



Historical Society Newsletter

OFFICERS: President, Mary Vetter; Vice President, Joan E. Rowland;
Secretary, Patti Veitch; Treasurer, JoAnn Rowland;

TRUSTEES: Ron Deutsch, Ron Feulner, John Greenwood, Mike Gymarthy,
Louise Okoniewski, Robert Roeckle, and Patty Schwartzbeck

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

Volume 22, Issue 9



501(c)(3)

email toghistsoc@gmail.com
www.GreenfieldHistoricalSociety.com

*THIS NEWSLETTER IS DEDICATED TO MILDRED M. BRILL (1912-2007),
DAUGHTER OF ROY H. AND BESSIE (MCKNIGHT) ORMSBEE FROM HER CHILDREN.*

CALENDAR

Sunday, May 15 — Clean Up Day, noon to 2 p.m., Chatfield Museum of Local History and Carriage House, Middle Grove

Tuesday, May 17 — meeting at 7 p.m. at the Community Center in Greenfield. **Program:** *Author Patricia A. Nugent* will discuss her book *Before They Were Our Mothers: Voices of Women Born Before Rosie Started Riveting*. Have you ever thought, "Why didn't I ask my mother more questions about her life before me?" If so, you will want to read this 15 story anthology written by daughters in their mother's voice. A perfect Mother's Day gift for anyone. (See page 3)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Fridays, June 17-Sept. 16, Farmers Market, 4 to 7 p.m.
Middle Grove United Methodist Church Parking Lot,
Information tent, 50/50, old photos, books for sale

Fridays, July 8-Aug. 26, Chatfield Museum Open, 4 to 6 p.m.
July 19-24, Saratoga County Fair – TOGHS Booth in the Townley Building

Saturday, Aug 6, Music in the Park, 6 to 8 p.m. with Family Movie at 8:15 p.m. at Middle Grove Town Park

Saturday, Aug. 13, Caboose Day and Car Show, 10 to 3 p.m.
Kings Station, Corner of Route 9N and Porter Road, Porter Corners. Station and Caboose open to visitors, Car Show, Crafters; hot dogs, hamburgers, and baked goods for sale.

Saturday, Sept. 10, Town Wide Garage Sale, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Carriage House behind Chatfield Museum of Local History, Middle Grove, selling some antiques and treasures.

Saturday, Nov. 5, TOGHS Gala – The View at Brookhaven (Golf Course), 333 Alpine Meadows Road, Porter Corners, more details to come.

Everyone is welcome, admission is free, and you don't have to be a member to attend.

A Note From the Editor About Future Newsletters

We are increasing the number of newsletters we send out by email. We will send a newsletter to everyone whose email address we have on file. Email copies will be in color, mailed copies will be black and white.

If you still want a copy mailed to you through the Post Office or if you have updated contact information, please contact me at jjones18215@roadrunner.com or mail it to Janet Jones, 213 Ash Street, Corinth, NY 12822, or just tell me if you see me.

MAY NOTES 2022

by Joan E. Rowland, Acting President

SNOW – This late? It was April 18 at 8:17 p.m. when high winds came through. My neighbors heard the train sounds. One of the pine trees in the trailer park at the south end of Ormsbee Road got caught up in this heavy wind and a huge limb came off, took power lines and transformer with it. Some of the tree landed on a trailer. Our power was out until the next afternoon. April 19 when we got up, we found around 4" of snow on the ground in Porter Corners but Lake Desolation was worse with 11" (higher elevation).

Talking to Justin Burwell, highway superintendent, he said Mark Young (long time highway employee) had commented that this was the latest plowable snowstorm that he remembers. I looked on web for top 10 snowstorms in April in Albany area: 4/9-10/1979 at 7.6", 4/10/1974 at 11.3", 4/9/2000 at 13.3" and 4/6-7/1982 at 13.3". Maybe Mark was not around the area for 4/19/1983 with 8.8" or maybe it did not happen in our area, just Albany Airport – it happens. When you cross the big bridge on the Northway, their weather can be totally different.

We finally had Saratoga Plan at our meeting, and it was worth the wait. Alex Fylypovych, community engagement manager from Saratoga Plan and Casey Holzworth previously from Saratoga Plan, now working for the State; tag teamed the presentation of the various trails available for hiking, biking, strolling. Will Aldrich (who lived down the road where Brookside Dairy Farm was located), also spoke about the trail where he has been a volunteer, working to get it passable. A mention of the 800 year old trees perked my attention. I may just have to get in shape enough to walk to see them. All the trails that are open, can be found on Saratoga Plan's website. Go have fun in the great outdoors.

Our next meeting is May 17, 2022. Program: Author Patricia A. Nugent will discuss her book, *Before They Were Our Mothers*. We will have election of officers and the annual budget will be presented for approval. Come be one of the voting members. We need 11 members present to take a vote. That doesn't seem like many but with Covid still lingering, attendance has been lower than usual.

Annual Dues is due June 1. JoAnn, our treasurer will be at the meeting May 17 if you wish to drop off your dues. This will be our last business meeting until September. Hope you all have a nice summer and stop in to our summer events.

HISTORIAN'S CORNER

May 2022 — by Ron Feulner

Before I begin this week's article, I just want to say a few words about the loss of an old-time friend. Norma Hoffman died on April 1 at age 97. I knew Norma and her husband Gerald all of my life and had a great respect for both of them. In recent years, Norma was my go-to person concerning the history of Middle Grove. She had lived most of her life there and had a vivid memory of all those people and events that she had known in her many years. Not only did she have a good memory, but she was also an accomplished story teller. She made history come alive with her funny little side-stories. Rest-in-peace, Norma.

In previous issues, I have written about the Rowell family in Middle Grove and the store that they owned near the intersection of Middle Grove and Murray Roads. Moses B. Rowell was the last of his family to operate the store. The store appeared to be poorly constructed and had suffered the weathering of time along with competition from the new well-constructed Cady store next door and all of this was taking its toll on the Rowell family.

Moses B. Rowell's challenges caused him to finally give up the store. The January 17, 1905, Daily Saratogian ran a brief news article that stated, "*M.B. Rowell has rented his store in Middle Grove to the Cady Brothers [they owned the store next door] and also sold them his stock of goods. They are running but one store as the Rowell store is closed.*"

Moses B. had been diagnosed with a spot on his lung thought to be tuberculosis, which his older brother, Fenton, had died from. The long hours of working in a smoke filled store, getting little sleep, and running deeper in debt had taken its toll on the family. They had actively tried to sell the store, but there were no buyers.

Finally, they made the decision to close its doors and sell its contents to their next door competitor, Clifford Cady, and take their losses. They handed the keys over to Cady, and he eventually purchased the property on May 16, 1907. Cady then rented the living quarters in the back of the now empty Rowell store to the Morris family.

Middle Grove in the early 1900s was a typical community in upstate New York. It was a nearly self-sufficient small mill town with most dwellings having a back-yard with a barn and chicken coop and enough acreage to keep a pig, cow, and a few chickens. What couldn't be grown or made at home was readily available at the general stores in town where you could purchase parts for your horse-drawn mowing machine, or an axe, or even a pound of locally made butter.

Telephone lines had been installed as early as 1882, but most homes still did not have one. Electricity was used to power the trolley that ran from Ballston Spa through Rock City Falls and terminated on Mill Street in Middle Grove, but electricity for homes apparently didn't reach Middle Grove until 1924.

A February 18, 1924 edition of the Saratogian reads, "*The men are at work on the power line setting poles between Dunham's and Middle Grove for electricity to the homes and churches.*"

I was born in Middle Grove in 1938, and, as a child, I remember electric lights but no electrical appliances. We still pumped water at the kitchen sink by hand and made toast on the surface of the kitchen wood stove. When a little older, I can remember an electrician coming to the house and wiring a few outlets for a radio, washing machine, and my mother's iron.

Our Newest LIFETIME MEMBERS

Robert J. Flynn

TOGHS Meeting and Program – April 19, 2022



Casey Holzworth previously from Saratoga Plan, now working for the State and Alex Fylypovych, community engagement manager, from Saratoga Plan giving their presentation of the Palmertown Range.



Will Aldrich stepped up to talk about the trail that was opening in April. He is a volunteer who has been working on the trail.



Volunteers Needed for Spring Cleaning Sunday, May 15, noon to 2 p.m.

Spring Cleaning is needed at the museum. Outside work – lawn sticks, stones, brush trimming, window washing, spiders removed from doorway. Inside work – window washing, dusting, vacuuming upstairs and down.

Volunteers Needed for Museum Hours

Museum will be open Fridays, July 8 through August 26 from 4 to 6 p.m. (8 weeks total).

We will need minimum of two volunteers per day (one upstairs, one down). Please drop us an email at toghistsoc@gmail.com to sign up for a time slot. Or call Joan at 518-893-7786 (H). Any questions, feel free to ask.

NORMA G. HOFFMAN**February 15, 1925 – April 1, 2022**

Norma Hoffman died peacefully on Friday, April 1, 2022, at the age of 97 in Wake Forest, North Carolina surrounded by family. It was time. She was getting tired of hanging out with “the old people.” They have a bad attitude. Too much complaining when the fact is, every day is a good day.

It was an informed opinion. She had been hanging out with old people for the last 25 years – some of the best years of her life – in Wake Forest,

Albany, Sarasota (especially in Sarasota!), and Middle Grove. And while those around her aged (and sometimes soured), Norma flourished, and time slowed down. She didn’t look or act her age, and she brought humor, energy, a relentless positivity and just “a little bit of the devil” to all the people she met and all the places she lived.

The 12 years prior were largely spent caring for others; first her mother, Gladys Baugh, who died in 1992 and then her husband of almost 53 years, Gerald, who died in 1997. For the 40 years before that, Norma was devoted to raising the first of her two “only children,” Royann, from 1946 to 1965 and then the second, Dennis, from 1963 to 1985. During this time, Norma also worked for several employers, including Grand Union supermarkets, the U.S. Postal Service and Montgomery Ward department stores.

She and Gerald were married on September 17, 1944, not long after she graduated from Saratoga Springs High School, and the first 19 years of her life were lived in Schenectady, Rock City Falls, and Middle Grove. Norma was born the only child of Gladys and Royald Baugh on February 15, 1925.

Norma lived a simple life. Every day was greeted with a few (weak) cups of coffee and, in her later years, was capped off with a cold Coors Lite in a glass (maybe two if no-one was keeping track). And every year revolved around the Holidays – all Holidays ... but especially Christmas. Norma’s love of Christmas was infectious, and it is the best gift she gave her family. It made Christmas together the best day of all.

Her hobbies included anything that made a house a home, from plants to knick-knacks to wallpaper – boy, could she wallpaper or turning something simple, like a ball of yarn, into an heirloom-worthy present. She firmly believed almost anything could be made new again with a can of Krylon spray paint, that it was impossible to overcook a vegetable, and that any thought worth thinking was worth saying.

Norma’s passion was her family, and her power was making most who encountered her feel welcome and cared for as if they were, in that moment, one of the most important people on Earth. She was certainly that to all of us.

Norma is survived by her daughter Royann (Hoffman) Mackey and son-in-law James Mackey II, and her son Dennis and daughter-in-law Mary (Robinson) Hoffman; her grandchildren: Geri Lynn (Mackey) Aitken (John), Anne Marie (Mackey) Moriarty (Jeff), James Mackey III (Kathleen), Ryan Hoffman, Katie Rose Hoffman, Lucas Hoffman and Dylan Hoffman; and her great-grandchildren: Olivia Aitken, Patrick Moriarty, Madeleine Aitken, Jamison Moriarty, Dawson Aitken, Brendan Moriarty, James Mackey IV, Aubyn Mackey, and Anna Mackey.

Calling hours were Friday, April 8 from 5 to 7 at Armer Funeral Home, Inc. in Ballston Spa. Funeral services were Saturday, April 9 at noon at St. Paul’s Catholic Church in Rock City Falls and interment followed at Middle Grove Cemetery. In lieu of charity, Norma would want you to support your local small business and send flowers. She loved flowers – especially purple ones. Good days are even better when you get flowers.

Presenting “At Our Mother’s Knee” Honoring Women’s Voices from the Past

Tuesday, May 17th 2022 at 7 p.m., Town of Greenfield Community Center, 25 Wilton Road, Greenfield Center
Select readings from the book

“Before They Were Our Mothers”

Voices of Women Born Before Rosie Started Riveting
(As featured in the NY Times and Chicago Tribune)

Introduced by Editor Patricia A. Nugent

Featuring readings from authors:

Sue Sweet Van Hook and Joyce Hunt Bouyea

Other authors featured in the anthology are:

Carol R. Daggs

Constance A. Dodge

Cathy Fedoruk

Nadia Ghent

Zoe Ann Christensen Gonza

Crystal S. Hamelink

Rachel Z. Ikins

Donna Jackel

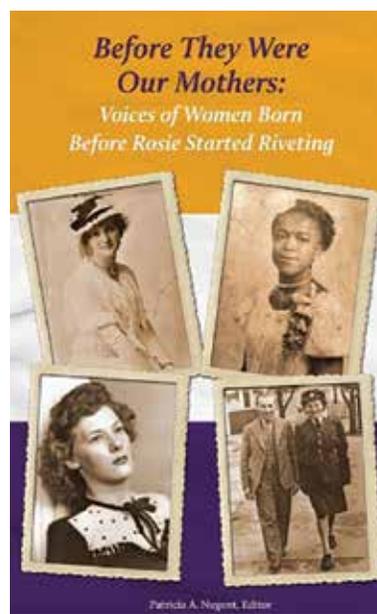
Catherine Ruggiero Lanci

Christy O’Callaghan

Josephine Pasciullo

Ginny Riedman-Dangler

Barbara J. Spaeth



Universal themes weave delicate, relatable threads through our foremothers’ lives: arranged marriages; well-meaning parents making questionable decisions; the desire for education and a career; unplanned pregnancies; the centrality of faith and religion; the need for affiliation and affirmation; healing and medical advances; the brutality of war; and the crippling effects of poverty, prejudice, and discrimination.

Thank You! Thank You!

It is the end of our fiscal year and we would like to thank everyone who shopped with Amazon. Amazon Smiles, the charity arm of Amazon, has given TOGHS \$32.89 this year.

Sincerely, JoAnn I. Rowland, Treasurer

Our membership year begins

June 1 and ends May 31, dues are paid annually.

(\$10 per household or
\$100 for Lifetime Membership)

Thanks to the refreshment volunteers for April, John Greenwood and Janet Jones. John and helpers served ice cream and snacks. May refreshment volunteers are Patti Veitch and JoAnn Rowland.

Janet Jones, Refreshment Chairperson

BLUEGRASS MEMORIES

by JoAnn Rowland

SMOKEY GREENE'S 8TH ANNUAL BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL

1980 BLUEGRASS FAMILY REUNION

AUGUST 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, - at BISHOP FARM

Porter Corners, New York

Off Route 9N, 8 Miles from SARATOGA

FEATURING

STAGE SHOWS

Wednesday 7:00 pm till Midnite
Thursday 6:00 pm till Midnite
Friday 10:00 am till Midnite
Saturday 9:00 am till Midnite
Sunday 9:00 am till 7 pm

●●● FOR TICKETS & INFORMATION ●●●
SMOKEY GREENE
Box 71, SCHUYLERVILLE, New York 12871
Telephone - 518 - 695 - 3955

○ ○ TICKETS ○ ○
Wednesday - \$3.00
Thursday - \$4.00
Friday - \$6.00
Saturday - \$6.00
Sunday - \$6.00
5 Days in Advance - \$15.00
5 Days at the Gate - \$20.00
CHILDREN UNDER 12 FREE

**Camping in the Rough, Free
with Tickets through Sunday.**

Field pickin', around the clock - Hot & Cold Food & Drink available

We get Bigger and Better each year..... Come and see why.....

:-: This is a **Festival** you can bring the whole **Family** to :-:

If you can only attend 1 FESTIVAL this year, because of the GAS SITUATION, Please make it this one.

All pets MUST be on a LEASH.....and are NOT permitted in the entertainment area.

Gospel Sing Sunday Morning

Gospel Sing Sunday Morning

Workshop Saturday 9 am till 12 noon for Guitar, Dobro, 5 String Banjo, Fiddle, Mandolin, Bass & Harmony singing.

Fred Pike (9)
Bob Paisley & So. Grass (7 8)
Bill Clifton - Red Rector (8 9 10)
Prindle Family (9 10)
Bill Harrell & The Virginians (7 8)
Don Stover & White Oak Mt. Boys (8 9 10)
Tiny Martin & Countrysiders (8 9 10)
Sam Tidwell & KVB (7 8)
Lee Moore "Coffee Drinking Nite-hawk" (7 8 9 10)
Yodelin' Slim Clark (7 8 9 10)
Kendall Morse (6 7 8 9 10)
Yankee Strings (6 7 8 9 10)
Bob & Grace & Rainbow Valley Folks (6 7 8 9 10)
Morse Brothers (9)
White Mt. Bluegrass (9 10)
Bluegrass Supply Company (9 10)
Ron Sutton & Co. (6 7 8 9 10)
Smokey Greene & Friends (6 7 8 9 10)
Crazy Al Hawks
Daddy Dick Richards
Fred Lantz
Fiddlin' Jimmy Hamblin
Al Bain
Gary Blodgett
Arlin Greene
WGNA's Nick Barr

A while ago I was looking for a recipe for rice pudding and came upon this Smokey Green Bluegrass Festival flyer being used as a bookmark. That got me thinking about those festivals. They were a half mile down the road from our farm on Ormsbee Road. We could set on our porch and hear the music. It was nice for those few days.

I remember the public water spicket across the road at the trailer park. This was just off the side of the road. You would see kids drinking from it, washing their hands or feet under it or filling jugs and buckets to take back to camp. This certainly wouldn't be an approved water supply in today's world.

One year I decided I would go down for the Sunday Gospel music. I went alone and wasn't meeting anyone. All I remember is parking in the field and taking out my folding chair. Guess I wasn't impressed.

The local Bluegrass fans had the best of both worlds, as they say. They camped with their friends, enjoyed the late night music around the campfire, then the next day, when not much was happening, they would go home shower, take a dip in the pool, or water the garden, do laundry, etc. Gather up cold or frozen food for the day and back to the field for more Bluegrass.

I am sure Mom & Pops general store did a brisk business that week. I don't think we had a Stewart's in the '80s. Bluegrass put Porter Corners on the map back in the day.

Did you ever attend? If so we would love to hear from you in next month's newsletter.

Now in 2022, there's a house in the field about where day parking was. The Thom Siragusa family now owns this property. Occasionally, this field is used for family weddings and other family parties. In about November or early December up goes this huge wood teepee ready for annual New York Eve bonfire.

Train Station New Deck

by Noah Szymanski

I am the one standing on the deck with the long hair, My friend Seth Tremper who did the stairs for his project is the other guy, he is standing on the stairs. For the one with everyone in it, there is Mr. Tremper in orange, Seth Tremper in red, Sean P. in black, Daniel Hancock in white, Mr. Fredette in blue, Ian Hancock in gray, Mr. P. in pink, my dad Mr. Szymanski also in red, and Mr. Tuck in a gray sweatshirt. All of these people are from my scout troop, Troop 4016 of Saratoga.



Photos provided by Noah Szymanski

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 \$10 for your household, 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.** Email toghistsoc@gmail.com for more information.

Click on “Store,” “Membership” then click either “Annual Membership – Household” or “Lifetime Membership.”

Please Print – Please indicate how many persons 10-years-old or older are in your household). _____ New Renewal

Name _____ I am interested in volunteering.

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 who you would like it dedicated to.

If you know someone 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 sponsored by.
Please send articles and/or photos to: JJones18215@roadrunner.com.**

Updating Historic Sites Map in the Town of Greenfield

We invite our membership and readers of this newsletter to share with Dan any historical information about an interesting person, place, structure, or event within our town. Dan reserves the right to proofread and edit submissions, but he will be very happy to add your information to our map. We are always looking for historical information to add to and enhance the map, which we consider to be an ongoing work in progress. Please email Dan Chertok at Dgchertok@gmail.com, call his cell phone (518-321-0330), or text him.



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