

Historical Society Newsletter

OFFICERS: President: Ron Feulner; Vice President: Louise Okoniewski;
Secretary: Patty Schwartzbeck; Treasurer: JoAnn Rowland;
Trustees: Skip Ballou, Coral Crosman, Ron Deutsch, Robert Roeckle, and Vince Walsh

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www.GreenfieldHistoricalSociety.com

Calendar

December 21, 2010: Tuesday, **CHRISTMAS PARTY** at 7 p.m. at the Community Center in Greenfield Center. *Bring cookies, candy or any goodies to share and sell, and nonperishable food items for the pantry. Bring an ornament to exchange. Have a poem or song ready to share, or listen to the other folks. KIDS ARE WELCOME!!!!*

Door Prizes Door Prizes Door Prizes Door Prizes Call Alice at 893-0620 for details HO ! HO ! HO ! Everyone is welcome – we would love to hear your favorite poem or song. Nancy Walker will bring her guitar and share her spirit of the season.

January 18, 2011: Tuesday, meeting at 7 p.m. at the Community Center in Greenfield Center. *Program: Ron Feulner, talking about his new book, Glass Factory with Histories of Middle Grove and Plank Road (including NYState Rt. 9N).*

February 15, 2011: Tuesday, meeting at 7 p.m. at the Community Center in Greenfield Center. *Program: Teri Gay, former Malta town historian, will do a program about the book she wrote: Strength Without Compromise – Womanly Influence and Political Identity in Turn-of-the-20th-Century Upstate New York, about the woman's suffrage movement and concerns women of Saratoga, Warren and Washington Counties.*

IMPORTANT – If schools are closed because of the weather, our meeting will be canceled that evening.

Please Note: Most of you have paid your dues for the current year, but a few have forgotten. To jog your memory, we are placing a box near the return address on the last page. If a red "X" appears in the box, it means, that according to our records, you have not yet paid. The January issue will be sent to only those who are up-to-date with their dues. If you feel a mistake has been made, please contact JoAnn Rowland at 518-893-7786 or Nancy Homiak at 518-893-7770.

WEEZIE'S WORDS

by Louise Okoniewski

Howdy everyone!!! Well, November has brought us a very busy month. The cold rainy night for our November meeting was a good prelude for our program, "Skeletons in the Closet." I was a little worried about attendance, but by the time the business part of the meeting started, we had a full house with 32 members and guests.

President, Ron Feulner, encouraged members and friends to stop by the bottle museum in Ballston Spa and show our support. In October, we lost a great person, Janet Rutland. She was a large part of the success of the bottle museum, working tirelessly as a volunteer and coordinator for many years. When a group or organization loses a person with the enthusiasm and commitment Jan had, it leaves a void that is hard to fill. If you are looking for something to do, stop by the bottle museum in Ballston Spa. They have bottles that hold part of Greenfield's past: bottles from the Glass Factory, and elixirs, to old milk bottles from Greenfield dairy farms, you can find it all at the bottle museum.

The IOOF Hall (Odd Fellows) in Middle Grove has been closed for the winter. Ann Michel and Joyce Woodard have done an excellent job with the archives. There are displays with photographs and artifacts throughout the downstairs of the hall. Ann says, they are finding more and more interesting articles and pictures. The ladies are available in the winter months if anyone has questions or would like to make a donation of photos, articles, newspaper clippings, old invoices, etc. If you come across anything – don't throw it out!! Call Ann Michel at 893-7052, or Joyce Woodard at 893-7638, and let your family's history live on.

Our Christmas party will be held Dec. 21, at 7 p.m., following a short business meeting. Alice Feulner and Nancy Walker are co-chairs. The party will feature our famous cookie exchange where after sampling the many goodies, guests fill plates to take home or give away and, in return, make a donation to the Historical Society: kind of an in-house bake sale where you get to try the product first. Also, there will be an ornament exchange where you bring an ornament, put it on the tree, and take one back. And last, but not least, the girls would like you to bring a song, story or poem, etc., that we can share. If you have any questions, call Alice at 893-0620.

Our program, “Skeletons in the Closet,” by William Rockwell was whimsical and amusing. While doing genealogy on his family and looking for the elusive Simeon Rockwell, Bill discovered that a horse’s life was worth more than a man’s in 1768! His family did originate in England and Norman Rockwell was a 9th cousin once removed! The audience chuckled as Bill and his brother impersonated their ancestors in various places such as at cemeteries and at the Daketown School. Bill explained about Path Masters (early keepers of the roads), and how, in days gone by, you could be arrested for almost anything, and apparently, some of his family was! The two stories that I found most interesting were about Pvt. Robert Ayers, a soldier of the American Revolution, and Orin Rockwell, a figure of the “Old West.” Orin was born in Massachusetts in 1813, traveled west and became a Mormon scout and bodyguard for Joseph Smith Jr. and Brigham Young. He spent time in jail on charges of attempted assassination of former Missouri Governor Lillian Boggs. At one point, Orin was wanted dead or alive for the sum of \$3,000. It was estimated that he may have killed as many as 150 men. He died in 1878 at age 65 of natural causes.

A lot of the same shenanigans of the Rockwell family also happens in all families – we probably all have “Skeletons in our Closet.”

Our Historical Society’s board is making a lot of progress on plans to have a museum at IOOF Hall in Middle Grove. The board met on Nov. 18 and decided on several items that will enable us to move forward. 1) Mike Gyarmathy will help to install a security system that is needed for our charter. 2) we plan to install a heating system that would be composed of two units, one mounted in the main room downstairs and another on the second floor. 3) We also plan to install a composting toilet. This facility will make it easier for the archives ladies and visitors.

The Historical Society is still working with the generous donation from Eugene Chatfield’s estate. His donation has helped us to move forward and keep the buildings updated and make repairs. Therefore it was suggested that the museum be named after him. Eugene was a member of the Odd Fellows and the Chatfield name is one of the older ones in Greenfield’s history.

Other activities that we have been involved in included a visit on Monday night, Nov. 22, by Cub Scout Pack 18, Den 3, who met at Odd Fellows Hall, despite the cold rainy night. Everyone was interested in the pictures and displays. Joyce Woodard gave a brief history of IOOF Hall, and the mail canceling machine. In attendance were Bill Welmaker and son, Erik; Jason Jennings and son, Brady; Raymond Rainville and son, Dylan; Lee Dome and son, Ethan; David Carey and son, Eamon; and Mindy Noxon and son, Walter Bishop. The Cub Scouts picked out a post card to put in their scrapbooks, and have an open invitation to come back and visit upstairs where we have our own skeleton in the closet!

December – Christmas at Our House

by Marie Willard

Memories of our early Christmas’s are lodged in my memory forever. We had the Christmas plays at church and school, the caroling, making wreaths, and lots of other things.

Mr. and Mrs. William Barth lived across the bridge where Clothworthy’s now live. They had a son, Fred, who was in the military. We would go to their house and sing Christmas Carols. She would give us hot chocolate and cookies. On their front porch stood a tall Christmas tree. From its branches hung comic books tied with pretty ribbons. We were each allowed to take one. When Mr. and Mrs. Barth moved to West Milton to open a store we were all sad.

At school we had the usual Christmas pageant. The wise men all wore their fathers bathrobes. The girls all fought over who would be Mary. After the pageant, we sang fun Christmas songs like “Up on the Housatop.” My father and mother took turns between church and school. One of them stayed at home with my sister and brother. It was my special night. We did all the decorations and made the scenery for the plays. Our parents baked goodies and Charlie Dake Sr. brought us dixie cups packed in dry ice for our party.

At home getting ready for Christmas was a big event. We would go into the woods and get bags of running or Princess Pine. We would form the wreaths and decorate them with small decorations. Mom would finish them with a big bow. We would go to Mrs. Gaba’s tree stand at the end of Murray road and pick out our tree. It always took a couple of hours because we had to get just the right one and she always had so many.

On Christmas eve, Dad would pull out the meat grinder and attach it to a tall wooden stool. Mom would have piles of bread, onions, celery, hamburger, sausage and spices ready. Dad would turn the handle, calling out what he needed. We would feed the grinder. When the piles were gone, Mom would mix it together and add whatever else she needed. Dad would stuff the bird and pop it in the oven where it would slow cook all night.

My father didn’t believe in credit. Our parents let us choose one big thing we would like for Christmas. If they could afford it they would get it. If not, our big gift would be nice but probably our second choice. On the year I entered high school, I asked for a typewriter. I can’t remember what my sister and brother wanted that year. We all got our big gift. I didn’t find out until much later that Dad had gone to Union Fern in Saratoga and got my typewriter on credit. This made it extra special and I kept it long after I married.

For a couple of years, we collected used toys from people around town. Dad would repair them if necessary, and both Mom and Dad would paint them to present them to the welfare department to distribute to children. I particularly remember a black and white jumping pony with bright red reins. It looked like it came out of a store window. Today, if you want to donate toys, they must be new and unwrapped. They will decide if they are good enough to distribute. In fact, they would rather you “adopt” a child and purchase the things on their wish list. This is how far we have come?



The House I Bought at Pages Corners

By *Mary (Eichorst) (Mitchell) Max*



The house at Pages Corners used to have a large barn (garage) on it. There also used to be a large dancehall where later years I had a garden. The dance hall burned when I was a young girl. There was a lot of drinking there. Once some drunks came down to where my Dad and Mom lived. Dad worked nights. It was night time, and the drunks tried to get in the back door. They were knocking on the door. Mom never had a gun in her hands before, but she opened the kitchen window and shot up into the air. There was an awful groan and Mom thought she shot someone. One of the children ran across the road to Eugene Chatfield's house. He came over, and they all had a good laugh. It was a drunk (Wig Marine) being held up by two other men who dropped him and ran when she shot.

There also used to be a blacksmith shop there on the corner lot near Sodeman Road. Irene Eichorst's father, Mr. Reckner, used to shoe Saratoga racehorses there (so I was told). There still are a lot of old horseshoes in the dirt there if you dig a little.

Shortly after that, the dance hall burned. I remember seeing it burn. I don't know when, but my Dad bought the place. He filled in the hole where the dance hall had been, and rented the house out for years. It had no running water (a pump outside), also an outhouse. For many years Dad rented it to different families. Then, in 1946, a man

bought the house. He put a coal stove in. He had tools in the garage, then he left and came back in the winter. It was one of our worst winters. He begged my Dad to buy it back. So he did. It was 1948, Richard Mitchell and I were going to get married and were trying to find a place to rent. I told Dad, I'd buy it. I had worked at Thompson Laundry for nine years by then and saved my money. So for \$3,200, I bought the house. Well, it needed a lot of T.L.C., so I papered and painted. Dick did the electrical work, and we dug the ditch to put in running water.

We worked on the house all our spare time as Dick Mitchell worked at General Electric and only had evenings off. He was an electrician at G.E. I worked 5 1/2 days at Thompson Laundry. Work went slow. In between, we bought some of our furniture off and on. There were days when we were ready to give up. We finally got the house with running water in the kitchen – still had outhouse. Kitchen appliances all in. Bedroom set and living room set, all which I still had when I moved out 47 1/2 years later.

Finally, June came and my wedding day. We got married, but the electric wasn't turned on yet. We went on our honeymoon, got back, and still no power. So we stayed with Mom and Dad for a week. My boss, Rem Thompson, called the electric company and somehow got them to turn on our power.

The bathroom wasn't in yet, so we had to use the outhouse. In 1950, Sandra was born, and finally our bathroom was finished. No more cold seats. We lived there 47 and 1/2 years. Had a big garden – I canned and froze all our vegetables. Current bushes grew where the dance hall had been, so I made current jelly. We had four children – Sandra, Rhoda, Glenn, and Donna. Richard passed away in 1995 (heart attack). I sold the house in 1996. The house was all remodeled both upstairs and downstairs including my laundry room. The kitchen cupboards were moved to the other side of the kitchen. It really looked beautiful. They left the wide boards on the upstairs floors.

In 1998, I married the man who had been my first sweetheart, Frank Max. I'm living in Wilton now.

Historian's Corner, December 2010

by **Ron Feulner**

We're still busy but making good progress. We finally completed our move into town hall. Everything has been unpacked and put away. We also completed the move of all the artifacts which were downstairs in the community center building; they are all upstairs under lock and key. We also did an inventory of them as we moved them.

I met with two members of the caboos committee, Stan Weeks and Ed Woodard, and we did an assessment of what would be involved in planking the interior walls of the station house (just the freight section which was never finished). We are going to use native ship-lap pine from Kilmer Lumber Company. Ed and Stan aren't sure if they will begin work this fall or wait till spring. If any of you are interested in volunteering, get in touch with me at town hall.

Speaking of volunteering, I have been working on developing a data base of names from our oldest

scrapbook (newspaper articles from the 1920-30s) and am making good progress. I could use some help and hope to build a volunteer group to speed the job along. I am thinking about meeting at my office in town hall on Thursdays from 10-2 (although this is just tentative at this point). If you would like to join us, call me at (893-7432 ext. 316 or e-mail me at thistorian@nycap.rr.com) and leave your name and contact information. Be patient with me as I am still trying to learn how to use the town hall telephone system. In the meantime, I have lost a few of your messages so don't be afraid to try again if you don't hear back from me.

I hope you all have a nice holiday and would like to invite all of you to stop by some Wednesday morning at our new office and say hello.

Thanks to the refreshment volunteers for November, Patty Schwartzbeck and Katie Finnegan. They served Chocolate Chip Cookies and Pumpkin Cake.

Janet Jones, Refreshment Chairperson

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL

Become a member of the Town of Greenfield Historical Society and receive our newsletter. Send \$10 per **household** along with your name and address to the address shown below. If you send more it will be considered a donation. Other types of memberships are also available (lifetime, corporate, etc.), just call and ask (518-893-0620). Our membership year begins June 1, and dues are paid annually. You may also join at one of our meetings. Send this application form and fee to Town of Greenfield Historical Society, P.O. Box 502, Greenfield Center, NY 12833. Make checks payable to: Town of Greenfield Historical Society.

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

Name _____

Address _____

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 free copy of our newsletter along with information on how they can join.

Name _____

Address _____

If you would like to write an article for the newsletter, send it to: Town of Greenfield Historical Society, P.O. Box 502, Greenfield Center, NY 12833 or if you type it using Microsoft Word, e-mail it to: aliron@nycap.rr.com.

Updating Historic Sites Map in the Town of Greenfield

If you have any information, e-mail Dan Chertok at bmmschertok@gmail.com or dgclawoffices@csdsl.net. You may also call (518-893-2268) or write him at: Dan Chertok, 58 Ormsbee Road, Porter Corners, NY 12859

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