



Historical Society Newsletter

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

Volume 25, Issue 2



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email toghistsoc@gmail.com
www.GreenfieldHistoricalSociety.com

In Memory of Pat Finnegan *Sponsored by Katie Finnegan*

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Tuesday, Oct. 15 – 7 PM, Program:

Cultivating Corinth – A Local Agricultural History. Photos of farming practices in the Corinth area over the past 100+ years by Rachel Clothier, Corinth Historian, Greenfield Community Center.

Saturday, Oct. 26 – 1 to 4 PM, Release of Book “Greenfield History” written by Ron Feulner, Special Open House at museum.

Tuesday, Nov. 19 – 7 PM, Program: Greenfield Oral Histories 1984, Greenfield Community Center.

Sunday, Dec. 15 – 1 to 4 PM, Holiday Open House at museum. Theme is Greeting Cards.

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

Joan's Jabbering – October 2024

by Joan E Rowland, President

I just love Fall – the cool nights, warm days, the colors in our landscape changing. This year has only had a few days of rain, with the rest of the days sunny and nice. As I write this time, Helene the hurricane had made land fall as a category 3 and has had 20 feet of water hitting Florida. Going through the eastern states on up to Chicago. Asheville, North Carolina is described as an island since so many roads are flooded or destroyed. Hoping all we know are safe.

September Meeting started as our annual covered dish. Lots of great cooks and bakers in our society. We had ziti, chicken, Mexican corn, quiche, chips-n-dip, shortbread cookies, potato salad, white triple cream cake, apple crisp, just to name a few items. Hard to pick just a few items for your plate, so just load it up!

The Bencze's, Larry and Bernice and Kay Youngs always come to this meeting since they are in town. But this time, Larry came with Kay. Bernice usually comes in all bubbly and chats with everyone. But no Bernice. Then we learned the sad news that she passed away a couple days after returning from their winter home in Florida. We are so sorry for your loss Larry.

It was nice to see Katie Finnegan back at a meeting. Katie's husband Pat passed away this summer and Katie has been his caregiver. Pat was a gruff teddy bear. He looked like he was untouchable but it took 2 minutes to find out that was just the outside. I remember dropping some mugs off to Pat and Katie when were selling mugs. He took me into his music room where around the outside were built in record, cassette tape, and maybe some 8 track tapes shelving. Huge music collection with a drum display hanging from the center of the room. He showed me how this all worked. Katie just waited for the show to be over. Pat's full obituary is enclosed. I had no idea of his involvement as a voice on the issue of Agent Orange which was sprayed in Vietnam.

LIFETIME MEMBERS

Vincent Walsh and family would like to “Renew their Life Membership.”

Vince requests that a challenge be issued to other lifer's to do the same. Renew your life membership today.

Our Newest LIFETIME MEMBERS
Keith Wozniak & Nicholas Warner/Laura Frare

Our Renewed LIFETIME MEMBERS
Vincent Walsh & Family and Katie Finnegan

A MESSAGE FROM OUR HISTORIAN

Duane Cornell

I'm sure most people are aware of the train depot at Kings Station located at the corner of 9N and Porter (Corners) Road, but did you know we had another rail station in town? The Greenfield station was located off South Greenfield Road and was the first stop on the Adirondack Line out of Saratoga Springs with Kings being the second stop. It was an open sided, covered passenger platform dating back as early as 1870. An article in the Mechanicville Saturday Mercury dated November 11, 1910 reports the residents of Greenfield have requested a new station be built as the existing station is just an "open sided shed that faces north and is unsuitable in bad weather." The January 11, 1911 Schenectady Gazette states that a new station is being built in Greenfield. It was a 12'x14' shake sided building with a window on each side and a man door on the trackside. It was situated 25' from the center of the road on the southwest side of the crossing. Along with the station was a 825' rail siding which stayed in service until it was removed in 1961.

The Greenfield station closed in 1932 due to lack of use and was abandoned. It was sold to J. A. Beyer for \$25 and moved to his farm and used as a shed. This property now belongs to Sue Newcomb who contacted the town in the early 2000s offering it them because she wanted to build a polebarn on the area the old station was on. An article in The Saratogian tells of the station being moved from Newcombs property by Paul Cameron to his property next door. Mr. Cameron, who owned a demolition and salvage company, was contacted by town historian Mary DeMarco to move the structure and hopefully restore it and place it back in it's original location. According to the article the town was talking about starting a tourist rail line and would pass by the historic station. The tourist train and the restoration of the station never came to fruition.

The building was still in the field on South Greenfield Road as late as 2007 as per Google maps. Sadly the over 100 year old station did not survive the last attempt to move it and fell apart according to Mr. Cameron. Now, as with many things that are no longer with us, all that is left are memories, stories and perhaps a photo or two.



Greenfield Train Station located off South Greenfield Road

Joan's Jabberings *Continued from page 1*

Our other member who we lost this summer was Rosemary Munter. (Obituary was in summer newsletter.) Always such a lovely lady. She reminded me of the glue that keeps the family running.

All these members will be missed, and we send our condolences to their families.

Our program for the September meeting was Vischer Ferry – A Forgotten Crossroads presented by Dave Waite. It was interesting to see the old homes in our southernmost section of Clifton Park township in Saratoga County. So different than our area since they have the canal.

Speaking of Programs, we still need a Program Chairperson. Only one more month of planned programs.

October 15 meeting – We will have Rachel Clothier, Corinth Historian talking about 100 years of farming practices. Since I grew up on a farm, lets see how close their practices were to ours in the township next door.

October 20 – We will be with a golf cart at Brookhaven to hand out peppermints and newsletters at the town's Fall Festival.

October 26 – I am planning to have a Special Open House at the Museum from 1-4 PM to release Ron Feulner's "Greenfield History" book (AKA the fire book). Watch your local newspaper and emails for details on this special event.

SEPTEMBER 17, 2024, MEETING



Pot Luck Dinner: Members, Food and Desserts

Our membership year begins June 1 and ends May 31, dues are paid annually. (\$10 per household or \$100 for Lifetime Membership)

SARATOGA COUNTY MAN MADE FORTUNE IN GOLD MINING

David H. Wilsey of Walla Walla, Oregon, has Returned Home After Visiting Local Relatives – Developed the “Mother Lode” in the Coeur d’ Alenes



Davis H. Wilsey, a native of Greenfield, and a millionaire, has arrived home after visiting his only sister, L. R. Wilsey, No. 445 Broadway, Saratoga Springs, and his only brother, B. Frank Wilsey, of Greenfield, father of Supervisor Wilsey. Mr. Wilsey now lives in Walla Walla, Oregon. Concerning

him a recent issue of a Wallace, Idaho Newspaper:

“D. H. Wilsey, of Walla Walla, one of the early gold miners of the North Side, is in Wallace for a few days looking over the country. He is largely interested in some of the best farm land in the Walla Walla country and also in the vicinity of Weston, Ore., a short distance south of Walla Walla. He has traveled extensively and has just recently returned from an extended eastern trip, where he visited his old home. In his native state, New York, and his later home in Missouri.

“Nearly twenty-five years ago Mr. Wilsey came out from his Missouri home to Murray. He was traveling

principally for the benefit of his health, but he is one who is never averse to looking into a good business proposition. His attention was directed to the Mother lode, then one of the most prominent gold quartz propositions in the Coeur d’ Alenes. He purchased an interest and later acquired by purchase nearly half the property. With him were associated Uncle Billy King, a pioneer prospector and miner of the camp. Albert Otto, yet a resident of Murray, and Alfred Coolidge, banker of Colfax, Wash.

“The Mother lode embraced two nearly flat veins of gold quartz. Both were worked profitably for a good many years, at times, yielding extremely rich ore. Mr. Wilsey talks of pounding out in a hand mortar from one rich pocket nearly \$14,000 in a few days. But the run of the ore in the Mother lode for a number of years save mighty profitable results. In fact, as manager of the property from shortly after acquiring an interest till it was sold, he earned a comfortable fortune for himself and every owner of the property.

“When he bought in, the Mother lode was equipped with an arastra. This was shortly afterwards replaced with a 5-stamp mill, which late was enlarged to 10 stamps.

“The Mother lode proved one of the nicest pieces of mining property ever held by anybody in the Coeur d’ Alenes.

“Mr. Wilsey is a practical farmer, delights in the work, and gives much personal attention to farming the choicest grain land in the entire northwest.

“He is accompanied by his son-in-law, Hugh Tinker, also a North Side gold miner in the early days and long a resident of Murray.”

Newspaper article supplied by Patti (Wilsey) Veitch. He was her Great Great Great Uncle.

Veterans’ Appreciation Dinner Dance

November 10, 2024 | 2 to 8 PM

**Knights of Columbus Hall, 50 Pine Road
Saratoga Springs, NY**

Veterans are encouraged to wear uniform or Service ball cap. Tickets – \$25 per person (\$200 per table of 8). To purchase tickets, contact Denny Butler at 518-870-2044.

BOOKS FOR SALE



We have three books for sale: *Saratoga County Stories* (\$18), *More Saratoga County Stories* (\$20), and *Follow My Moccasin’s Tracks* by Ira Gray (\$15.95). Pick your copy up at the next meeting or order from the Town of Greenfield Historical Society, PO Box 502, Greenfield Center, NY 12833, with an additional \$5.00 postage and handling.

Program for October 15, 2024

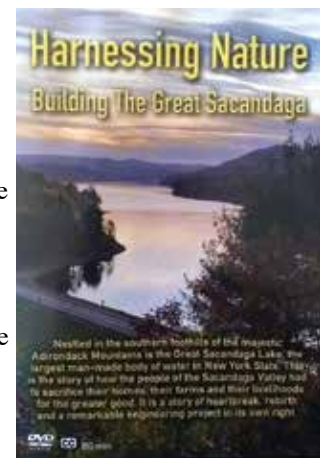
“Cultivating Corinth – A Local Agricultural History”

by Rachel Clothier, Corinth Historian

Photos of farming practices in the Corinth area over the past 100+ years.

“Harnessing Nature: Building the Great Sacandaga”

This DVD is an 80-minute documentary telling the story of how the people of the Sacandaga Valley had to sacrifice their homes, their farms and their livelihoods for the greater good. It is a story of heart-break, rebirth and a remarkable engineering project in its own right. This is the story of how the Great Sacandaga Lake, the largest man-made body of water in New York, was made. DVDs are available for \$20 by contacting the Historical Society, P.O. Box 502, Greenfield Center, NY 12833. (Please add \$5 if you want one mailed.)



PORTER CORNERS Schoolhouse Flag Pole DISCOVERIES

My husband and I have lived in the Porter Corners Schoolhouse since 1997. We have loved it upon first setting eyes on it, and we've taken care over the years to preserve many things about the building. Including reinstalling the chalk boards that we found stored in the basement, preserving the coat hooks and cubby shelves in the central hallway, restoring some of the wainscoting, and preserving school student textbooks that we keep on our library shelves.



The school was in use from 1933 to 1963, with students from First to Eighth grade in two classrooms, pictured here, photo courtesy of the Greenfield Historical Society archive.



and here, pictured in c.1970's, see Flagpole at lower left.



We have lived here 27 years and only recently uncovered these sweet mosaics in the cement slabs around the base of the flag pole, apparently made by students in 1961.

While digging out the myrtle ground cover I had planted around the flag pole's base a few years ago, my shovel hit some hard surfaces ... It didn't take long to discover its edges formed a larger square, and after a little more careful digging, we discovered the hidden mosaics.

It was fun guessing each subject as we cleared away the dirt from the eight panels.

Music:

My neighbor, who was the student who made this music staff, with little glass shards, explained that the notes spell out "My Country 'Tis of Thee."



Geography:

The clear outline of U.S.: note the Great Lakes represented with ceramic tiles. Major cities, Los Angeles, and the Mississippi River, maybe the Caribbean Islands in glass pieces, lower right?



Spelling:

**CAT
BOWL
HOUSE**

Terracotta pot shards form the uppercase letters.



Science:

It's a Microscope! Beautifully made with a glass bottle from France, stones and glass shards, with marbles along the base.



Reading and Writing:

The first few letters of the Alphabet, and an open book depicting picture and text.



Art:

A painter's palette is very nicely made with shards of glass and bits of crockery.



Math:

Hard to see the equations, but big numbers 1 2 3 4 5 are clear.



Sports:

A very clear baseball and bat, with a football field drawn and outlined in little stones.



How it looks now.

Submitted by Laura Frare and Nick Warner

Bernice Bencze

September 17, 1934 – May 3, 2024

GREENFIELD CENTER – Bernice O. Bencze, 89, passed away on Friday, May 3, 2024, at her home surrounded by her family. She was born in Greenfield, New York on September 17, 1934, to Brainard and Jesse Older.

Bernice started her career as a secretary at ALCO, and then General Electric Company and Knolls Atomic Power Lab in Niskayuna. She then chose to become a stay at home mom raising her two children. Bernice and her husband Larry collected beautiful vintage bottles together and over the last thirty years enjoyed traveling throughout the country.

She was predeceased by her parents Brainard and Jesse, and her siblings Elsie, Loretta, Margaret, Jean, Frank, and Ted. Bernice is survived by her beloved husband of 68 years, Lawrence, her children Greg Bencze and Lisa Bencze, grandchildren Ashley, Devon, Danny, and Dustin, and many nieces and nephews.

A private family gathering will be held. Memorial contributions in memory of Bernice can be made to Community Hospice of Saratoga, 179 Lawrence Street, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866.

T-Shirts for Sale

Our T-shirts are still available for purchase. Front has a left chest logo. Back of shirt has a Caboose Day advertisement which was designed by Conductor Carey Ward of the Saratoga Corinth & Hudson Railway. Shirts are available for purchase for \$20 each. Sizes still available are Small, Medium, Large, and X Large shirts. If you need to have your shirt mailed to you, please send a check to our PO Box 502, Greenfield Center NY 12833. Please indicate size and include an additional \$8 for postage and handling. \$28 total.

RECYCLE BOX GREENFIELD LIONS CLUB

The Greenfield Lions Club has a recycle box in the entry way of the Town's Community Center. (Box is on right between entry doors).

What can you leave in this box? All things plastic. Store plastic bags, ice bags (dried), reclosable bags, cereal box liners, bread bags, newspaper sleeves, dry cleaning bags, bubble wrap, and plastic e-commerce mailers. All items must be clean and dry.

Later we will see a bench made from the recycled plastics.



Thanks to the everyone that brought a covered dish or dessert to our September meeting/program.

October refreshment volunteers are Terry Tree and Patty Schwartzbeck.

Patrick Joseph Finnegan

November 23, 1947 – August 25, 2024



MIDDLE GROVE – Patrick Joseph Finnegan passed away peacefully at Saratoga Hospital on August 25, 2024, after having spent the day surrounded by his loving family. Pat was born in Brooklyn, NY on November 23, 1947, and spent his earliest years

in Broad Channel, Queens, until his family moved to Lynbrook, Long Island. After graduating from Lynbrook High School, he enlisted in the United States Army.

Pat was a disabled veteran who served with the 82nd Airborne, and with the 173rd Airborne in Vietnam. He was proudest of having been awarded both his parachute wings and the Combat Infantry Badge.

For more than a half century, Patrick, through his writings, his teachings, and unselfish commitment emerged as a conscience for the Vietnam War and all those forever changed by it. He was a life member of Vietnam Veterans Against the War, a spokesperson for Veterans For Peace and Reconciliation, and a founding director and officer for the Capital District Vietnam Veterans of America.

Perhaps his most significant contribution came as a voice on the issue of Agent Orange, the toxic defoliant sprayed in Vietnam. His national and statewide leadership resulted in the formation of commissions, focus on lawsuits, and benefits for Vietnam veterans and their families. Following the nation's normalization of relations with Vietnam, Patrick led the first veteran delegation to the United Nations to discuss with the Vietnam president the effect of Agent Orange on the Vietnamese people and Vietnam's environment.

After his military service, Pat was employed for many years at the Saratoga County wastewater treatment plant in Mechanicville, NY. He was proud of his work to clean and protect the Hudson River. He married his wife, Catherine Keefer in 1980, and together they raised two sons. One of his greatest joys was coaching the boys in baseball, soccer, and basketball. He loved being with his family, and adored his two grandchildren.

After retiring, Pat spent many hours as a volunteer in the community. He delivered meals on wheels, volunteered at the NYS Military Museum in Saratoga Springs, and came in weekly to read stories to children at Geysers Road School.

Patrick was predeceased by his parents, Walter and Miriam (McCormack) Finnegan, and two brothers, Walter and Dennis. He is survived by his wife Catherine, sons Michael (Elizabeth) and Daniel (Julia), grandchildren Penelope and Oliver, a brother John, and nieces and nephews.

A celebration of Patrick's life will be held on Friday, October 25, 2024 at 2 p.m. at the First Reformed Church of West Glensville, 2172 West Glensville Road, Amsterdam, NY, followed by burial in West Glensville Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, it would please Pat if people made a contribution to their local fire department.

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 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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