



## 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

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[www.GreenfieldHistoricalSociety.com](http://www.GreenfieldHistoricalSociety.com)

### CALENDAR

**March 15, 2022 – Tuesday**, meeting at 7 p.m. at the Community Center in Greenfield. **Program:** *Adirondack Ike: The Life and Times of Ira Gray.* TOGHS Member John Greenwood has assembled a complimentary presentation to Ira Gray's book "Follow My Moccasin Tracks." Enjoy photographs, anecdotes, and newspaper clippings from Ira's personal scrapbooks. Anyone who enjoys the great outdoors will appreciate this Ira Gray Bio. Thanks to the generosity of Ira's niece Sandra Loychik all proceeds from the book sales benefit the TOGHS. (See article on page 4.)

**April 19, 2022 – Tuesday**, meeting at 7 p.m. at the Community Center in Greenfield. **Program:** *Saratoga Plan – Casey Holzworth*, a member of Saratoga Plan's Palmertown Guidance Committee and staff at NYS Parks, will update us on the exciting things that are happening in the Palmertown Range and the Sarah B. Foulke Friendship Trails. This planned network of trails in Northern Saratoga County, emphasize celebrating friendship, building community, and connecting people from all walks of life to nature and to each other.

**May 17, 2022 - Tuesday**, 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.

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

### Meetings Cancellations

*If schools are closed due to weather, our meeting will be canceled. A message also will be posted on our website and on our Facebook page.*

[www.GreenfieldHistoricalSociety.com](http://www.GreenfieldHistoricalSociety.com)  
[www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=town of greenfield historical society](https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=town%20of%20greenfield%20historical%20society)

### MARCH NOTES 2022

*by Joan E. Rowland, Acting President*

We made it through February, the shortest month, with only a couple storms. Last one was 8 inches at my house on Friday, Feb. 25, 2022. We would have had more if it had not rained/snow for an hour. I am looking forward to some spring flowers. Just need to wait a few more weeks.

It was great to see 15 attending our Feb. 15, 2022 meeting. Very cold that night. We had Greg Veitch as the speaker. Greg is a former Saratoga Springs police chief. He was here to talk about his second book, "A Gangster's Paradise" but had to back track a book, "All the Law in the World Won't Stop Them" to give us some background. When he was doing research on a family story about gangsters, shootings, blood, hospitals, he ended up writing his first book but there was too much for one book so the second is the later years. I found it interesting that two of the police chiefs had been moved up into that position after helping the gangsters out. But now, we have civil service test to get the position. I loved seeing all the old photos of Saratoga and hearing stories of places that no longer exist.

We had a board meeting this month and discussed fund raisers for the year and community projects, and museum hours. I will fill you in with all the information in the next newsletter when dates/times are secured.

We have two books we are selling and the Sacandaga DVD. They are available by ordering through our P.O. Box or at our next meeting. (See ad on page 3.) Hope to see you at the March meeting.

Our March meeting, March 15, 2022, the program will be presented by John Greenwood. He will be discussing IRA Gray's "Adirondack Ike" and the last book he wrote before his passing. Come hear some tales of Adirondack Life.

### UPDATING OUR RECORDS

We're asking every one that uses email to send us your email address in case we are unable to do a complete mailing in coming years. We will mail to members that don't use email or still want a hard copy. Thank you.

[toghistsoc@gmail.com](mailto:toghistsoc@gmail.com)

# HISTORIAN’S CORNER

*March 2022 — by Ron Feulner*

In previous issues, I have written about the Rowell Store in Middle Grove and the Rowell family. This month, I will write about the Trolley coming to Middle Grove and how it connected this small community to the rest of the country in a way that it had not experienced before. It also brought a new opportunity for the young people to continue their education.

As it entered the 20th century, Middle Grove was experiencing change. The telephone had arrived in 1882, but most homes were not yet wired for electricity although an electric trolley line was being built from Ballston Spa and would run through Rock City Falls and eventually on to the paper mills in Middle Grove. Built in sections the trolley did not arrive in Middle Grove until 1902, but when it did, its arrival connected Middle Grove with the rest of the country in a way that had been impossible before. One could now board the trolley right in front of the two stores (and hotel) and ride to Ballston Spa and from there switch to railroad lines leading anywhere in the country.

produce to other communities and for the stores to get shipments of supplies delivered. Even simple bakery items like bread were now being delivered fresh from bakeries in Ballston Spa on a daily basis.

For young people in the area, the trolley made high school education possible without having to attend boarding schools. Prior to the trolley’s arrival most students only attended the local one room school on Cemetery Hill in Middle Grove or one of the several smaller one room schools in districts around Middle Grove.



*Figure 18 – Cemetery Hill School, Middle Grove, NY*



*Figure 17 – Trolley at loading dock*

The trolley not only hauled supplies in and products out for the paper mills but it also made it possible to sell farm

**Our Newest LIFETIME MEMBERS**  
**Louise Okoniewski**

## TOGHS Meeting and Program – February 15, 2022



*Former Saratoga Springs police chief Greg Veitch talking about his book, “A Gangster’s Paradise.” This is a history of the Gangsters of Saratoga Springs from the Prohibition era up through the Kefauver Committee hearings in the 1950s.*



*Side and Back view of Saratoga Springs City Hall and Police Station*



*Corner of West Avenue and Washington Street/Route 29, Saratoga Springs*

*The Audience*



**WAYNE F. MIDDLEBROOK**  
Feb. 6, 1940 – Feb. 14, 2022

Porter Corners, NY –  
Wayne F. Middlebrook, 82,  
passed away Monday, Feb. 14,  
2022 at his home, surrounded  
by his loving family.

Born on Feb. 6, 1940 in  
Albany, he was the son of  
the late Frank and E. Irene  
(Menshausen) Middlebrook.

Wayne graduated from  
Saratoga High School in 1957.

He joined the United States Coast Guard on Sept. 17,  
1957 serving as an electrician in Groton, Conn., Juniper  
Florida, Atue, Alaska and lastly in Grand Haven, MI,  
where he met the love of his life, Donna Diephouse.

Wayne married Donna on June 23, 1962 in Fruitport,  
MI and the couple has resided in Porter Corners for almost  
60 years.

He was employed as the Supervisor of the Electrical  
Department at the International Paper Co. in Corinth,  
working for over 30 years until his retirement in 1995,  
and was a member of the IP Quarter Century Club.

Wayne was a life member of the Greenfield Fire  
District Porter Corners Company No. 2, serving as  
captain and chief.

He was a jack of all trades, doing electrical,  
woodworking, carpentry, fabricating and even built his  
own home. He enjoyed trips with his family to the New  
Hampshire coast, trips to Michigan, collectible trains,  
and later in life, trips to Virginia.

Survivors besides his loving wife of almost 60  
years, Donna Middlebrook of Porter Corners include  
five children, Melissa Kerwood (Daniel) of Johnstown,  
Melinda Robertson (John) of Dendron, VA, Frank  
Middlebrook (April Henley) of Gloversville, David  
Middlebrook of Porter Corners, and Bruce Richey of  
Sophia, NC; one brother, Gary Middlebrook (Bonnie) of  
Porter Corners; nine grandchildren, Garrett, Courtney,  
Kenny, Tyler, Kaydee, Amanda, Cheyenne, Mason, and  
Michael; seven great-grandchildren; and several nieces,  
nephews and cousins.

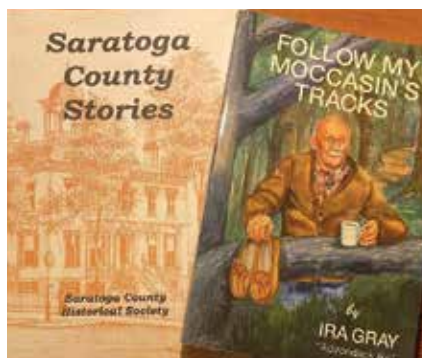
At Wayne's request, services are private and at the  
convenience of the family.

Committal will be at the Gerald B. H. Solomon  
Saratoga National Cemetery.

The family wishes to thank Dr. Daoui, Dr. Yamada,  
Dr. Dempsey, and the staff of Community Hospice of  
Saratoga for their kindness and compassionate care given  
to Wayne during his illness.

The family suggests that in lieu of flowers, memorials  
take the form of donations to Porter Corners Fire Co.  
No. 2, PO Box 41, Porter Corners, NY 12859 or  
Community Hospice of Saratoga, 179 Lawrence Street,  
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866.

Arrangements are under the direction of the Densmore  
Funeral Home, Inc., 7 Sherman Ave., Corinth.



**BOOKS  
FOR SALE**

We have both the  
*Saratoga County  
Stories* (\$18) and  
*Follow My Moccasin's  
Tracks* by Ira Gray  
(\$15.95) for sale at the  
March meeting.

Thanks to the  
generosity Ira Gray's  
niece, Sandra Gray

Loychik, we have several copies of Ira Gray's (Adirondack Ike)  
*Follow My Moccasin's Tracks*. These were printed in 2002 and  
have become a rare keepsake for anyone who enjoys old stories  
of life in the Adirondacks.

Pick your copy up at the March Meeting or order through our  
P.O. Box 502, Greenfield Center, NY 12833 with an additional  
\$3.50 postage and handling.

**“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 state, was made.  
DVDs are available for \$20 at  
the Greenfield Town Hall, or by  
contacting the Historical Society at  
P.O. Box 502, Greenfield Center,  
NY 12833. (Please add \$3 if you want one mailed.)



**The Town of Greenfield Historical  
Society is still looking for a few  
good bodies (and minds)!**

**Are you good at planning social events?**

**Are you good at working with people?**

**Do you have carpentry skills?**

**Are you good at organizing collections?**

**Do you have computer skills?**

**Do you like lawn and landscaping work?**

**We need your ideas and skills.**

**Please contact us at 518-322-5675 or  
email us at toghistsoc@gmail.com**

*Thank you John Greenwood for bringing Stewart's ice cream  
sandwiches for the February meeting. For the March meeting,  
we will be serving desserts and soda after the program.*

*Janet Jones, Refreshment Chairperson*

## Adirondack Ike: The Life and Times of Ira Gray

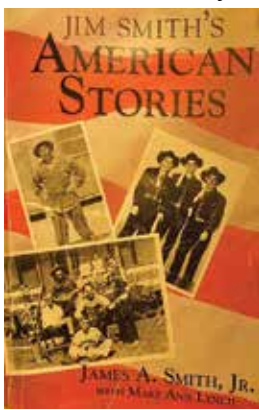
By John R. Greenwood

I met Ira “Adirondack Ike” Gray when I was a teenager in the '70s. My parents were staying at a friends camp across the street from Ira's HI-N-Dri Cabin in Brooks Bay on the Sacandaga. My father took me over to visit him. He was well into his 80s and had established himself as an Adirondack Legend decades ago. I was fascinated by him then and as I assembled a presentation of his life to share with others I became even more enthralled with his story. I must thank Corinth Town Historian Rachel Clothier for sharing her knowledge about Ira as well as her extensive collection of his. Rachel's passion for preserving and sharing local history is infectious. The presentation consists of about 30 slides. I think you will enjoy the ride.



## Jim Smith's American Stories

By John R. Greenwood



I want to thank Town Historian Ron Feulner for introducing me to Jim Smith's book American Stories. I also want to thank Janet Jones for gifting me her mom and dad's copy. Knowing Marge and Earl were lifelong friends of Jim and Rose made reading it all the more special. Thanks also to Karl Zeh for offering to lend me his copy. He assured me I was in for a historic journey. The book was published in 2003, and I'm sure

it's familiar to many GHS members. I was in the Stewart's Hauling Department at the time, and the only reading I was doing back then was DOT Regs and roadmaps. Before I even started reading, I opened the book to a random page, and the name “Lola's” appeared. Lola's was the only Greenfield watering hole before the arrival of the Greenfield Village Inn in 1946. For me, the memory of that name went back over sixty years. I vaguely remember my father stopping there. My only recollection was it being a place for him to wet his whistle. That simple memory trigger sent me racing to page one — I couldn't wait to dig in.

My parents, Helen and Ralph, were the same age as Jim and Rose. The four of them had been friends and members of the Greenfield Fire Department and Ladies Auxiliary years before I became a volunteer in the 1970s. My introduction to the Smiths began at fire department meetings and functions at the fire hall. When I recall those days, the first thing that comes to mind is how nice the two of them were. Always smiling, always giving their time and energy back to the community. During those years, the Ladies Auxiliary catered scores of wedding receptions and parties, and the department was the beneficiary of their fundraising. Jim's band was the entertainment at many of those functions, and my own wedding was one of them.

The wedding goers may have gotten blisters from dancing, but nobody left hungry or thirsty. That was June 15, 1974. Jump ahead to 2022 when I read about Jim and Rose's wedding day on June 30, 1946. They were married in St. Joseph's Church like we were. Although their reception was at the Sokol Hall and not the fire hall, there was a common denominator that I would never have known about if I hadn't read Jim's book. Jim writes about the men who performed the music for his wedding. A warm feeling overcame me as I read my uncle Steve Pasek's name. The same Steve Pasek who owned the house where our Historical Society meets. As a boy, I knew he played the banjo. He loved being asked to play whenever we stopped for a visit. I'm sure that's where my love of the instrument began. His twin brother Mike Pasek was another surprise. I had no idea he was a saxophone aficionado. The third and final band member really threw me a curve. It was Jack Koptula. Jack, my barber/bus driver who lived just up the road from us back then. Jack had a barber chair on the front porch. I received many 90 cent crewcuts there. Thanks to Sandy Arnold and her history addiction, I now knew Jack's instrument of choice was the drums.

“Well, I'll be dipped!”

There's not enough room here to document all the familiar names and locations Jim wrote about. Each one transported me back in time so clearly it felt like I was watching a movie. From his mention of George Hodges making the windows for his home to Emil Orisek helping install the wood floors, each name brought a face and a voice back to life for me. Each chapter had a connection to me somehow, and I savored every one of them. I hated to put the book down; on the other hand, I wanted to make it last as long as possible. Jim and his generation gave us more than we will ever know. They instilled work ethic and true patriotism. They didn't simply wave a flag; they died for it. They didn't have YouTube; they learned by rolling up their sleeves and digging in. They repaired their own cars and created their own entertainment. They were, as they say, the greatest generation, and I'm proud to have been the beneficiary of their contribution.

## Brookside Dairy

by Sydney Homicz (Peysler)

Something surreal happened today. I listened to a 50 minute interview of my Grandpa Hall that I found on the Saratoga Room Digital Exhibits website. Hearing his voice again brought me back to when I was little girl and went to visit him, he would give me M&M's and cheeseballs as a special treat. Then we would go see and pet the cows in the field.

My Great Grandpa, Grandpa Hall dedicated his life to his family and farm, Brookside Dairy. He tells a story of one day on the farm, he and one of his employees came down with the flu. It took them an hour to get from the house to the milk room, and another hour to get to the milk room to cow barn. They were so sick and couldn't see straight. He recalls that a "fellow came in who lived around the corner" and said, "oh you fellows are lazy this morning, there is nobody in the milk room". He looked at my Gramps and said, "you sick Mr. Hall?" and my Gramps nodded his head yes. The fellow said, "me fix, me fix, I'll be back, we'll be back." He goes and rounds up the neighbors to help finish milking the cows for the day.

What I love about this story is you get a real feel for what the community was like when Brookside Dairy Farm was around. The basics. Neighbors helping neighbors.

*Below is a photograph of my great grandpa who owned Brookside Dairy Farm with three of his Guernsey cattle.*



*I'm excited to share that I recently started a blog called @hillsandhearths (on Instagram), a place to ground yourself in nature.*

*I will be sharing a collection of photos and videos taken in nature on my family's land in Upstate New York, outside of Saratoga Springs. The land that I walk today is where my great-great-grandfather started a dairy farm in 1904 on 100 acres of land with two cows and two horses. It grew to be over 500 acres of land and over a 100 cattle. They processed and bottled their own dairy milk and made deliveries around town.*

*I'm inspired to share stories and photos of Brookside Dairy Farm, the same land that I walk today in 2022.*

Follow along on Instagram at @hillsandhearths

## Porter Corners Bluegrass Festivals August 1978 and 1982

A lot of people have asked if we have any photos of the Bluegrass Festival that took place in Bishop's Field in Porter Corners. This is all I could find so far. If anyone else has some, please send them to me and I'll put them in the newsletters. Thank you in advance. My address is Janet Jones, 213 Ash St., Corinth, NY 12822 and my email address is jjones18215@roadrunner.com.



## 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](http://www.GreenfieldHistoricalSociety.com).** Email [toghistsoc@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:Dgchertok@gmail.com), call his cell phone (518-321-0330), or text him.



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