



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 16, Issue 2



www.GreenfieldHistoricalSociety.com

CALENDAR

Oct. 20, 2015 – Tuesday, meeting 7 p.m. at the Community Center in Greenfield Center. Program: **Ben Kemp** will talk about “*At my General’s Side to the End*,” a program about Sam Willett, a Civil War veteran who stayed by Ulysses Grant’s side as he was dying of throat cancer at Mt. McGregor.

Nov. 17, 2015 – Tuesday, 7 p.m. meeting at the Community Center in Greenfield Center. Program: **Marty Podskoch** will talk about his book, *Adirondack Civilian Conservation Corps Camps – History, Memories and Legacy of the CCC*.

Dec. 2015 – 1-4 p.m., Christmas Party at the *Chatfield Museum of Local History* in Middle Grove. No date yet.

Jan. 19, 2015 – Tuesday, meeting 7 p.m. at the Community Center in Greenfield Center. Program: **Don Monica**, of our Farmer’s Market, will speak about *Maple Sugaring*, something that his family has done for generations. Many local farms would collect maple sap in the spring to make maple syrup, a practice learned from the native Americans.

Feb. 16, 2015 – Tuesday, meeting 7 p.m. at the Community Center in Greenfield Center. Program: **Ellen Steinberger** will speak about “*Down in the Valley: Exploring the Gut*.” This area in Saratoga Springs, east of Broadway, has been home to multi-ethnic working class families for over two centuries and also was important to the evolution of the Jewish community.

**Everyone is welcome;
you don’t have to be a member to attend.**

Dues Are Due

Our membership year begins **June 1 and ends May 31**, dues are paid annually. Dues can be paid at any meeting or they can be mailed to The Town of Greenfield Historical Society, P.O. Box 502, Greenfield Center, NY 12833. Make check 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 \$10, the balance will be considered a donation. Members whose dues are in arrears at the end of September, have been dropped from the mailing list.

WEEZIE’S WORDS

by Louise Okoniewski

Our September meeting had approximately 30 members enjoy a wonderful potluck dinner on a beautiful warm evening. As usual, all the food was delicious, credit to the great cooks and bakers that we have in Greenfield. After some belly-rubbing and a business meeting, we were treated to a fantastic program by Trish Miller, John Kirk and Ed Lowman. Their upbeat music and stories of finding early Greenfield music by C. Lockwood had the audience toe tapping and smiling. The Lockwood music is a collection of tunes that were performed by a local group from the mid 1800s to approximately the early 1920s. Barn dances and town socials were the place that people would gather to mix and mingle, socialize and meet people. The Lockwood music seems to have an Irish or Celtic tone to them, which plays well on a fiddle, the musical instrument of the day. During a rousing rendition of “Chicken Reel,” we were treated to Trish clogging to the music. John, Trish and Ed kept the music coming, even though they worked a long day and I’m sure they were tired. But they kept smiling and playing and even gave an encore when asked by someone in the audience to play a couple more songs. John and Trish remembered when they played for a September program a couple of years ago, they were joined by two of Greenfield’s musicians, Ted Jones and Jim Smith. This night was somewhat bittersweet as Ted and Jim are no longer with us. However, they are well remembered by those who were at that program and those who just knew them. Trish and John play locally for different events and are often joined by Ed Lowman and other local musicians. If you have a chance, be sure to check them out, you will not be disappointed. (See photos on page 2.)

I would like to thank all those who attended our Second Gala Fundraiser at the Haven Tee Room at Brookhaven Park. It was a huge success thanks to support from our members, Greenfield businesses and some from Saratoga. Most of all, the people that came out to enjoy the night. We’ll have more in the next newsletter, so stay tuned!

HISTORIAN'S CORNER

by Ron Feulner

John Kirk and Trish Miller did a wonderful job of entertaining us at our September meeting. They played a variety of historical music and did an excellent job of weaving stories into the presentation which is how I got started on a new project.

John mentioned an upcoming performance, where he will be involved in a group celebrating the anti-rent wars that once occurred in the Helderbergs near Albany. He mentioned a book called "Tin Horns and Calico," which described the rent wars. This name rang a bell for me, and I was certain that I had seen the book before. I thought that it might have been in my personal collection of local history books, which I donated to the town historian's collection when I became the town historian. Sure enough, it was on the book shelf in our archive room. When I opened the cover, I saw Elliot Older's name written on the title page. Before Elliot died, he gave me a number of his local history collection of books, and this must have been one of them.

I had no knowledge of the anti-rent wars before John Kirk mentioned them, and I began reading this book, however, I have been interested in the early days of land ownership in the Town of Greenfield for quite a while and wondered if there was any parallel between what was happening in Albany County and Greenfield.

In Greenfield, the white man's history of ownership began with the Kayaderosseras Patent when 13 wealthy Englishmen decided to pool their resources and purchase a large tract of land from the Mohawk Indians who were in control of the region at the time. This turned out to be more difficult than they expected and the purchase lingered on for about 60 years before a final settlement was reached with the help of Sir William Johnson of Johnstown who was a friend of both the Queen and the Mohawks.

In Albany County, wealthy Dutchmen had purchased large tracts of land similar to the Kayaderosseras Patent from the Native Americans, and their ownership survived the takeover of the area by the English and later the Americans in the Revolutionary War.

These wealthy families divided their lands into small farms and set up a system of leasing them to farming families to clear the land and purchase it. However, these wealthy landlords had structured the leases to their own advantage so that it was almost impossible for a farm family to get ahead enough to ever purchase

the land. Instead, they had to keep paying the taxes on the land and providing much of what the land produced to the landlord as lease rent. The system was structured as a carry-over from the feudal system in Europe from an earlier time but given a different title.

After several generations working the farms and coming no closer to ownership, the farmers began banding together and demanding that the system be changed. They had not participated in a revolution so that wealthy landowners could live like kings off the fruits of their labor. They began to organize at many levels and eventually formed a secretive organization that would alert neighbors by blowing on tin horns in the event that the landowner sent the sheriff to evict a farmer who could not meet the conditions of his lease.

Neighbors hearing the tin horns would quickly dress in homemade hooded calico dresses, grab a weapon and rush to the site where they would harass the sheriff (sometimes tarring and feathering him) and preventing him from serving his papers. These occasions sometimes resulted in violence on both sides and eventually a deputy sheriff was killed and perpetrators were punished. Both sides tried to have laws passed to protect their interests and as politics in Albany changed, sentiments for one side or the other would shift.

In the end, however, both sides became weary of the fight and gradually the wealthy landowners loosened their control so that one-by-one the farm families were able to purchase the land that they had worked so hard to own.

After reading about this activity in Albany area, I wondered how early Greenfielders like the Dakes, Morehouses, and Youngs came to own their farms. Did they lease first or did they purchase directly from the wealthy parties who had negotiated ownership in the Kayaderosseras Patent? All of this still remains a mystery to me. If any of you have research skills, time on your hands, and would like a good project, I would be more than happy to talk to you about it.

I would also like to correct an error I made in the September newsletter when I mentioned the dedicated volunteers who kept the museum open last summer. I accidentally left Ann Michel off the list. She attended many of the Friday evening sessions with Joyce Woodard. I apologize, Ann.



Everyone at the Pot Luck Dinner.



Ed Lowman, John Kirk & Trish Miller – playing base, fiddles, guitar, banjo, mandolin, singing, telling stories about Greenfield music and dancing!

A Baseball Memory

by Steve Stanton

The Fall Classic, or the World Series, as it is called by non-afficiandos, is upon us and baseball fans follow more intently the final stretch for teams to make the playoffs. Some have given up as their favorite teams have faltered during the long summer and have dropped from contention. For the majority of fans, each game becomes more important as the season nears its end.

My interest in baseball started early since my father, Don, had always played as a younger man and my grandfather, Brownie, had taught me to be a loyal Yankee fan. As a youngster, I played baseball as often as possible and my father, for over a decade, was without a team for playing.

This changed as the Porter Corners Indians, managed by Cy Young, came into being in 1959 and into the early 1960s. The team was a viable entry into the Northway League with a winning record. Dan Chertok, in October 2009, wrote a comprehensive article providing a historical look at local baseball efforts. It's a well written piece worth a re-read.

However, by 1964, the team was having some difficulty in fielding nine players for every game. Cy Young had to go recruiting and that's when he contacted my father to play and bring me along. I had just turned 16 and was a junior varsity catcher for Corinth High School. My father, Don, at the time was 45 years old, and although still an amazing contact hitter, his legs were gone and his throwing arm was not the rifle it once was. Still, he loved being in the game.

I was brought along when the Indians needed a ninth player. Taking the field as the catcher for pitchers such as Gene Feulner and Bill Berg, filled me with anxiety. I had never caught pitchers that could throw as hard or had as many pitches as these two big men.

In one game, versus the Saratoga team, Gene was not getting the strike calls from the home plate umpire that he thought he should. Between innings, Gene said he would

teach this ump a lesson. He wanted me to crouch very low as if he was going to come with a low pitch and stay low. He was about to deliver a high hard fast ball to the face mask of the umpire.

Another memorable playing moment occurred on the Porter's field when I was once again designated to catch. We may have been playing Mechanicville when during the game they had a man on second and the batter hit a ball between the outfielders. Weighing around 150 pounds, I was going to tag this runner out at home if the throw made it to me. I took my position straddling home plate not giving enough notice to the 240 pound fullback charging down the third base line at full speed. The collision at home plate was a precursor to the infamous Pete Rose – Ray Fosse collision in the 1970 All Star game. The collision ended Fosse's career.

As you may guess, the ball never reached me. I had never been hit so hard by another person in my whole life. My equipment, as well as myself, went flying toward the backstop. It literally "knocked the snot" out of me. The runner was obviously safe and proud, and I was pounded silly. I tried to gather myself and got my equipment straightened out and went back into the game. However the first pitch back told me I had double vision. I saw two baseballs coming at me and I couldn't catch either one. They took me out of the game. Today, they would probably say I had a concussion. Also, baseball has changed the rule for catchers, they can no longer block home plate until they have the ball, which makes for less collisions.

I continued to play baseball as a catcher on the high school varsity team and even freshman year at SUNY Brockport. As an adult, I played softball for a number of years on a work team and continue to be a Yankees fan. I have many baseball memories as a player and a fan, but the year of 1964 when I played for the Porter Corners Indians leaves me with indelible images.

HERITAGE HUNTERS

Genealogy Conference – October 17, 2015

Scott Andrew Bartley will be the speaker at the annual Heritage Hunters Genealogy Conference. The conference will be held on Saturday, Oct. 17 at Saratoga Town Hall in Schuylerville, at the corner of Rt. 4 and Rt. 29, (12 Spring St.). Scott is a genealogist, archivist, librarian and editor specializing in Vermont, Mayflower lineages and colonial New England. He is currently an editor/researcher for New England Historical and Genealogical Society [NEHGS]. The conference topics are: Crossing the Border, U.S. and Canadian Records; Family Search Program; American Probate System; and Your Brick Walls.

The day begins with registration, exhibits and coffee at 8:45 a.m. and will conclude at 3:15 p.m. Registration is \$30 for members and \$40 for non-members. Included is a hot lunch, breaks and exhibits. An option is offered for \$45 that would include HH 2015-2016 membership at \$15 and the conference at \$30.

For information and registration, call 518-587-2978 or email: melfrejo@aol.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

Our newest Lifetime Members are:

Gary Dake
Pat and Katie Finnegan
Derek Stannard
Sandy and Jim Wimet

Thanks to every one that brought a dish to pass at our September Pot Luck Dinner. October refreshment volunteers are Katie Finnegan and Leah Cornell.

Janet Jones, Refreshment Chairperson

Chatfield Museum of Local History Open House – June 20, 2015



Dan Chertok and Walt Chandler



*Raffles, refreshments, hot dogs and burgers
Joan and JoAnn Rowland, Katie and Pat Finnegan,
Dan Chertok,*



*GFD Fire Police, Bob and Peggy Roxberry and
Tom Merrills, parking cars and directing traffic*



*Peggy and Bob Roxberry, Roy and Alice Rogner
with Ann Michel and Joyce Woodard on the right*



*Town of Greenfield Veterans' Wall
Radio (donated by Louis Okoniewski Jr.)
Pump Organ (donated by the Porter Corners
United Methodist Church)*

Chatfield Museum of Local History Open House – June 20, 2015



*Audrey Crandell and Alice Feulner,
George Habig and Ron Feulner in the background*



*Melissa, Brandon and Scott Murray checking out the
displays with Ron Feulner on right*



*Florence and Bill Hinckley, Henry Rowland, Robert Roeckle
and other visitors in the back*



*“Walter E. Chandler Forestry Service”
1930 Model A Ford Pickup*

Please send articles and/or photos for our future newsletters to The Town Of Greenfield Historical Society, P.O. Box 502, Greenfield Center, NY 12833 or email JJones18215@roadrunner.com

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL AVAILABLE ONLINE

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. **YOU CAN PAY YOUR DUES ONLINE AT OUR WEBSITE! www.GreenfieldHistoricalSociety.com**

CLICK ON:



AND FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS.

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'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 a note describing who you would like it dedicated to and/or sponsored by.



**The Town of Greenfield
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