

# Greenville Local History Group Newsletter

September 1998, Issue 101

Cunningham Photo Albums

The September meeting opened about the time it was getting dark, reminding us that darker and colder are a few months away. Attending were Harriet Rasmussen, Connie Teator, Don Teator, Kathie Williams, Ron Golden, Dot Blenis, Phyllis Beechert, Toot Vaughn, Betty Vaughn, Alice Roe, Cris Ketcham, David Rundell, and Judy Rundell.

The first topic was a review of the firemen's parade, and the details of who was where, and the warm weather, and how nice it was.

Harriet read a letter she had received from one of the Lord relatives, with special focus on Sarah Lord.

Don noted that Bill Moore had donated two framed pictures of the Knowlton, before and after the addition in the nineteen-teens. Also noted was the Greene County Historical Society's series, the fourth part of which was "A History of Greenville", which Don presented on September 16th. About fifty turned out. In addition, Ray Beecher had available his revised book, *Out to Greenville*, which many of the people present bought.

The main part of the night was to show the Cunningham photo albums. These albums were mostly Orson Hallen-

beck's collection which made its way to the museum when the museum was open. Currently, it appears the albums have been rearranged into two albums, with many of the pictures looking familiar since Deb duplicated many of them almost ten years ago. It also seemed that some pictures did not find their way into the albums. Between these two albums, and the three people "people picture" albums that are part of the Historian's files, we amused ourselves very well for over an hour.

The next meeting will be a share session. It will coincide with the Monday that Columbus Day is celebrated. I'm hoping the calendars will be ready by then. And, we need to select our people to recognize, a topic we'll discuss at this October meeting. In addition, I'll have copies of the newest Ingalls' diary summary to hand out, with the program on the final installment to be given in November. (Perhaps, reading the 70 pages of "summary" before the November program will get you into the mood. If you can't attend the October meeting but want a copy before the November meeting, call me.)

Included in this newsletter is Harriet's summary of the Taylor diary – 1867.



## The R.E. Taylor Diary Harriet Rasmussen

1867

On December 17 of last year, Taylor had returned to his teaching at Lampman School and on the 27th, he writes, "Heavy snow storm & wind blows tremendous – had 18 scholars today." The following day, "Tremendous blustering – started for school but came back. The worst drifts there have been since I have lived here."

But the new year of 1867 starts out more kindly and, by January 25, twenty-five scholars are attending his classes. He has sent to Brown & Wing for new History books and throughout this month he diligently records which pupils have brought in their \$152 payment. This has documented for all time that Franklin Spalding, A. More, Lucilla Haines and Louisa Frese were being taught History by Richard Edwin Taylor.

On February 7, this teacher records, "Rec'd a Mental Arithmetic from the publishers at New York & sent \$2.00 for 8 copies. And on February 16, "Mr. Mott left 8 geographies & 2 grammars with me to sell." By this time he records payment merely as, "Rec'd pay for 4 geography's at 60¢ each." And we have no way of knowing who was listening to his geography lessons.

The early winter respite is brief. It seems that winter comes on with a vengeance. On January 17, Taylor writes, "Snowed all day & commenced blowing a gale near night – had 24 scholars." On January 18, "Tremendous blustering all day – had 16 scholars." January 19, "Very blustering – stayed at home but went to Norton Hill near night – mail did not get through." January 21, "Snowed last night & nearly all day. Snow deep – had only 12 scholars." And so this pattern of snow, wind and drifting snow continues until the end of January. In February he speaks of thawing and only one snowy day. In March he records a few snowy days but nothing severe. In fact, on March 9, he makes this diary entry. "Commenced snowing – closed school today – had a full house & all things went off satisfactory." On the last day of school in these early one room schoolhouses the pupils put on a program for parents and visitors; sometimes, the teacher would give small tokens or presents. March would be really the end of school for R.E. this year. On

March 20 he writes, "went to Durham & engaged Miss Cornelia Reed to teach school at \$4.00 per week." This would be a summer term and, in December, Taylor does not sign on to teach a winter term as he had done last year.

If R.E. is not in the classroom, he is still involved. Last year he had gotten his niece, Arvelia Lord, a job teaching at the school near Aaron Jennings where she also boarded. This year the February 9 entry reads, "Went to see Mr. Asbury Lamb to get school for Arvelia rec'd some encouragement." Apparently he has not been falsely optimistic because on March 2, we read, "Closed arrangements with Asbury Lamb for Arvelia to teach at Lambs Corners at \$2.50 a week." Then on May 6 he takes her to her school to begin. On the day before he had written, "Went to see Mother and carried Celinda to her school. So it is revealed that Arvelia's sister, Celinda Lord, also has a school to teach although we are not told where. All we know is that Mrs. Rufus Gifford gives R.E. \$13.00 on September 30 to be paid to Celinda. When September 28 comes, Taylor pays the Miss Reed of Durham her \$30.89 Public School money. It is evident that she is not coming back for the winter term because, on October 4, the entry reads, "Miss Reed came here with Mr. Wm R. Cowles of Durham to apply for the school for him." This is 19 year old William R. Cowles who marries Delia Tripp and becomes the father of Augusta Hilzinger. Taylor does not say if Cowles is hired but we conclude not since, on October 28, he writes, "Mr. Julius Thayer came here & hired him to teach our school for the winter for \$35.00 per month & board around." Exactly two weeks later, on November 11, he pens these lines. "Went down to school house to install Mr. Thayer into school & he came up at night & stayed with us." So Mr. Thayer begins to experience the boarding around his contract calls for.

If we have been wondering why R.E. Taylor has the authority to make these school decisions we get our answer on October 8th. On that day, "Went to school meeting & was elected Trustee again." We now know he has been doing the duties of trustee for a year already. This is why we find him doing things like taking 24 feet of pine to make a door for the school house and going to John C. Nelson to engage three cords of wood for the same school house.

Before we leave the subject of school, there is the question of where his resident nephew is attending. Little hints like the entry on October 29 in which

he writes, "Went to Norton Hill & paid \$3.27 for school bill & tax" make me think that Charles Lord is in school there. It may well be that Howard, who will be seven in another month, is also attending school with Charles. Perhaps, that is the reason that R.E. records his attendance at the closing day exercises at the Norton Hill school on March 29th.

This summary may give an impression that school is Richard Taylor's main concern this year. Actually, it is only one of many. There is still a farm to be run. Again this year there is no mention of a resident hired man. Young Charlie Lord is still living there and it appears he is helping out towards his board. Extra help is brought in on a daily basis when needed, to plough and plant. On May 21, Taylor writes, "Cleared stone, logs & pine roots from corn ground." On June 1, the entry reads, "Hot – ploughed corn ground all day." After three full days of ploughing, on June 5, he "Finished ploughing and commenced dragging." On the 7th, Ezra Burroughs, Charles Ingalls, Alonzo Hunt, Frank Spalding and Curtis Tripp come in to help him plant the corn.

He wasn't going to have all that labor go to waste. On the following day, this is his entry. "Went down in the woods & killed 4 crows & hung them in the corn field", as if to say to other crows, "Leave my corn alone or you'll look like this." The following week, as a return favor, he helps plough and plant on the farms of Ezra Burroughs and Elihu Ingalls, a sort of a trading off of work among farmers. And they would help a widow too. On July 10, R.E. records, "Went to Mrs. Hunt's bee and sowed her Buckwheat in forenoon." June is hot and so good for growing corn that on June 27 he writes, "Curtis Tripp helped me hoe corn all day."

In July he ploughs and sows his wheat and buckwheat. One concludes that he must have had hay and straw in the barn left over from last year. On May 20, he writes, "Rec'd \$100 of John Maybee on my hay – making in all that I have rec'd so far \$130.00 & then \$170 yet due." And on July 9, "Took a load of straw to Cocksackie & put on Hamilton & Smith's boat – Charlie went along & traded considerable. Commenced raining before we got home."

This year's haying begins on July 15 and finished on August 6 and he notes that 47 loads of hay were cut this season. On August 7, he "Paid Charlie Lord \$2.00 for helping in hay"

The harvesting overlaps somewhat. At the end of July they are cutting wheat and rye and on August

8 they "finished cutting oats. On August 26-28, he cuts barley and on September 2, he plants his winter wheat. The buckwheat is cut and threshed in the fall and, on October 7, R.E. tells us, "Cleaned up Buckwheat – 51 bushels on the floor." This crop of buckwheat necessitates carrying it to D. Stannard's mill to have it ground into flour. On October 23, R.E. "Brought home my buckwheat flour." This process of bringing in the crops and putting away what will be needed for the coming winter is a fundamental action of farmers. It is no wonder that this farmer has been so consistent in recording these matters in his diary.

The comings and going of family, particularly his mother and Sarah's family, this year is sometimes puzzling. He does not explain and one can only make up their own scenario. I have been trying to track the whereabouts of Mother Phebe. Her former home on Wright St. is now the home of son Charles who married last year. Phebe spent a good part of last year with R.E. and Louisa. The first mention of her this year is on Sunday, April 7th. He writes, "took Louisa over home & we stopped at Wm's to see Mother." That places her back on Wright Street with son William and his wife Polly (Traver). She is still there on May 5 and he does not record when she comes back to Sunset Road, but she is there because the entry on Sunday July 28 reads, "Louisa & I went to Freehold to meeting & afterwards I carried Mother down to Wright Street & back." On October 12, "Mother went down to Wm." On November 20, he "Mended plaster over home – Mother came home with us." I'm not sure if the plastering over home means at Phebe's former home, but it is apparent that she does not have a home now and her time is divided between her sons.

If poor Phebe seems to be in limbo consider the plight of sister Sarah and young daughter Rosa. Their existence has been pretty nomadic this year. As the year begins, Mr. Cook from Cook's Hotel in Livingstonville brings Sarah, Celinda and Rosa down to Taylor's. It must be that Sarah has finished her work there. Since Phebe no longer has her house they are not living there but R.E. does take Sarah to spend a week with Charles who is living in that house. On January 30, R.E. writes, "Eli Coffin came after Sarah & Rosa." From this we assume that Sarah is helping out in another household. This arrangement lasts until April 14 when the entry reads, "Sarah, Rosa & Celinda came to stay a while – went to hear Mr. Coffin preach at the school house." This tells us that the

household that Sarah works in is that of a preacher but we do not find out where he lives.

On April 25, R.E. takes Sarah down to Charles Taylor's to bring some of her belongings up to the Taylor house. And just two weeks after their arrival Richard Edwin makes this notation: "Carried Sarah & Rosa to Daniel Doolittle." So, for a time, Sarah will be back in her old neighborhood in Medusa. Daniel Doolittle ran a grist mill next to the creamery there. The Doolittle house is now the home of Porter Wright.

Sarah is not mentioned again until December 15 when John T. Milton brings her down for a visit. We do not know if she is working now for the owner of Medusa's paper mill or is still at the Doolittle's.

There is mention of only one funeral this year although I'm sure there were many more deaths. "Went to Hunting Miller's funeral at Greenville" was the entry on Sunday, June 23rd. Likewise, he mentioned only one marriage. On February 26, although he taught that day, his entry tells us, "Mary Hunt stayed all night with our children & Louisa & I went to S.R. Potter to J. Utter's wedding party." This wedding presents a bit of a mystery for me. On March 20, we read, "Took 17 doz eggs to Russ & Avery for \$4.23 – traded 22¢ of them & then over to second part of wedding at J. Utter's." I do not know what to make of this unless the first was a pre-wedding dinner and the actual wedding day is March 20th.

Another social event besides his lodge meetings is the yearly trip to the Cairo Fair on September 19th. On September 26, "Louisa went to Wright St. picnic" while R.E. stays home and finished cutting his buckwheat. But Taylor has his day on October 2 as he recounts, "Fair – Put my horse before Jerry Goff's wagon & he went with me to the Catskill Fair – could not sell pork – heard Ex. Gov. Layman deliver his address & saw Major General Anderson there."

And on December 21, the children get a treat. He writes simply, "Finished threshing today – took Charlie & Howard to see magic Show at Norton Hill."

Addie seems to be with her Utter grandparents most of this year again. Taylor records in his diary his and Louisa's visits to her there. On February 11 he buys a Primer for her which makes me think she may be going to school there. On September 15 he says, "Took Louisa over home and brought Addie home with us, but on December 19, "took Addie to Grandpa." So she missed by two days any chance to

go to the Magic Show with the boys.

The final social event must have impressed Taylor. He records it in detail on December 29th. "Went to Freehold in Eve to "Ming Chow" – A Burman lectured on the customs, manners & religion of his country men. He showed his turban, sandals & dress, idols, symbols & brass parchment & gave a description of the country – gave him 10¢"

I can picture that Louisa has some happy days in June. On the 10th of that month her husband "Sent \$90 by John Maybee for 2 sewing machines." Surely she would have been happy with just one so we wonder why there are two. I don't know where they were shipped from but ten days later Taylor writes, "Paid 70 cts for carting sewing machines and brought them home." Can you picture the scene? It is certainly not an ordinary household purchase. On June 22, he explains, "Took A.J. Utter sewing machine to him – rec'd \$47.00 cash in full." So Louisa's brother Alan also has a happy wife. The machines are mentioned again just before Christmas when R.E. pens these lines. "Took some Butternut down to have Matt make cover for machine."

There have been two prospective buyers for the farm in 1867. On October 18, "Mr. Hayes came over to look at farm & all that is divided is the winter grain. He has till the first of the week after next to take it at the price." Taylor doesn't tell us the price now but on Christmas Eve, "A man by the name of Palmer came to look at the farm & stayed all night." On Christmas day, Taylor gives us the answer. "Gave Palmer the refusal of my farm for a week at \$4000." On the last day of the year Mr. Palmer comes back with a Mr. Campbell to look again and request two weeks to bring his wife to see it. Whether she approves or not is not clear but since we know that the farm is sold in 1869 we know that for whatever reason this sale falls through.

The last venture in 1867 is something new to the diaries. On December 20, "Went to Benj. Palmer & paid him \$2.40 for 24 woodchuck skins." On the 24th, he makes tan liquor. And on December 27 he fleshes out the skins and puts them in the tanning liquor. Three days later he writes, "Worked at hides all day." What is the outcome of all this labor? Perhaps he plans to make a lap robe for the cutter. After all there are still three months of winter left to face. We will see in 1868 just what kind of contribution 24 woodchucks can make to Taylor family comfort.