



Historical Society Newsletter

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

Volume 17, Issue 3



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www.GreenfieldHistoricalSociety.com

CALENDAR

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.

Dec. 11 – Sunday, Christmas Party, 1-3 p.m. at the IOOF Hall/Museum in Middle Grove. Please bring cookies/desserts to share/sell. **Theme:** Santa.

Jan. 17, 2017 – Tuesday, meeting 7 p.m. at the Community Center in Greenfield Center. **Program:** *Andrea Mann* will speak about growing up in Greenfield and the children's book she wrote, **A Letter From Ginger Boy**, which is the true story of a girl and her horse growing up in the Adirondack foothills, circa 1964.

March 21, 2017 – Tuesday, meeting 7 p.m. at the Community Center in Greenfield Center. **Program:** *Lauren Roberts*, our county historian, will do a presentation on **The Homestead – Saratoga County's Tuberculosis Sanitarium**.

April 18, 2017 – Tuesday, meeting 7 p.m. at the Community Center in Greenfield Center. **Program:** *Dave Fiske* will talk about a new book he has written, **Solomon Northup's Kindred: The Kidnapping of Free Citizens Before the Civil War**.

May 16, 2017 – Tuesday, meeting 7 p.m. at the Community Center in Greenfield Center. **Program:** *Marty Podskoch* will speak about a book he wrote on **Fire Towers**.

Everyone is welcome, admission is free, you don't have to be a member to attend and refreshments are served after all programs.

Our October Meeting and The Greenfield Fire District

by Mary Vetter

We had a great turnout at our October meeting. We learned that repairs to the Daketown School House were underway thanks to Mike Gyarmathy and that Rob Roeckle was proceeding with ordering storm windows for the Chatfield Museum. JoAnn Rowland had the pleasure of announcing the wonderful fund raising total for the Gala. We made over \$7,000 due to the generosity of our community and the hard work of our members. Thanks to Ron Deutsch for being the coordinating force behind the Gala. Everyone who worked on the event should be proud of the lovely evening that all the attendees enjoyed.

We hope to see you at our annual Christmas Party on December 11 from 1 to 3 p.m. at the Chatfield Museum.

If you are interested in a live wreath for the holidays, please contact Joan Rowland.

Our meeting was concluded with a presentation by members of the Greenfield Fire District. Jay Ellsworth, Deputy Chief for Middle Grove, Justin Burwell, District Chief and Stephanie Burwell, Firefighter from the Porter Corners Fire Company did a great job giving us a sense of the history of the district and a terrific understanding of where the district is now.

What began as a small endeavor in 1947 has become a large well-coordinated effort that is up to the task of protecting our town while keeping the safety of its firefighters and officers front and center.

The first fire houses were organized and built primarily with donated land and buildings. Additions were sometimes done with the money and labor of the firefighters living in each community. The firefighters bought their own personal equipment and fought fires in adverse conditions that sometimes tested the mechanical abilities of the equipment on the fire trucks and the ingenuity of the firefighters themselves. These early

members created a dedicated district that has served this town well.

As time marched on, so did the district. Today four companies that were largely independent have united forces to make sure that every call in every part of our town is answered with well-equipped and trained firefighters who can make the most of the well-equipped vehicles that are tailored to take on many types of calls that come in.

The video of this presentation will be available on our web page, under the “View This” tab: www.GreenfieldHistoricalSociety.com/. You also can learn more about the fire district at their web site: www.GreenfieldFD.org/.



Left: Jay Ellsworth, Deputy Chief for Middle Grove; Justin Burwell, District Chief and Stephanie Burwell, Firefighter from the Porter Corners Fire Company

Greenfield Memories Preserved

We are looking for people who are interested in setting up a program to preserve the oral history of our town. Elizabeth Conant has offered some of her studio space for this project. There is a lot to decide; from naming the project, to defining its goals, to deciding on a focus for each recording event. These stories can center on a significant event in a person’s life or can be broader to give the listener a sense of how life was lived in a particular period of time.

If you are interested in working with us, please contact Mary Vetter at mvetter@nycap.rr.com.

Museum Clean Up

We are looking for volunteers to help spruce up the museum this fall. If you have any time to spare for this project, please let us know. Email Mary Vetter at mvetter@nycap.rr.com.

If you haven't paid your dues for the 2016 - 2017 year, please mail your check or go online and pay by credit card.

Thank You

HISTORIAN'S CORNER

by Ron Feulner

Those of you, who are my age, know that the world was a different place when we were young. Technologies that younger people take for granted today were either non-existent or in a more primitive form. I remember that we had a telephone on the small table in the middle room next to the platform rocker, but it was seldom used. Local calls were difficult to make because you were on a party line and several other families competed for the line. Long distance calls were only made in an emergency or to inform a family member of a death (or near death) in the family.

One big difference that I have observed is that back then, we always answered the phone when it rang. Today, we are over-run with technology, but try to get a family member to answer their phone. I would estimate that about one-in-ten calls to our grandchildren are answered. Instead, we usually have to leave a message and wait for a return call that may or may not come.

We recently had an opportunity to see how this takes place with our twenty-five year old grandson. We had driven out to Cooperstown area where we have a number of family members and friends. It was one of those last minute decisions on a beautiful Sunday morning, so we thought we would take pot-luck and visit whomever we could find home. (That’s the way it was almost always done in the old days. You seldom called ahead before making a visit – you just dropped in.)

On this particular Sunday, we arrived in Cherry Valley in late morning, and as we approached the apartment building where our grandson lives, I told Alice, “We had better use our cell phone and call him before going up to his apartment.” I pulled off to the side of the street and fumbled for the phone in my pocket and dialed his number. As the phone began to ring, I looked up and at the other end of the street, I saw him crossing, going toward the coffee shop on the corner. As we watched, he took his phone out of his pocket, looked to see who was calling and then slid it back in his pocket and continued toward the coffee shop. I quickly drove down the street and intercepted him before he went inside.

Using a telephone was such a big deal when we were young. I remember that it was an adult-only-tool, and although I cannot remember the first time I made a call by myself, I believe that I must have been at least a teenager. Today, toddlers are using technology before they can walk or talk. It is no wonder that they are sick of answering calls.

With all the advertising and robo-calls that we now receive, I am gradually learning the technique of not answering my calls either, but it sometimes makes me wonder if we haven’t experienced too much of a good thing regarding technology.

Town of Greenfield Fire District



At our October meeting, members of the Greenfield Volunteer Fire Companies talked about its history and what they are doing now. The Town of Greenfield Fire District started in 1947 with four trucks (top left). They now have 118 active members covering 82 square miles and 10,000+ residents throughout Greenfield Center, Middle Grove, Porter Corners and Maple Avenue.

Town of Greenfield Farmers Market 2016



Matt Memmelaar and Maggie the dog enjoying the music of Dan Berggren at the Farmers Market



Middle Grove Firefighter Matthew Petkus and future Firefighter Hunter Ball

There is a Heaven for Volunteers

Author Anonymous

Many will be shocked to find,
 When the day of judgement nears,
 That there's a special place in Heaven,
 Set aside for volunteers.

Furnished with big recliners,
 Satin couches and footstools,
 Where there's no committee chairman,
 No group leaders, no car pools,
 No eager team that needs a coach,
 No bazaar and no bake sale,
 There will be nothing to staple,

Not one thing to fold or mail,
 But a finger snap will bring,
 Cool drinks and gourmet meals,
 And rare treats fit for a king.

You ask, "Who'll serve those privileged few
 And work for all they're worth?
 Why – all those who reaped the benefits
 And **Not Once**
 Volunteered on Earth!!!

Supplied by JoAnn Rowland

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

Three Families Cronkhite/Kubish/Bouchard

By John R. Greenwood



Merritt Cronkhite House – Built around 1834-1835, occupied by the Cronkhite's into the early 1900s.

My visit to my mother's (Kubish) family home in January 2016 was a wonderful start to the new year. Not only did it revitalize my desire to write it also gave me immense satisfaction knowing the feel and integrity of the home and property had remained intact for over 180 years. The Bouchard's were gracious hosts by opening their home to me that day. They have a large family of their own and they know the value of, "the sense of place." The sense of place the Bouchard's home and property possess encompasses many generations but really only three families. As I dug deeper and deeper into the history of the home, property and the town itself, the more precious that sense of place became to me. I didn't think that was possible. I was wrong.

When Ray and I first spoke back in January he told me about a visit he had back in 1967. It was just months after they'd moved in. An elderly woman showed up at the house and said she had some information they might like. The woman's name was Ida C. Standerwick. She was a Cronkhite and had been born on the property. Her father was Rueben Cronkhite and her grandfather was Merritt Cronkhite. She provided the Bouchards a wealth of information about the property and her experiences growing up there. Ray emailed me some photographs and a letter that he had retyped from a handwritten letter she'd sent him after her visit on 1967. I was like a child opening a Christmas package when I saw what Ray had sent me. The photograph of the Cronkhites standing in front of the home that held so many great family memories was a true gift to the heart. It was then that I realized how significant connecting with Ray and Carolyn had been. It clarified many things for me. I think everyone reading this will be able to identify with them.

This piece is not about genealogy, it's about more than that. I love family history and the information I assembled in the last few days has been a gratifying experience. The Cronkhites are not relatives. They built the home my grandparents would later own; the place where my mother called home; the place where her five siblings would live



Very early photograph of the original tree-lined Cronkhite driveway. Ida Standerwick gifted the photo to the Bouchard's when she visited them in 1967.

until they began families of their own. This piece is about how important it is to have something to connect to. I was barely 10 when I'd last been on this property. Those were simpler times and the memories hung with me for a lifetime. My recent visit refreshed them and made them all the more valuable. This piece is about reconnecting with something you thought you'd never see again. I was fortunate enough to have someone open a door that allowed me re-entry into the physical past. Relocating a remote cemetery, seeing an old shed covered in its original garb, seeing the rock covered hill that seemed mountain-like as a child, all swirled together to remind me how lucky I was to have lived a life full of so many great memories.

The second point I'd like to make is how important it is to act upon your instincts. Don't be stifled by the fear of the unknown. I think of all the years I drove past the long driveway leading to the old farm, too afraid or too busy to pull in and just knock on a door. It wasn't as though Ray was a stranger. I knew who he was. He'd been a teacher of mine. He was known for his generous and helpful nature. This is just one of those things you say, "someday" to over and over again. You would think in a 50 year span I could have made someday, that day.

If you have an old friend you keep planning to contact or an old place you keep meaning to return to, don't wait another day. Get on your bike, get in your car, grab your sneakers, get a plane ticket, most of all get moving. Don't sit idle waiting for memories to come to your door. Get out there and create a new one. I've become inspired by my new found friends Ray and Carolyn. Their kindness will have a long-lasting affect on me and my future adventures.

I asked Ray if he minded me sharing the letter Ida C. Standerwick had sent him. He never hesitated for a second, he encouraged me to use anything he'd shared. I was fascinated by the letter and the information it contained. I will insert it here.



Late 1940s early 1950s: My father Ralph Greenwood and my grandparents Joseph and Johanna Kubish. I called my grandparents Baba and Zedo.

Merritt Cronkhite Home

Merritt Cronkhite built the house about 1834-1835. It was well constructed, the cellar with it's thick walls was immune to frost. Bricks lined the walls to add protection from the cold. I think the cistern was not built until the house had a slate roof. I do not know it's date. The cellar had rows of bins for storage of potatoes and apples, the winter vegetables of carrots and squash. We had a variety of apples called, "Rusty Coats" that lasted until the early variety, "Astrakhan" came in early July, so we were never without apples. My father sold the first quality apples for table use, others were taken to a cider mill, converted into cider, then stored in the cellar where it became vinegar, which found a market in grocery stores in town. There were also shelves to hold a supply of canned fruit, jellies, preserves, and pickles.

The original layout of the house was changed somewhat after my grandfather passed away. The stairs went up from the back hall, and a bed sink or recess was removed from the living room and a closet built in it's place, and the stairs turned around going up from the front hall. The back hall became a kitchen. A small bedroom opened from the living room. The original chimney had a fireplace with crane, pot hooks, and hand irons. We took them with us when we left the farm, and eventually they were installed in our home that my husband and I built on Staten Island, living in it 42 years until we came to Ossining in 1958. The mantlepiece in the parlor is the handiwork of my grandfather, as well as the woodwork under windows, baseboards, and doors. The porch was added at the time of other changes.

The yard on the south side of the house called, the front yard, had many old-fashioned flowers, peonies, bee balm, flowering current, phlox, both pink and white, a bed of ribbon grass are some that I remember. Under the parlor windows were old fashion double roses various shades of pink, there were two lovely trees, one a balsam, the other a spruce. There was also a pear tree that bore pears that ripened in the winter, stored in the cellar.

In the picture you can see a wee bit of picket fence built around the yard. My mother always had a flower bed in the yard near the porch.

At the end of the lane approaching the house, were three large willow trees. As one turned up the hill toward the house there was big butternut tree on the right. In the picture you can see it's branches and the rock on which I spent happy hours, my play house. The well was at the foot of the hill on the left as you went up the hill to

the house. Water was drawn by bucket on a chain, turned by a handle. One could see the bottom of the well where water came in through a rock. It was never dry. I do not know the present source of water supply. There was a spring on the left hand side of the lane as you leave the main highway, source of a small brook. East of the butternut tree were several black walnut trees. We let the squirrels have them, but we enjoyed the butternuts. Near this group of trees were two buildings, one a shop which had all sorts of tools, including some kind of a contraption used to mend harnesses. Nearby stood a grindstone for sharpening the farm tools, especially the scythes and axes.

The other building housed the swine in winter time. It had a chimney and a big iron kettle used to cook provisions for the pigs. The kettle was used for the making of soft soap. In the summer time the pigs were moved to an outdoor location beyond the barns, near the corn crib. The corn crib was built with air space between the upright boards and was set on posts two or three feet above ground to provide ample airspace. After corn had been cut and husked, the corn was stored in the crib. One other important building was a small smoke house near the shop. It was quite tightly built, had a small door, inside in the center was an iron kettle in which a smoldering fire of corn cobs and hickory wood was built to provide the smoke to cure the hams, bacon, and slabs of beef for "dried" beef.

In the picture, the building parallel with the house was a long building with an open shed at one end for storage of implements and farm wagons, midsection was the woodshed and the portion at the right also had a chimney and facilities for cooking and a brick oven for baking bread. This was used in the summertime- (No air conditioning or electric fans in the "good old days"). A stairway led to space for storage of smaller farm tools, odds and ends of lumber.

The picture also shows a bit of the "carriage house" where ordinary wagons for business and pleasure were kept. The barns were built in the form of a right angle. One portion had stables for horses and storage for hay and grain. The other portion had stables for the cows with space overhead for more hay. West of the barns and adjacent to them was an orchard of apples and peaches. Beyond the orchard were three fields separated by stone walls. These were cultivated, oats, corn, buckwheat in rotation. There were several trees bearing chestnuts on the north side bordering on the wooded section of pines. There was a large boulder in the woods. It must still be there. We called it "The jumping off place." These woods had an abundance of spring flowers, trailing arbutus, wild orchids, and trillium among those I recollect. The ground was covered by a creeping vine, "evergreen" we called it, but I think it was princess pine, not sure, also there was a carpet of wintergreens with berries so pleasant to eat.

The fields on each side of the lane past the little cemetery were under cultivation, potatoes, garden vegetables mostly. Near the brook marsh marigolds grew in early spring. We called them cowslips and gathered them to cook like spinach, leaves and blossoms too. With the exception of two fields, land on both sides of the highway east extended to the property line of the next farm home for many years of Mr. Hawkins. On south side of the highway were meadows and more woods, much being hardwoods, maples, etc... In all there were more than two hundred acres. A large area

north of the cemetery plot was the pasture for the cows. Maple trees grew along the lane and elsewhere here and there. In springtime they were tapped and the sap made into syrup or sugar.

August 1967 – Ida C. Standerwick

The week after my visit I found this same letter and additional information downstairs in the archives of the Greenfield Historical Society. Historian Ron Feulner showed me all the Cronkhite information he had on record. I didn't have enough time to investigate all of it. It will take another visit. I can't wait.



Three Families Memories – Pick a Generation

The letter simply added more interest to my search. I could remember the fruit and apple trees, the bins in the cellar, the wide variety of plants and flowers that surrounded the house and yard. Ida and her memories, along with mine and the Bouchard's all ran together in this wonderful tapestry of an old farm and the land that it sat on. What a gift it was to be able to enjoy it once more. Like a vintage wine that sat undisturbed for decades, I was able to pop the cork and relive the sights, smells, and sounds of a '50s childhood.

Ida C. Standerwick was born on the Cronkhite property April 23, 1880. She died in May 1973 at the age of 93. She was a school teacher who lived and worked in Staten Island, N.Y. I found her listed in the book of: Proceedings of the Continental Congress of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, Volume 25, April 17 - 22, 1916.

The poem below along with other valuable Cronkhite history was found in the "Brief Genealogy of the Cronkhite Family" by Leora Mae Greene Hildenbrand.

"Leaf after leaf drops off, flower after flower,
some in the chill, some in the warmer hours;
alive they flourish, and alive they fall,
and earth who nourished them receives them all.
Should we, her wiser sons, be less content to sink
into her lap when life is spent?"

"Aye thus it is, one generation comes, another goes
and mingles with the dust, and thus we come and go,
filling up some little space- and thus we disappear
in quiet succession, and it shall be so till time
in one vast perpetuity be swallowed up."

Walter Savage Landor



1951 – "Happy Days" – My father, Ralph, holding my sister, Joanne; my aunt and uncle, Anne and Steve Pasek; my grandparents, Joseph and Johanna Kubish; seated is my mother, Helen, holding my cousin, Henry Ebert.

This story will continue I promise. I plan to revisit the Bouchard's soon.

**Note: If any of the information I've shared is in correct or incomplete I apologize. I do my best to get it right. Much of what I share is done from memory, and time and distance have a way of clouding the clearest mind. In that regard I'm at a severe disadvantage. I welcome any feedback that might aid the accuracy of my accounts.*

John R. Greenwood, Feb. 10, 2016

What do you know?

Over the years, the Town Historians Office and the Society have been receiving photos of places and people in the Town of Greenfield. Some come saying a lot about the place, time and people but some come in without a voice. We are hoping you will take a moment to view these photos and tell us what you know about them. You can contact Ron Feulner at the Town Historian Office. The first picture (left) is from our Porter Corners Photo Album and the second picture (right) is from our Middle Grove Photo Album.



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 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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