



Historical Society Newsletter

OFFICERS: Interim President and 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 9



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www.GreenfieldHistoricalSociety.com

CALENDAR

May 14, 2016 – Saturday, 9 a.m. to noon

Clean Up Day at Daketown School

May 17, 2016 – Tuesday, meeting 7 p.m. at the Community Center in Greenfield Center. *Elections for the 2016-17 year will take place at this meeting.*

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.

June 17 - Sept. 9, 2016 – FARMERS MARKET
Fridays, 4 to 7 p.m., Middle Grove Town Park.

THE CHATFIELD MUSEUM OF LOCAL HISTORY will be open on Fridays during the Farmers Market from 4 to 7 p.m. at the IOOF Hall, Middle Grove. It also will be open Saturdays and Sundays, dates and times to be announced.

July 19 - 24, 2016 – 175th SARATOGA COUNTY FAIR, Tuesday - Sunday, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., Ballston Spa Fairgrounds, Townley Building.
Visit our display and info booth.

Aug. 13, 2016 – SEVENTH CABOOSE DAY AND CAR SHOW at King's Station, Saturday, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Corner of Route 9N and Porter Road.
Bake Sale and food available for purchase.

Rain or Shine. For information, call Tom Clute at 580-0655 or the Town Hall at 587-6060.

Sept. 20, 2016 – Tuesday, Pot Luck Dinner before the meeting/program, Community Center in Greenfield Center. Dinner starts at 5:30. Bring a dish to pass and your own place setting. Meeting starts at 7 p.m.
Program: *To be announced.*

Oct. 1, 2016 – Saturday, HISTORICAL SOCIETY FUNDRAISING GALA AT BROOKHAVEN GOLF COURSE – The Haven Tee Room.

More information to follow.

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

Our Constitution

by Robert Roeckle

At our April 19 meeting, we had our second vote to amend the Town of Greenfield Historical Society's Constitution. After some discussion about the phrase 'code of ethics listed in the Bylaws' and if it would still be applicable by the amendment only stating the 'officers agree to abide by the Bylaws,' the amendment was passed.

Since there has been a change to our Constitution, I thought it would be a good time to print the entire constitution so everyone is kept informed. However, I realized that our Constitution is five pages long and would take up the entire Newsletter with some pretty dry language. So I have asked that our Constitution and Bylaws be posted on our website:
<http://www.greenfieldhistoricalsociety.com/>.

I am not sure exactly when that may happen, since I cannot find an electronic version of the Bylaws in my files. I am sure there is an electronic copy, if not we can retype or scan an existing copy and post it. But in the meantime, here is the changed language:

The Board of Trustees shall consist of not less than nine (9) active members in good standing. The Board shall consist of President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and not less than five (5) Trustees, however the actual number may be more than five (as long as it remains an odd number for voting purposes) with the total number increasing or decreasing as interest and participation levels change from year to year at the annual meeting with the election of officers. As a condition of accepting their position as a member of the Board, each of the officers agree to abide by the Bylaws.

April refreshment volunteers Lelah Cornell and Alice Feulner, served cookies and lemon-pecan-cranberry cake (for Ron's birthday). John Greenwood also brought ice cream. Ron and Theresa Alger of Saratoga Crackers and Oils, served fruit and whipped cream on crackers with various oils.

May refreshment volunteers are Katie Finnegan and Nancy Homiak.

Janet Jones, Refreshment Chairperson

TIME TRAVEL?

by Robert Roeckle

Several years ago, I was minding my own business wandering through an antique center when suddenly I was a young child standing in my great-grandmother's house watching her make rag rugs on her loom. I wasn't really there, but it seemed like it, I could almost hear the thud, thud of great-grandma using the loom. One of the dealers had installed an almost complete room from an old house in the antique center. This room had absolutely no resemblance to my great-grandmother's house, except for the smell. A combination of the dry wood and plaster of the actual house; wood smoke and cooking odors that have permeated the carpets, curtains and upholstery; the ever present acrid hint of dried mouse urine hidden in the walls; all mixed with remnants of cleaning products. We all know the smell, that wonderful old house smell.

This got me to thinking of what triggers our memories. Looking through photos and talking about the past with friends and family always starts us remembering. But what about those sudden flashes of memory, like the one I described. I have had with other similar memory jogs dealing particularly with smells, like we all have had. The perfume that reminds us of mom, that cooking smell that takes us back to our youth sitting in the kitchen, even the smell of wood smoke reminding us of filling the wood stove or of camping. Thinking about it, all of the five senses can most likely trigger our memories.

Obviously the things we see trigger memories, like driving through old neighborhoods and visiting special places that bring back memories. Of course that can also make us see change as a problem. I was recently in Buffalo for business and was driving by my old college campus. I could barely recognize anything. They had even moved the streets, or at least the way they intersected each other in front of the campus. The change made perfect sense from a traffic point of view, but it was different and really confused me. I spent more time thinking of the way it was and not really seeing how the changes were most likely an improvement to the area. After that I knew why my sister has no desire to see the renovations made to what used to be my parent's house, it would be almost like erasing some of our past.

There is always that wonderful memory when you suddenly realize that what you are eating, or better yet have made, is exactly the way you remember your mother or grandmother making it. This could be one of the reasons food is often seen as comfort, especially when we are sick or just not feeling well. That is when we go towards our 'comfort' foods which are invariably those foods we remember from our youth when we felt safe, secure and taken care of. Thinking about memory and the senses I found touch to be the most difficult, maybe I am just odd. There are scratchy wools and soft cottons, cold hard metal and warm woods that all can elicit memories. Waking up in the morning and touching a bedspread or quilt can make it seem like a different place and time, until you finally realize where you are and get up and start your day.

Sound can also be powerful memory trigger. For me, certain spoken phrases, especially with a familiar intonation, can be like listening to my parents and grandparents speaking again. I am sure we all remember the first time we heard either our mother or father's voice coming out of our mouths. Not that we sounded like them, but it was something they would have said in the same situation. And then we knew it, horror of horrors, we have become our parents.



Ron and Theresa Alger and daughter, Molly (left), from Saratoga Oils and Saratoga Crackers, presented the program at our April meeting.

***The Town of Greenfield
Historical Society's
Farmers Market at the
Middle Grove Park
will start Friday, June 17
through Sept. 9, 2016 –
every Friday, 4 - 7 p.m.***

Our Newest LIFETIME MEMBERS

Mr. and Mrs. John Greenwood

In Memory of Ruth Atwell

*April 13, 1926 -
April 18, 2016*



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 (518-321-0330) or write him at: Dan Chertok, 58 Ormsbee Road, Porter Corners, NY 12859

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.

**PLEASE SEND 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 to: JJones18215@roadrunner.com.**

The Dr. Isaac Youngs' Family and the Revolutionary Plot to Aid the British by Arden Blunt

In 1983 my family moved from Pennsylvania to a farm house on Young Road, two miles outside of Middle Grove. The house was built between 1792 and 1797 by Dr. Isaac Youngs, (the "s" has been dropped from their name) reputed to have been the first medical doctor in Greenfield township. In the gunpowder cabinet beside a fireplace chimney, we discovered a box containing a treasurer-trove of documents: deeds, wills, genealogies and ephemeris dating back at least to 1736. One piece of information in particular sparked my interest and became the inspiration for this paper.

Dr. Youngs was born about 1753 in Southold, Long Island, New York to George and Phebe Ketcham Youngs. Isaac had a brother named Israel. In the winter-spring of 1775-1776, the Youngs brothers and their respective families were sharing a duplex house at Cold Spring (later Cold Spring Harbor) on Long Island. A man named Henry Dawkins was staying in the house with them. Dawkins persuaded one or both brothers to purchase a "rolling press" which could be used to print the engravings and currencies being printed by congress and the new state governments. The press was hidden in the attic of the Youngs brothers' house.

In the spring of 1776, Isaac Ketcham (probably a brother of Mary Ketcham Youngs, Isaac and Israel Youngs' mother) went to Philadelphia to purchase the proper type of paper used to print currency. His questions aroused suspicion and Mr. Ketcham was arrested "soon after May 1776."

On May 11, Israel and Isaac Youngs were also arrested by the New York Provincial government on a charge of counterfeiting Colonial currency. On May 16, a man named Charles Friel testified that the brothers had been harboring the counterfeiter, Henry Dawkins, Isaac and Israel were ultimately jailed in New York City where Mr. Ketcham was being held, also facing a counterfeiting charge.

In the spring of 1776, New York was a hotbed of Loyalist activity. General Washington and his continental Army had arrived on April 4 from Boston, following the British evacuation of that city. It was expected that the British would soon attempt to invade and capture New York City. There were many rumors of Loyalist plots meant to help the British when they arrived.

In the prison where Isaac Ketcham and the Youngs brothers were being held was Thomas Hickey. Hickey was born in Ireland and had deserted from the British army some years earlier. When he was arrested for passing counterfeit money, Hickey was a member of General Washington's "Life Guards;" soldiers supposed to protect the general and other officers and the Army's cash. As it turned out, Hickey had a propensity to talk too much. He told Ketcham and the Youngs (or they overheard) about the Loyalist plot in which Hickey was involved, probably as a rather minor player. The plot seems to have been the work of the Loyalist (Tory) Mayor of New York City, David Mathews and the Royal Governor of New York, William Tryon. The plot involved raising a substantial Loyalist militia, partly by bribing members of Washington's forces and partly of Loyalist citizens, of whom there were many in the city and the surrounding countryside.

Coordinating with the arrival of British warships in New York harbor, the Loyalist force would attempt to capture the Kings Bridge, the only land route from Manhattan, trapping Washington's army in Manhattan. The Tories would then attempt to capture or destroy the Continental Armories and supply depots in Westchester County and the Hudson Highlands. But the most frightening aspect of the plot was to kidnap and/or kill General Washington and other officers.

Isaac Ketcham notified the N.Y. Provincial government about what he and the Youngs brothers had heard from Thomas Hickey. Ketcham agreed to testify in return for leniency in his counterfeiting charge.

Israel Youngs testified that Hickey had boasted that he would never again fight for the American cause, and that almost 700 men had been enlisted (bribed) to fight for the British.

Thomas Hickey was court-martialed, was tried and convicted on a charge of mutiny and sedition. The next day, June 28, 1776, Hickey was hanged before "a cheering crowd of 20,000." General Washington had ordered every soldier not on duty to attend the hanging. Although about 20 other supposed conspirators were arrested, including Mathews and Tryon, so far as is known, none were ever tried. Thomas Hickey was not only the lone member to be tried and punished; he was the first person to be hanged for treason during the Revolution. It seems that Hickey's death was used as a warning to others who might want to plot against the continental forces. After the execution, General Washington wrote to John Hancock, President of the Continental Congress, "I am hopeful this example will produce many salutary consequences and deter others from entering into like traitorous practices."

Israel Youngs was not only arrested, he was tried and convicted of counterfeiting. His testimony against Thomas Hickey undoubtedly helped him in his escape, for family legend tells us that he bribed his jailors and escaped on Nov. 25, 1776. He was not welcomed back by his neighbors in Long Island, and moved to Connecticut with his wife and children.

I have found no evidence that Dr. Isaac Youngs was tried or convicted. His testimony against Hickey probably worked to his benefit. He returned to his home on Long Island until he came to the Ballston area in 1790 and then to Middle Grove area in 1792. The family lived in a small cabin while he built the present house (1797) on Young Road. Although at one time Isaac Youngs owned several thousand acres in Greenfield and Providence Townships, the present acreage is 34 acres. My husband, Charles, and I have owned and lived in Dr. Youngs's home for almost 33 years, raising our children there. It still amazes me to think of the part Dr. Youngs, the original settler, played in our American History.

Bibliography: My thanks to William G. Preston, a descendent of Isaac Youngs for his efforts organizing the Youngs papers and geneology. If one googles Thomas Hickey, Soldier, a large number of articles concerning the plot will show up. Googling any one of the characters' names will lead to different articles. Some examples: American History illustrated "The Plot to Kill Washington" file 1987 Ben C. Fenwick
Wikipedia.org: Thomas Hickey, Soldier and the others
Encyclopedia.com
Google Books: Counterfeiting in Colonial America, Kenneth Scott 1957
www.revolutionarywararchives.org
MentalFloss.com

Town of Greenfield History

By Ron Feulner, Town Historian – 2016



Kilmer's Water-Powered Sawmill, Middle Grove

The Town of Greenfield is a rural township that stretches from the edge of Saratoga Springs northwesterly about twelve miles toward Lake Desolation, consisting of more than 41,000 acres. It occupies a wide shallow valley between two fault block mountain ranges (the Kayaderosseras Range to the west and the Palmerton Range to the east), and is representative of the rolling foot hills of the southern Adirondacks. It has two primary water features, Lake Desolation and the Kayaderosseras Creek.

Before Europeans came to the area, it was wilderness and of little interest to Native Americans except as a hunting and fishing destination. They preferred to build their towns and villages along the more fertile lands of the Mohawk and Hudson River valleys where river travel also allowed for trade and more freedom of movement.

As the English came to North America in greater numbers, they built towns and cities along the Atlantic coast and eventually began to push their way inland, at first, spreading up major valleys like those of the Connecticut and Hudson. Wealthy English investors saw opportunity in obtaining large tracts of frontier land from the Native Americans which could be subdivided and sold to land hungry immigrants. One of these land deals involved a huge tract of wilderness which stretched from the Mohawk River, east to the Hudson, and north past the Sacandaga Valley. It included more than four-hundred-thousand acres and represented most of what would one day become Saratoga County as well as parts of surrounding counties.

The Kayaderosseras Patent, as the purchase was called, turned out to be an extremely complicated deal which took nearly sixty years to complete and then only with the help of Sir William Johnson who negotiated a settlement between the Mohawk Indians and the English investors.

Shortly thereafter, the American Revolution prevented the patent from being settled, but it did allow some of the Americans who fought in the Battle of Saratoga to become aware of the land. Following the Revolution, the area was at last ripe for settlement. Some of the earliest families like the Morehouses, Deakes (Dakes), Scotts, Reynolds, and Fitches were attracted to the area either because of the potential water power of the Kayaderosseras Creek (which powered sawmills and gristmills) or the affordability of the wilderness land. The rich and productive land along the Mohawk and Hudson Rivers was already priced beyond the means of most farmers.

As more families came, the land was quickly cleared for agriculture, and soon the larger farms began to be subdivided into smaller ones. With increasing population, political boundaries were established and adjusted. Saratoga County was formed in 1791, and was further divided into townships. At first the Town of Greenfield did not exist but after the original larger towns were divided and new boundaries

established, what we now recognize as the Town of Greenfield (geographically the largest town in Saratoga County) came into existence in 1801. (It was most likely named after Greenfield, Connecticut where some of the early inhabitants had come from.) Many of the places and roads in the town are named after early settlers and town leaders.

By the nineteenth and early twentieth century, most of the town had been cleared for agriculture. Several industries, including the Mount Pleasant Glass Factory (which made bottles for Saratoga spring water), a graphite mine and mill near Porter Corners, several saw mills, and a paper mill in Middle Grove added to the local economy. To service this industry and provide transportation for the residents, including high school students who attended Ballston Spa High School, a trolley line was built between Ballston Spa and Middle Grove and operated until 1929.

By the time World War One ended, most of the industry was gone from the town except for the saw mills, and young men had a limited career choice between farming and wood chopping. Life on the many small farms was almost self-sufficient, and the few items they needed could be purchased at the small general stores that existed in each of the hamlets.

As travel by automobile became viable, life began to change rapidly. Roads were improved and young men had a choice of either staying on the farm or commuting to Corinth or Schenectady where industry was booming and well-paying factory work could provide amenities that farm life could not. One by one, the small farms began to show signs of abandonment. Fields lay fallow, and wild blackberry bushes, pine, and poplar seedlings began to erase the hard work of the early settlers who had blasted and pulled stumps to clear the land.

During the 1950s and '60s, the Northway was built connecting the Capital District with the North Country. Improved cars and better roads made it possible for people to live in places like the Town of Greenfield and work in ever more distant locations. The old farms were now more valuable as home building sites and subdivisions became so common that zoning laws had to be adopted to protect the quality of housing, while nature continued reclaiming the old hay fields. Today, the Town of Greenfield consists of nearly 4,000 parcels, of these, 2,700 are residential, 1,000 vacant (woodland), and the rest commercial, state owned, or municipal.

Currently, the Town of Greenfield is a residential town of nearly 8,000 people with beautiful homes, winding country roads, and a lot of green space. Scattered across the town are four small picturesque hamlets, each consisting of little more than a cross roads and cluster of homes. They are Greenfield Center, Porter Corners, Middle Grove, and Maple Avenue.

Sixteen working farms (mostly for horses) and a few hobby farms along with several small industries (like sand, gravel, and rock mining along with logging operations that market the mature timber that now grows where farm fields once produced hay and grain) still exist. The only hint of Greenfield's vast agricultural past are the miles of stone wall fences that crisscross the forests.



Dairy Farm, Greenfield Center

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 _____



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