The Town of Greenfield

September 2016

Historical Society Newsletter

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

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

Volume 17, Issue 1 Find us on Facebook **501(c)(3)** **www.GreenfieldHistoricalSociety.com**

CALENDAR

Sept. 20 – ***Tuesday, Pot Luck Dinner before the meeting/program,*** at the Community Center in Greenfield Center. *Dinner starts at 5:30 p.m.* Bring a dish to pass and your own place setting. *Meeting starts at 7 p.m.* **Program:** ***Marty Podskoch*** will speak about a book he wrote on **Adirondack Stories.**

Oct. 1 – ***Saturday, HISTORICAL SOCIETY FUNDRAISING GALA AT BROOKHAVEN GOLF COURSE – The Haven Tee Room*** **– 5:30 to 9 p.m.** (see invitation on page 3).

Oct. 18 – Tuesday, meeting 7 p.m. at the Community Center in Greenfield Center. **Program:** ***Jay Ellsworth*** will speak about the **Greenfield Volunteer Fire Co.,** covering its history and what they are doing now.

Nov. 15 – Tuesday, meeting 7 p.m. at the Community Center in Greenfield Center. **Program:** ***Jim Richmond*** will talk about his book that is coming out this fall, **War on the Middleline.** He will speak about the Revolutionary War in Saratoga County after the Battle of Saratoga, local militias and the British raid along the Middleline Road in Ballston in October 1780.

You don't have to be a member to attend, admission to our meetings/programs is free and refreshments are served.

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, will be dropped from the mailing list.

Our Newest LIFETIME MEMBERS
Cheryl Payer and **Ronald & Margaret Barcomb**

BACK TO SCHOOL

by Mary Vetter

While thinking about the September newsletter, I was reminded that all over this country and including here in Greenfield, kids would be beginning their first day of school or returning for the first day of another year and it gave me pause.

I thought about how different this school experience would be from the school experience of children 50, 60 or 70 years ago. So I decided to ask a couple of people at the Town Historian's office to reminisce about their early educational experience.

Ron Feulner, our town historian, started school in 1943, a full year younger than he should have because the girl next door convinced his mother that she would look after him. I doubt that there is a school superintendent alive today that would allow a parent to do that. He attended the Middle Grove School on Cemetery Hill. It was a one room school where grades 1 through 8 learned their lessons. The district could use the land as long as the school remained operational. Once the school closed, the land would revert to the cemetery. Ron recalled that in later years former students bought plots right on the site of the old schoolhouse.

Water for the school was brought up from the pump at Wilbur Barney's house. At the school a metal dipper was used to fill paper cups with water. The school was heated by a large wood stove that was surrounded by a heat shield to prevent burns. Off the cloak room a single chemical toilet made up the sanitary facilities. The paper cups represented a step up from the common water dipper described by Clayton H. Brown on page 40 of his book "Greenfield Glimpses."

The shenanigans of three hooligans, just waiting to turn 16 so they could ditch school all together, conspired to make Ron's first year of school miserable. In one incident, the teacher felt that everyone had behaved and left the school to go into town to buy all the students Eskimo Pies. While he was gone, the older kids soaped the windows and created some damage in the schoolroom. When the teacher returned, he forgot the treats and set the students to

cleaning up the room. The forgotten pies melted in his car. In contrast to what might happen today, no criminal charges were brought and no one was expelled from school.

The dismal year inspired his mother to run for trustee. Some of the changes she championed brought positive changes to the little school and after that first year and with the help of a new teacher, he learned to love school. The room sported a long row of shelves full of books and Ron set a goal to read every one of those books.

Learning took place with the following practice: each grade had a lesson in the front of the room with the teacher. They were then sent back to their seats to work on assignments while another grade took a turn at the front of the room. Every student in the room not only learned their own lessons but absorbed the lessons they heard being taught around them.

Joyce (Burton) Woodard, our Deputy Town Historian, fondly remembers starting first grade at age 5 in Porter Corners. She began her first year with just three other students. It was a bigger school than the one Ron attended and grades were separated into different class rooms. Like Ron, she remembers shelves of books that she read and re-read. She also recalled listening to the lessons of other grades and absorbing those lessons. She remembers a school nurse visiting several times a year to check for head lice. Well I guess some things never change.

She wrote a lovely piece recalling her early school days in which she remembers lessons in reading, writing and arithmetic with Mrs. Lucy Ballou as her teacher. While there were no gym classes or music lessons, they did have drawing and in later grades history and some science. School parties and plays rounded out the school year. Significantly, she remembers feeling safe at school despite the war that was raging around the world. Everyone knew everyone. The children in her class were the children she played with after school. Her childhood was filled with companionship and loyalty. She never felt deprived.

So unlike yesterday's young Greenfield students, today's students probably won't be walking to school, water will likely come out of a plastic bottle not out of a pump and they will not be privy to the lessons of other grades.

Yet their school years will be filled with parties and plays. Some will struggle with hooligans in class, but like Joyce and Ron many young minds will be inspired by the dedicated teachers they meet throughout their school years.

Note: *This article and Joyce Woodard's reminiscence will be posted on our web page. Each will have a comment section so that you may leave your own memories or comment on the articles. Please share these articles with those you know who do not use the internet.*

Website: www.greenfieldhistoricalsociety.com

HISTORIAN'S CORNER

by Ron Feulner

Where has the summer gone? Keeping busy makes time fly, but since we only get to experience so much time on this earth, I don't know if this is a good thing or not.

The historian's office in Town Hall continues to be open every Wednesday, where I, along with my volunteers, keep busy answering requests that come in via e-mails, letters, phone calls, and people just dropping in. When not doing research for people, we stay busy with a number of different projects most of which are designed to organize the historical documents and photographs that we have in such a way that they will be easier to find information in. This usually involves creating searchable data bases on our computers. Someday in the distant future, we may reach a point where we can make some of this information available online, but for now organization is the key.

I have also been working with the historical society, the town supervisor, Dan Pemrick, and members of the Kilmer family hoping to preserve all or parts of the water powered mill that is on their property on Lake Desolation Road. The mill is still intact except for a water supply (the dam and pond that supplied the water originally has long since gone out and filled in with silt).

The mill was operated by Guy Kilmer (Jud Sr.'s father) from sometime in the 1930s until the 1960s when Guy retired and Jud Sr. took over and built a new diesel powered mill adjacent to the old one. That mill is now gone, but the old mill still remains.

I am interested in preserving the mill because it represents the reason why Greenfield was settled in the first place. The Kayaderosseras and its many tributaries represent the primary water feature in the Town of Greenfield (Lake Desolation being the second) and, as such, it was attractive to the first white settlers who were looking for places where they could build sawmills and grist mills which were necessary to start communities. Gershom Morehouse, a millwright, was the first to build a mill near the lower bridge in Middle Grove, and soon after, many more followed until water powered mills were found up and down the stream. Don Young once told me that, "The Kayaderosseras was the biggest dammed stream around."

Since the Kilmer mill is the last surviving water powered mill in the town, that we know of, I, as historian, would very much like to see it saved. I am very hopeful, at this point, that the town and the Kilmer family can work something out that will make this possible. The Kilmer family has a long history of supporting the historical society and the history of the town, which leads me to hope that the many complicated details accompanying a project like this might get worked out.

I am also investigating the possibility of adding additional historical signs to denote the many historical sites that we have in the town. I hope to have more information on this that I can share with you in future issues.

I hope to see you at the historical society's annual bring a dish-to-pass dinner and first meeting scheduled for Sept. 20. I hope you can make it since it will be our first meeting with our new president, Mary Vetter. Mary has already been busy behind the scenes working with me in the historian's office as an invaluable volunteer and running the historical society. She has already held her first board meeting which was successful in taking care of a whole host of issues before the board, and now she will conduct her first general meeting. I hope you will make an effort to attend and give her a word of encouragement and support.

You are cordially invited to attend

The Town of Greenfield Historical Society

Annual Gala

Saturday, October 1, 2016

5:30 - 9 in the evening

at

Brookhaven Golf Course "Haven Tee Room"

333 Alpine Meadows Road, Porter Corners, New York

Buffet With Cash Bar, Music, Dancing, Raffles, Door Prizes, Silent Auction, Historic Displays

Ticket Price: $25 individual / $45 per couple
R.S.V.P. by Sept. 24 to Ron Deutsch at 469-6769, mkd67@aol.com, at our website: *www.GreenfieldHistoricalSociety.com* or at the Sept. 20 Historical Society Meeting at the Community Center

Make checks payable to The Town of Greenfield Historical Society

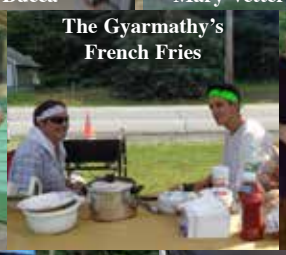
To benefit The Town of Greenfield Historical Society's Chatfield Museum of Local History and Daketown School

Seventh Caboose Day & Car Show at King's Station – August 13, 2016

The Caboose & Tony Bucca

Mary Vetter (our new president), JoAnn Rowland, Joyce Woodard, Joan Rowland & Katie Finnegan

Stan Zah & Ron Feulner, Town Historian


The Gyarmathy's French Fries

Cooks – Rob Roeckle, Louise O. & Ron Deutsch

Tom Merrills & Bob Roxbury – Fire Police

Some of the Stewart's Shops Gift Certificate Winners

Grants Cottage Display with Ben Kemp

Caboose Photographers Louise O. & Dan Chertok

2016 Car Show Participants

1. Deb & Pete Papula, 1949 Ford F1
2. Dave McConnell, 1958 Chevy Suburban
3. Gary Gedron, 1966 Chevy C-10
4. Darryl B. Delanater, 1981 Z28 Camaro
5. Wayne Pearce, 1950 Ford Club Coupe
6. Frank Lyons, 1932 Plymouth Coupe
7. Chris Disbrow, 1999 Pontiac Trans Am
8. Brian Conroy, 1970 Chevy K-5 Blazer
9. Jim Ebert, 2001 GMC Samana Quigley
10. Tom Sadlon, 1921 Ford Model T
11. Richard Bishop, 1970 Opel GT
12. Tom Clute, 1950 GMC Pickup
13. Taylor Robarge & Evan Dutcher, 1957 Willys Jeep
14. John Fura, 1963 Chevy Impala SS

PEOPLE'S CHOICE WINNER

15. Rick Hoag, 1933 Dodge

16. Karl Zeh, 1980 Chevy Camaro Z28
17. Stan Zeh, 1965 Oldsmobile Cutlass F85
18. Jim Winsman, 2012 Camaro
19. Ron Deutsch, 1981 Datsun 280xz
20. Sharon Stevens, 1956 Thunderbird
21. Joe Rapant, 1940 Packard 120/Coupe
22. Richard Darling, 1980 Chevy Camaro

People's Choice Award

Tom Clute

Farmers Market 2016

Katie Finnegan and Yvonne Major won two passes each for the Saratoga County Fair.

The Porter Corners Melody Workers 4-H Club set up a booth at our Farmers Market on July 8.

Artist, educator, scholar Adam Tinkle & guest, July 8

Kate Blain playing mellow, acoustic folk music, July 15

Bob Marcotte playing his fiddle, July 22

August 12

Van Arnum's Plants and Flowers

North Creek Studios

Goode Farm

Farmers Market 2016

West's Homegrown Produce

A new addition to the Stewarts section of our museum.

The Heritage Cafe

FATAL COLLISION AT KING'S CROSSING – 1924

by Daniel Chertok

Our Seventh Annual Caboose day was fun and lively, another successful event for our Historical Society!

One of our visitors that day was local friend Karen Gibbons, who told us a sad but compelling story about her own family going back 92 years. She provided us with some newspaper clippings of the relevant events, surrounding the tragic death of her Great Grandfather Clarence A. Hall, at the King's Crossing, just a few hundred feet from where we once again celebrated our Greenfield heritage and community, at the sight of our landmark historic artifacts: the old King's Station building and the D&H Caboose.

The lay of the land is important to this story: In 1924 the current Porter Corners road did not come into 9N where it does today, near the caboose and station house. Back then, to get from Greenfield Center from that portion of the highway between Saratoga and Corinth (or from the Green Road from Wilton), one would leave off 9N to the west, a hundred feet or so south of the overpass.

The road ascended an earthen ramp to gain the railroad grade, then curved right and in towards the tracks, before crossing and going down the hill and on towards Porter Corners on what we know to be Porter Road. In its earlier busier life, the King's station house stood atop the hill at the crossing.

Now to our subject: Clarence Hall was born in Greenfield in the late 1870s. Over his first 45 years of life, his personal success and leadership role in the community led his fellow Greenfielders to vote him in as Town Supervisor (and thus the town's representative at the county) in January 1924.

Clarence and his wife, Millie (born Millie Priscilla Brackett in 1881), had raised two children, a son and a daughter. They owned and operated the Brookside Dairy, a successful "modern" farm of 200 acres located at the corners of Locust Grove and the Greenfield-Wilton Roads (historically known as St. John's Corners, site of the historic Wayside Inn).

Here are the facts of the fatal accident and its aftermath, from the various clips Karen gave us: The Saratogian reported on Nov. 10, 1924, that Supervisor Hall died while doing his civic duty. He was reported to have been instantly killed about 1:30 in the afternoon when a "lone engine on the Adirondack Branch of the D&H Railroad struck his machine at Kings Crossing. Supervisor Hall was returning toward Porter Corners, and at the time was alone in the car."

"Just how the accident happened is not known," the paper said. With a "plain stretch of scenery in the vicinity of the accident" the local residents were at something of a loss to account for what happened. The engineer was apparently not interviewed, or at least was not mentioned in the paper.

The ticket master at Kings was first to arrive on the scene. Dr. C. T. King was summoned and determined that death was instantaneous. Acting for the coroner was M. E. Van Aernum, who directed that the body of the deceased be removed to his home.

CLARENCE A. HALL
Supervisor of the Town of Greenfield who was instantly killed this afternoon.

Shortly after the funeral, which apparently took place rather soon after the tragedy, the Town Board approached the grieving widow and asked her if she would serve as replacement to her husband's vacant office, to which she declined ("after expressing her appreciation of the honor," saying that due to "the state of her health and because of the responsibilities that would now rest upon her," she would be unable to serve).

It was also reported of Mrs. Hall that after hearing the news of her husband's sudden death, which had been "revealed to the widow in careful manner," she was "bearing the severe shock bravely."

Karen tells us the epilogue: Her Grandfather was Harold L. Hall, the son of Clarence, who was 19 when his father died. Harold helped his mother run the big farm, and later in life served in county government as coroner and County Clerk. He continued to run the farm and some years later his son, Harold C. (for his grandfather Clarence) Hall would help him. The Brookside Dairy was a successful farm until it was forced out by larger commercial operations around 1970.

Karen's Great Grandmother would eventually re-marry Mr. Gale, and would move to the house on the corner of Locust Grove and Wilton Road, where she lived out her years after Mr. Gail died. Millie died in 1970, at 89, the same year the dairy closed. Karen has good memories of her great grandmother as she was a young lady when Millie passed away.

Karen recalls her mother doing some fancy riding for her and her friends on a trick horse named Echo, who had been trained by the man who had trained the famous Trigger, of Roy Rogers fame. Karen's mom was Harold L. Hall's daughter.

Karen also tells of a tunnel, the remnants still evident today, which ran from the big house (Wayside Inn) to the house Millie lived in on the corner. It is believed this secret passage served the Underground Railroad through our town. Karen also tells of a place in the house behind the canning cupboard which would be a prime hiding place for two or three people, but which would be undetectable. There are other Underground Railroad legends in Greenfield, lending credence to each other and making us feel proud.

Karen (Davis) Gibbons paternal grandfather was Harold L. Hall, the surviving son of Clarence Hall.

Harold L. Hall had two children, Jean (Hall) Davis [Karen's mother] and Harold C. Hall.

CABOOSE DAY

by Louise Okoniewski

Despite the high heat and humidity, the threats of torrential rain and the black clouds that surrounded us all day, our 7th Caboose Day and Car Show was a success. We had 24 Classic Cars attend this event, which we appreciate as threats of rain usually keep some of the old cars at home. Both lots at King's Station were full of the Classics and visitors alike. Tom Clute does an awesome job for us working with the car guys and advertising this event. A number of our younger visitors enjoyed looking at the old cars and listening to the stories.

Tony Bucca and Mary Vetter took care of the tours of the Station and Caboose. The high humidity made it very uncomfortable for both of them, which made you wonder how it would be in the days when the trains were running. The heat, dust, smoke, the clothes that were worn in those days had to be sweltering for the railroad employees and travelers.

Ben Kemp, from Grant's Cottage in Wilton, set up a wonderful display of a Soldier's Camp in the 1860s. Ben took off his vintage wool coat that was worn by the Soldiers. He had the Soldiers tent set up, showing what supplies they would have. Ben also had vintage kids games, which despite the humidity, he played with his young visitors. I was surprised that the kids wanted to play these games. Near the end of the day, Ben gave a wonderful demonstration of how a Soldier would shoot his musket. He stood in the sun, while everyone watched him describe how the soldier would stand and why, how the musket was loaded, and how to fire the gun, which he did.

I'd like to thank Greenfield's bakers which supplied our Bake Sale with all kinds of goodies, including homemade jams, jellies, pickles and snack bags.

Thanks to Robert Roxbury and the Greenfield Fire Police who kept the parking organized. And a special thanks to all the people who visit this event each year and those who are just passing by.

We have some plans for the Station for next year's event. We look forward to seeing you Aug. 17, 2017!

The Twinkles of the Night

by Fran Lambert

I sit in my white metal chair, and watch the fireflies twinkle over the lawn, and then visit and hover over my garden, and suddenly race to the field where their home is.

I view the sky, as the sun has already set, and I see the dark grayish clouds float in before a pinkish sky background.

The clouds keep getting darker and darker, and then a gentle breeze from the south-east races across my face, to tell me that night time has arrived.

I feel the calmness of the approaching night, and marvel at its peacefulness.

Then there is the occasional mosquito to interrupt the whole scene with his honed in accuracy upon my arm I swat, and then ignore this little creature, as I don't want to be disturbed from this beautiful scene.

I've already given my farewells to my friends on the internet, and now is the time for me to revel in Nature's abundant beauty at night time.

As I sit in this calm atmosphere, I await the night creatures' sounds from the distance.

Many other times on an occasion such as this I would hear the hooting of an owl, or the cries of the coyotes, and their new offspring.

But, this night, all is calm and peaceful and quiet.

So, as I enjoy this peace, I find a treasure trove of thoughts as I view the little ones twinkling in the night time field.

I wonder what do they do all the day long as they must be alert for the night "lighting show"?

I am not disappointed as they seem to calmly float through the air to their respective places, and I am happy to have been witness to this sweet spectacle of night-time wonder.

Our Booth at the Saratoga County Fair, July 2016.

For the September Pot Luck Dinner at 5:30 p.m., please bring a dish to pass and your own place setting.

Janet Jones, Refreshment Chairperson

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: Start or renew your membership today **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 the wording describing who you would like it dedicated to and/or sponsored by. Please send articles and/or photos to: JJones18215@roadrunner.com.

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Historical Society
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