



Historical Society Newsletter

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

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

Volume 15, Issue 2



www.GreenfieldHistoricalSociety.com

CALENDAR

- Oct. 21** – Tuesday, meeting at 7 p.m. at the **IOOF HALL IN MIDDLE GROVE.**
- Nov. 18** – Tuesday, meeting at 7 p.m. at the **Community Center in Greenfield Center.**
Program: Mary Shartle will discuss her new book: “The Truth and Legend of Lily Martindale.” This is a novel about a woman living alone in the Adirondacks.
- Dec.** – Christmas Party – Details coming in the next newsletter.
- Jan. 20, 2015** – Tuesday, meeting at 7 p.m. at the **Community Center in Greenfield Center.**
Program: Joe Zarzynski will speak on a Fort William Henry archaeological study of cannons and other artillery pieces done in the spring/summer of 2014.
- Feb. 17, 2015** – Tuesday, meeting at 7 p.m. at the **Community Center in Greenfield Center.**
Program: Show and Tell Program, where members all bring an item that they can briefly talk about – anything that has a story.
- March 17, 2015** – Tuesday, meeting at 7 p.m. at the **Community Center in Greenfield Center.**
Program to be announced.
- April 21, 2015** – Tuesday, meeting at 7 p.m. at the **Community Center in Greenfield Center.**
Program to be announced.
- May 19, 2015** – Tuesday, meeting at 7 p.m. at the **Community Center in Greenfield Center.**
Program: Marty Podskoch will discuss his book, “Adirondack 102 Club: Your Passport and Guide to the North Country.”

WEEZIE’S WORDS

by Louise Okoniewski

Macaroni and cheese, home made corn bread, spaghetti pie, all kinds of salads, rolls, ziti and sausage, vegetables, desserts and ice cream, are just a few of the delicious dishes that we enjoyed at our September meeting and annual pot luck dinner. When faced with such a smorgasbord, we tend to eat a bit too much. After the business part of the meeting, Town Historian, Ron Feulner presented a program on Greenfield. Ron started by showing some routes that early man may have traveled. The continents were quite different at the time, as man searched for food and exploration. Ron explained how the English bought land rights from the Native Americans. The Kayderosseross Patent, divided the land into many sections or tracts that were bid on. Because of the diverse topography of the land, the purchasers were not allowed to buy large sections. One person didn’t end up with the fertile valleys, while another ended up with rock ledges or mountains. In the beginning, Greenfield was known as “Fairfield.” Saratoga County was quite large extending to Hadley and Luzerne. Eventually, the county was divided into smaller counties. Hopefully, Ron will follow up with the early settlers and leaders of Greenfield.

A “sneak peek” open house was held at Odd Fellows Hall in Middle Grove on September 28, with the upstairs displays finished. The upstairs features a logging display, agricultural display, Dake family and Stewarts display, Odd Fellows and more. Ron Feulner wanted to let the many people who donated articles, time, artifacts, helped move items, painted, etc., over the last couple years, see that their efforts have not been in vain. Last year, the downstairs displays were viewed at the October Harvest. Downstairs features pictures from the different “hamlets” of Greenfield. Pictures of the Masons who also were physicians, business owners and town officials. There is also a veterans area and Daketown School display. Ron

Feulner is in charge of the upstairs museum, and Robert Roeckle is in charge of the downstairs museum. With the help of many hands, both areas are beginning to come together. Approximately 30 people signed in and enjoyed the pictures, displays and company. Thanks to those who brought baked goods and refreshments. We are looking for pictures of the veterans of Greenfield. If you have a family member you would like to have in our display, let us know. We can scan the photo and give back the original. Let's fill up that area and pay tribute to our Vets.

As I write this article, we are getting ready for a fundraiser at the Haven Tee Room at Brookhaven Golf Course. This is a new venture for us. Let ya know the details in the next newsletter.

We'd like to welcome more lifetime members,

Kay and Wayne Young
Claudia Wilsey Bright



Everyone after the Pot Luck Dinner.



Ron Feulner talking about Greenfield before it was Greenfield.

**PORTER CORNERS FIRE COMPANY'S
BREAKFAST BUFFET
ON BOCKES ROAD**

SUNDAY, NOV. 2, 2014 • 7 - 11 A.M.

\$8.00 per person

Now serving a breakfast buffet,
including juice, coffee, tea and milk.

HISTORIAN'S CORNER

by Ron Feulner

As I write this, the leaves are approaching peak color and this year has all the makings of being a prime year for leaf viewing.

On Sunday, Sept. 28, we had the open house at the museum for all those who played a part in making it a success. We had an exceptionally good turnout with the museum filled with people almost shoulder to shoulder for much of the afternoon. The weather cooperated 100% with blue sky and warm temperatures, so we were able to leave the front doors open, and except for a few late summer flies trying to gain access, we had a perfect afternoon. We can all take pride in a job well done.

I am hoping that next year, as soon as the weather permits, we can put together a team of volunteers so that we can keep the hall open for visitors on a more regular basis. Be thinking about whether you would like to get involved, and let us know when the time comes. I would expect that we will have a brief training program so that you will feel comfortable in knowing what you are doing.

Congratulations to Ron Deutsch and all those who worked at making our gala at Brookhaven such a success. It was a wonderful gathering of friends and neighbors. The food and music rounded out a perfect evening.

At the historian's office, we have a new volunteer, Arden Blunt, who has joined our ranks. We are also continuing with the photo labeling and organizing project along with several other projects.

Photos are still coming in almost weekly, which we really appreciate. It is such a joy to view old photos of Greenfield that we have never seen before. One of our biggest concerns is that many of the photos come to us without adequate labeling and that is such a shame. The people, who knew, must have thought that everyone else would also know what the photos are of, but that is not the case. One of our old photos has, "You certainly know who these people are," written on the back, but we don't know. It would be so helpful to us now if they would have only taken the time to write a few words more on the back of the photograph, and it would have made the photo so much more valuable to us now. In most cases, all the old timers who might have known what the photo was of are now gone, and we younger folks don't have a clue. When labeling your photos, just follow the old rule of describing who, what, when, and where the photo was taken.

HERITAGE HUNTERS MEETINGS

Shellee Morehead Ph.D., CG, will be the speaker at the annual Heritage Hunters Genealogy Conference. The conference will be held on Saturday, Oct. 18 at Saratoga Town Hall in Schuylerville, at the corner of Rt. 4 and Rt. 29, (12 Spring St.).

Conference topics are: *Introduction to Italian Research; French-Canadian Research; Organizing Your Genealogical Research; and Sex, DNA and Family History.* The day begins with registration at 8:45 a.m. and will conclude at 3:15 p.m. \$30 for members and \$40 for non-members. Note: As a special offer, \$45 would include 2014/2015 membership and conference. Registration includes a hot lunch, breaks and exhibits. For information and registration, call 518-587-2978 or email: melfrejo@aol.com.

Lillian (Sherman) Bills Derby

by Mary Cuffe Perez

The following is from the booklet, "What We Keep: Life Stories from Maplewood Manor," by Mary Cuffe Perez.

"What We Keep" was part of a project that Mary did last year through a grant from the Saratoga Arts Council. The booklet is composed of stories she wrote from interviews with 10 residents of Maplewood Manor. Lillian was the inspiration for the project and her story is one of the 10 stories in the booklet.

"I'm one who takes things the way they come."

Lillian Bills Derby was born Lillian Sherman in 1923 in Haganan, New York. When she was three, the family moved to a 99-acre dairy farm on Jockey Street in neighboring Galway. Lillian lived in Galway until coming to Maplewood, after her first husband, Kenwood, passed away. She married Gordon Derby, a long time friend, after they both moved to the nursing home. Lillian has one son and three daughters, 12 grandchildren and 12 great grandchildren.

When I visit Lillian and Gordon in Room A-127, the first thing Lillian asks me is, "What's new in Galway?" When I start to tell her, she tells me. She has never really left. The room she shares with Gordon is so full of keepsakes she can hardly move among them. Gordon brought very little with him when he moved into the nursing home, but Lillian has always had a hard time letting go. But the keepsakes – dolls from her collection of over 100, family photos, letters and books – are the least of it. What Lillian has held on to are the times of her life played out in one small, rural town – the hardships of the Depression, a husband gone to war, the struggle of farm life, the children she loved and those she lost, the innumerable joys of family and the lifelong love of music. Lillian has never cleaned out the attic of her memory. It's all there. Just ask her. She can give you names and dates. That, too, is the least of it.

Lillian was raised on a small, subsistence farm in Galway, New York. A lot was asked of her at an early age. The first born girl, she was schooled early in caring for her younger sister and brothers, helping her mother in the kitchen and her father with the milking. She also learned to take care of herself. As young as six years old, she walked the two miles to the one room school house on the corner of Welch and Shaw Roads, even in the worst of winter. "I remember walking between snow banks big as barns," she recalls. Right out of high school she went to work at the Ackshand Glove Factory, then Schutts Sock Factory in Ballston Spa. "Work was what we knew," she says, thinking back on a life of farming, of work in the mills and at General Electric when her husband, Kenwood, entered the service. All the while raising children – not just her own four but foster children, then grandchildren. Because there was never enough money,

she took in laundry and ironing, churned and sold butter. Non-stop work. "It's just the way it was."

In 1948, the Welfare Office contacted the Bills and asked if they would take in foster children. "Those were hard times," Lillian says. Some parents had no choice but to give up their children to foster care until they got back on their feet." Over the years, they took in 20 foster children, from infants to teenagers, as well as children from the Fresh Air Program in New York City. "Ken never knew who would be there when he came home. Sometimes we had ten at the table."

Some foster children stayed for only a week, others for years. She smiles, remembering their faces. "Tommy," she says quietly. "He stayed with us for eight years. A sweet, sensitive little boy who was easily hurt by the wrong words." She pauses and looks past me. "I can still see him looking up at me with his big brown eyes, made bigger by the glasses he wore, and that mop of dark hair."

The Bills later adopted two of the infants, Sharon and Tisa, who were placed in their care. "All of the children accepted one other," Lillian says. "Foster, adopted or our own born."

I ask Lillian if the large doll collection she has accumulated over the years is compensation for all the children who have come and gone. "Could be," she answers. Lillian is not given to introspection. She has always been too busy thinking of the next thing to be done.

Lillian is a happy person, sometimes determinedly so. The good times are as close to the surface as her laughter. "We always had a yard full," she says of the gatherings of family and neighbors. "Square dances, ball games, picnics. Galway was a community that supported one another during harvest and troubles and knew how to celebrate the good times." The celebration was often to bluegrass music, played on fiddle, guitar and banjo, at the Saxon Dance Hall, Benson's or at Fords Dance Hall, where Kenwood first asked her to dance 73 years ago. She hummed music while she ran laundry through the wringer washer and churned the butter; sang the children to sleep. On Saturday nights, she and Kenwood never missed a square dance.

Lillian doesn't dance anymore. She uses a motorized wheelchair to get around. But music is still as much a part of her life as if she was still twirling the squares. She and Gordon kept their membership in the Adirondack Fiddlers Association and members of the group often come to play at Maplewood out of friendship for the two. "I make sure everyone knows when they come," she says. She makes the rounds of the rooms on her floor and calls people on other floors urging them out of their rooms to enjoy the music.

Each time I visit Lillian, I learn a little more about her. When I ask how she dealt with the hardships of her life then and now with such good humor, she answers, "I'm one who takes things the way they come." But that's the least of it.

Farmers Market and Chili Cook-Off – Sept. 19, 2014



The Chili Cook-Off Servers



Customers Sampling the Chili

IOOF Museum Open House – Sept. 28, 2014



Pump organ from the Porter Corners Methodist Church



Signs from the Mason's Lodge



IOOF Chair



Ron Feulner giving a tour



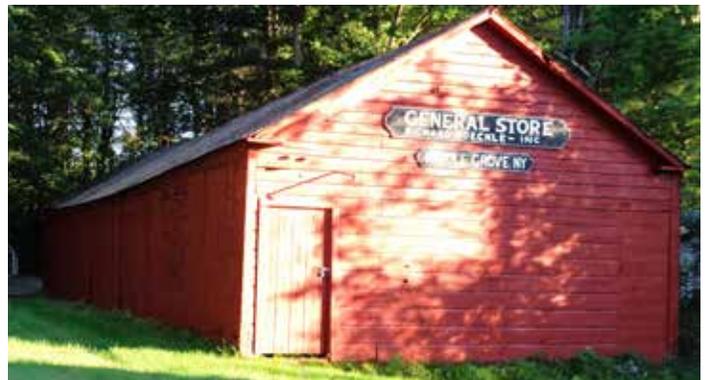
Fox Farm display, ice tools and a Skip-Jack



Phyllis Dake portrait (left) and other sections of the museum



The saw mill and logging section of the museum



The old carriage shed has been painted and looks like new

30th Anniversary Fundraising Gala – Oct. 4, 2014



Silent Auction Table



Silent Auction Item



Farming in the Town of Greenfield



What We Used To Do: baseball, volunteer firemen, parades, church, Home Bureau, IOOF, Masons, Rebekkas, Grange



Basket Raffles



Daketown School, IOOF Hall, Kings Station and Farmer's Market



Where We Worked: post offices, stores, saw mills, graphite mine, gas stations, maple syrup, butter plant, dairy plants, restaurants



Ron Deutsch, leader of the gala, with Louise O. & Aida Gordon



"The Music" – Trish Miller, John Kirk and Bob Marcotte



Some of the workers: Louise O., Patty S. & Tom M.



The Odd Fellow's Chairs for the Silent Auction

Please correct me if any of the captions are wrong.

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.

“Thank You” to everyone that brought a dish to pass at the September Pot Luck Dinner. October refreshment volunteers are Katie Finnegan and Sandy Wimet.

Janet Jones, Refreshment Chairperson

If you’d like to dedicate and/or sponsor a newsletter, send \$50 to *The Town of Greenfield Historical Society, P.O. Box 502, Greenfield Center, NY 12833*, include your name, address and the wording describing who you would like it dedicated to and/or sponsored by.



**The Town of Greenfield
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