



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 4



www.GreenfieldHistoricalSociety.com

CALENDAR

Dec. 19, 2015 – 1-4 p.m., Christmas Party
at the *Chatfield Museum of Local History*
in Middle Grove. Our theme this year is **Reindeer**.
Show off ornaments, statues, tell stories and wear
your favorite reindeer sweaters and hats!

Jan. 19, 2016 – 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, 2016 – 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.

March 15, 2016 – Tuesday, meeting 7 p.m. at the
Community Center in Greenfield Center.
Program to be announced.

April 19, 2016 – Tuesday, meeting 7 p.m. at the
Community Center in Greenfield Center.
Program to be announced.

May 17, 2016 – Tuesday, meeting 7 p.m. at the
Community Center in Greenfield Center.
Program to be announced.

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

WEEZIE'S WORDS

by Louise Okoniewski

Despite a glitch in the power point, Marty Podskoch presented an interesting program on the Adirondack Civilian Corps Camps. The Civilian Corps Camps were an idea of President Franklin Roosevelt for putting young men to work during the Great Depression. FDR saw that a lot of young men were without jobs and just roaming around city streets. Fearing some sort of a revolution, he approached Congress to start the Civilian Corps Camps. Approved by Congress, the project ran from 1933-1942. In order to be a part of the Corps, you needed to be among the very poor. The Corps were overseen by the Army, even old Army uniforms from WWI were used for the young men. Once enlisted, the Army decided where you were to go. New York state employed approximately 225,000 young men. They built roads, camps, fought forest fires, built dams, planted trees and much more throughout the United States.

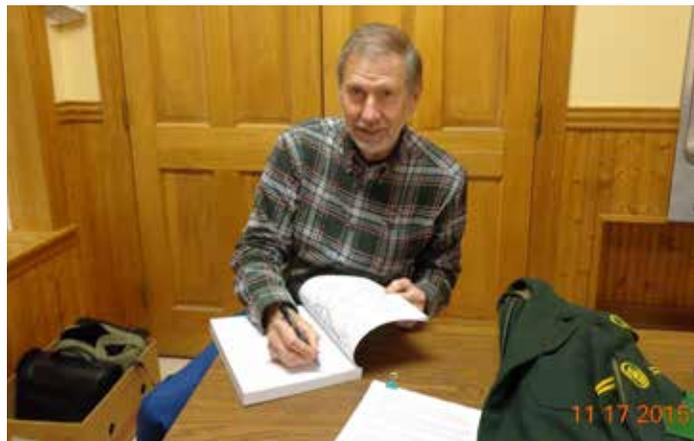
The Corps had 2,600 camps nationwide and put over 3 million men to work in its lifetime. Three of our members, Jim Wimet, John Zimmerman and Sue Martin all had family that were part of the Adirondack Civilian Corps. We've all been camping or hiking and have come across a structure that may resemble an old log cabin. Most likely it's the remnants of one of the Corps Camps.

Many of the men had no idea how to construct any thing, build a road, a dam or clear a trail. But they were willing to learn a trade, they felt important, learned to love nature and took pride in their work. The camps were run with discipline, like the military. But social time, like playing baseball, also was enjoyed.

Most of us know where Blue Mountain Lake is. Near Blue Mountain is Lake Durant State Campgrounds. The men built the dam that created Lake Durant, the

campsites, ranger's cabins and trails. They also are responsible for Lake Eaton, Eighth Lake and many more of today's camping areas.

Marty's book *Adirondack Civilian Corps Camps* is full of information on the daily life of the fellows that were employed by this project. There are many pictures, personal stories from men who were there. A lot of time was spent finding and speaking with families and descendents of these extraordinary men. Marty's books are available at many stores and shops throughout the Adirondacks or online. They make a great Christmas gifts. Buy an *Adirondack 102* book, take a ride into the Adirondacks before the big snow comes and fill it in. It's full of local history and very enjoyable.



Marty Podskoch autographing his book, Adirondack Civilian Conservation Corps Camps – History, Memories and Legacy of the CCC.

HISTORIAN'S CORNER

by Ron Feulner

Last month, I wrote about stonewalls, and this month, I would like to add a few additional thoughts.

I wrote that most of the stones found in stone walls come from soils pushed in place by a continental glacier that blanketed most of New York state (and areas north of it) from about one million years ago until about 10 thousand years ago. This thick blanket of ice and snow shifted under its own weight and moved in such a way as to gouge out and push along large volumes of rock and soil until it reached a point where the glacier began to melt. With melting, its load of debris was left spread out over the rock and soil that had been there originally. This new layer of mixed debris is now called glacial till.

As the climate warmed vegetation began growing on the till, and over long periods of time, mature forests developed. Each year a new layer of rotting leaves and wood was added to the top of the till until a thick layer of organic topsoil developed.

This top soil had few if any rocks in it, so when the first white settlers began clearing the trees and planting their crops around the stumps, they no doubt encountered few stones. The tree canopy and thick organic soils are thought to have insulated the deeper till soil from freezing, so frost heave had not lifted many of the boulders and stones in the till.

Three things happened during the early farming years. First, they cut the trees, and in so doing removed the

insulating canopy (especially in evergreen forests), and secondly, the climate turned cooler so that winters became more brutal. In addition to this, the farmers began tilling the soil and opening it up to erosion and further decay, making the topsoil thinner.

As a result of all of the above, the soils began to freeze deeper which in turn caused frost heave to be more active, lifting the buried stones toward the surface. It is not actually the soil that freezes but the moisture in the soil. When it freezes, it expands the soil and lifts the stones upward. When the spring thaw occurs, the frozen water turns to liquid and the soupy wet soils slump under the stones leaving them higher. As a result, each year after the winter freeze and spring thaw, a new crop of stones can be found on the surface, and this activity is still occurring today. In areas like Alaska, this activity is so active that it can lift telephone poles completely out of the ground.

After writing last month's article, a number of Greenfield residents have shared their own rock picking stories with me. It seems that it was almost a right of passage in the Town of Greenfield for young people to work for area farmers picking stones while the farmer drove the tractor.

I hope that all of you have a meaningful holiday, and we here at the historian's office will be looking forward to the end of a very productive year and the beginning of another.

November refreshment volunteers, Louise Okoniewski (for Joyce) and Alice Feulner, served Pecan Danish Twist and N.Y. Style Crumb Cake, Chocolate Chunk Cookies and Cinnamon Walnut Coffee Cake. Please remember to bring cookies to the Christmas Party to share.

Janet Jones, Refreshment Chairperson

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.



Our Annual Open House and Holiday Gathering

will be held Saturday, December 19 from
1 to 4 p.m. at the IOOF Hall in Middle Grove.

This year's theme is Reindeer.

Come visit with friends, see the museum,
bring a few cookies, sample some cookies and
the mulled cider, and when we are done –
you can select a variety of cookies to take home
(for a small donation).

We will have some reindeer around to view.

If you would like to bring some,
we would love to see them.

We also would love to hear your reindeer story.

Did Grandma get run over by a reindeer on the
way home from your house Christmas Eve?

Did one attach to your car and then less than a year
later another one take out all those same car parts?

Did the big one (10 pointer) get away?

Please stop in even if you only have a few minutes.

Picking the Sure Crop

by Joan and JoAnn Rowland

After reading Ron Feulner's Historian's Corner article in the Nov. 2015 issue, we got laughing about our experience of picking the annual 'sure crop.' Why do we call it that? Because the stones were sure to be there the next year.

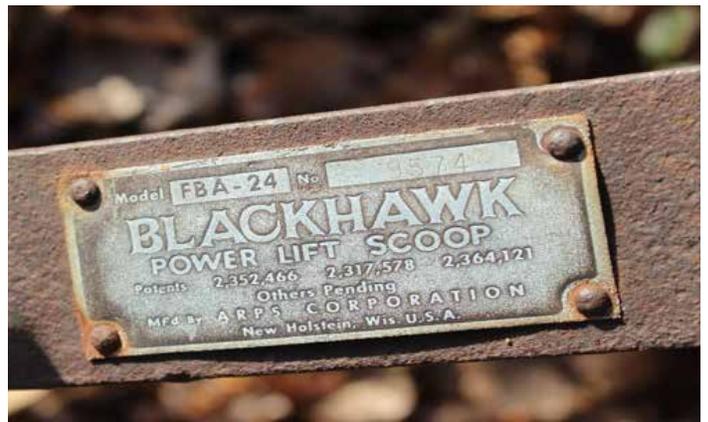
Our father, Myron J. Rowland, would hook onto the 8N Ford tractor our stone boat and Aunt Gert (Rowland), JoAnn and I would go out and follow the tractor and fill the boat with the stones from the big garden and fields. We would then go to the edge of the field and unload them onto the stone fence that was built by generations before us. This was repeated until either dark or we were done.

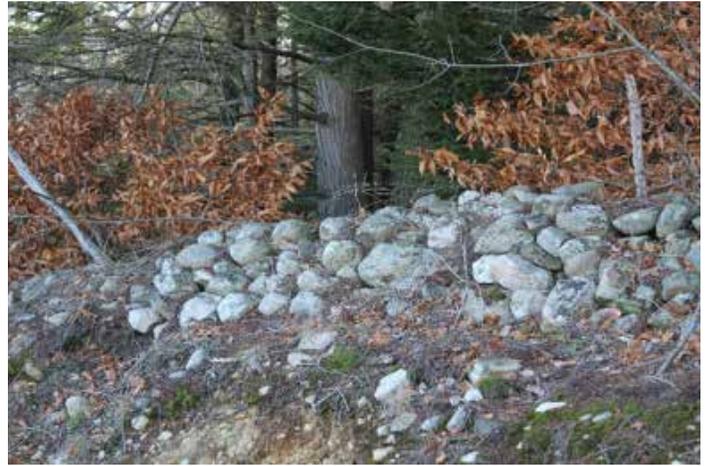
We had two types of stone boats: one was a scoop where we would load and he could dump the stones out (also this would work for those too big for us to pick up).

The second one is just behind this one in the photo but I need someone with a tractor to lift it up for the photo – maybe in another newsletter. This one had three wide bars and loaded from the back. We would have to place stones just right on this one so the stones didn't drop between the bars. Really big stones you would roll on. If they were still partly in the ground, Dad would go back and use the bars and the tractor's hydraulics to lift it up a little to get under it and get it out.



You really are never done.





Stone walls can be seen around each of our fields. Some have fence post within them and would have three or more strands of barb wire hooked to the fence post to help keep our cows in. You also will see in a few places the Paige wire fence from many years ago when our grandfather had sheep.



This fence is between us and our neighbors to the North. It has one Butternut Tree growing within it. This was to denote our land ending and theirs beginning.

The Big Rock

Our father worked for many hours to remove a stone from his hay field (both with horses and later with tractors). He ended up hiring someone to remove it because every time he worked this field, he would hit it and break the equipment. He never did get it out.

But finally, Don and Mark Young figured it out. (They were haying our fields and had enough of hitting this stone and breaking their equipment.) Well, it was bigger than we thought. I am not sure if they were using the back hoe or the bull dozer but Don can tell you.

That was one ‘head shaking day’ when Dad saw the size of his stone (the big rock). He could not believe it. No wonder the horses couldn’t budge it.

This rock can be seen from Ormsbee Road at the end of the stone fence line (where the Butternut Tree is in the fence line) and the field makes a right hand turn. Nestled in the trees is this rock that Don and Mark Young rolled there (or pushed).



Happy picking the “Sure Crop!”

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.

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



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