

# This Week in Saratoga County History

## Stewart's Presidential Cake

Submitted by John R. Greenwood November 5, 2020

*John Greenwood is a lifelong resident with an affection for Saratoga County's place in history. He enjoyed a 45-year career in the dairy business, starting at Saratoga Dairy in 1974. During the 80s, John owned and operated Price's Dairy. He spent the next 30 years in the Hauling Department at Stewart's. His greatest joy is sharing stories about the everyday people and experiences that have enriched his life along the way. You can find those stories and more on his blog [RainingLquanas.com](http://RainingLquanas.com) and John can be reached at [jgreenwood3@nycap.rr.com](mailto:jgreenwood3@nycap.rr.com)*



Ike Cuts a 150-Lb. Ice Cream Cake

Election week seemed like an appropriate time to share this Presidential Story. On June 22, 1955, President Dwight D. Eisenhower visited the Vermont State Dairy Festival in Rutland. The Festival held a barbecue that day in the President's honor. When it was over, they presented the President and his Presidential Party with a 150-pound ice cream cake. The cake represented a day's work for twenty cows.

It was a gift from the Stewart's on North Main St. in Rutland. "Hap" Haapala was the store manager at the time. Plant Manager Paul "Perky" Robinson made the cake at the Stewart's Ice Cream Plant in Greenfield, Saratoga County. Melvin Tuttle, the owner of Tuttle's Bakery on Church St. in Saratoga Springs, was responsible for the decorations. Bob Gailor told me that his father, Wally Gailor, was a baker at Tuttle's and that he decorated the cake.

The cake was carried by a refrigerated truck from Saratoga Springs to Rutland Vt. It arrived just in time to be placed on the table by Stewart's General Manager Charles S. Dake and Public Relations Representative, Larry Mahar. After everyone had been served, the rest of the cake was divided between the Rutland Children's Rehabilitation Center and the pediatric ward at the local hospital.

I discovered this historic anecdote while researching the paper archives of Stewart's Ice Cream. In the 1950s, Stewart's published a monthly brochure appropriately named "The Stewart's Story." It was a simple 8" x 11" paper folded in half. It contained sale promotions, new store openings, and happenings throughout the company. It included the "New Customer Column."

The column listed the birth announcements of babies born to Stewart's employees. In the issue that contained the story above, I was delighted to read the birth announcements of two past classmates born within days of my own June 1955 birth. One was Kathleen Eddy, whose father Burton Eddy was in charge of Stewart's rural home deliveries. The second was Donna Hodges, whose father Douglas worked part-time at the old Church St. Stewarts. These little discoveries envelop me with a sense of place. When it comes to local history, there's always a treasure to unearth.

I'll share one last story to make my case. Wally Gailor mentioned above is a familiar name in the Saratoga area. He played Santa Claus locally for decades. There are hundreds of Saratogians with fond memories and stories of Wally in his role as Santa. As I was assembling this piece, Wally's son Bob Gailor and I connected online. During our conversation regarding the ice cream cake, he mentioned another tasty tidbit that I felt was historic and worth sharing. Bob told me his father decorated another cake for someone famous. He'd made a cake for Hollywood actress Jane Mansfield. She was doing a play at the Spa, and it was the last show. There were two cakes. There was a fake one used to tease her on stage and a real one to enjoy after the play. These generational stories are what helps history survive.

One last note. Bob Gailor said between him and his father; they had combined 119 years playing Santa Claus. Play Santa yourself this year. Give a monetary gift of support to your local historical society. If you're not currently a member of your town or county historical society, consider becoming one. The survival of stories like these depend on people like you; people who love telling stories and people who love hearing them.