

Greenville Local History Group Newsletter

April 2000, Issue 114

Share Session

The 2000 GLHG season opened with a share session, our traditional way of airing the winter activities we have found ourselves in. In attendance were Toot & Betty Vaughn, Connie Teator, David & Judy Rundell, Harriett Rasmussen, Kathie Williams, Dot Blenis, Vern Sharp, Gretta Knowles, Gerald Boomhower, Jeanne Bear, Ron Golden, and yours truly – a slightly larger than usual opening meeting.

Credit should first be given to the organizers of the pot luck dinner held in March at the Episcopal parsonage. A thank you goes not only to Betty Vaughn and Phyllis Beechert, the usual "instigators", but also to Judy & David Rundell and Dot Blenis.

We started with the pooling of our resources to help Gretta Knowles try to find more information about the Knowles family. Gretta's husband is Al, whose father was George Knowles (1895-1980), whose father was Hiram Knowles (married Tilla Youngs), born about 1870. I think Gretta had some notes that indicated that Hiram's father was William Knowles, and the research was continuing. Of course, one of Greenville's early forefathers was Eleazer Knowles, and a generation or two is known of that family. It would nice to know what, if any, connection there is between Gretta's research and our town history. Call Gretta at 966-5719 if you have any more information.

The "Top Historic Houses" sheet supplied in the annual review are slow in

coming. Two, in fact. I'd like to compile whatever number of sheets I collect by the end of May. If you'd like your ballot counted, make sure I get it.

Toot and Betty brought in a big envelope of material for the files – three year-books, a Mabel Parker Smith history of the county, pages from the 1977 Methodist Church calendar, photos of school and elsewhere, and Episcopal Church material.

The Westerlo Historical Society 2000 Calendar was passed around and enjoyed. I always look for good ideas to incorporate into ours.

During the winter, I had purchased a copy of Thelma Bell's *Reflections: A Lifetime of Memories*. Anyone reading this will understand why we should try to record some of the life we have lived.

Marion Winyall wrote a page or two of her memories of growing up in Freehold, as well as sketching, and labeling, a map as she recalled Freehold. I've copied the text of the letter, and will include the map sometime. A special thank you to Marion for recreating her memories.



Other News:

The Greene County Historical Society and the Catskill Center for Conservation and Development is sponsoring a barn tour on April 29 (rain date of May 13). I've copied the info sheet later in this newsletter.

The starting point is the grounds of the Greene County Historical Society. *The sheet says that only 30 tickets are available.

A brochure about the restoration of Thomas Cole's Cedar Grove was passed around. If you'd like to know more, or to help out, contact Ray Beecher of the Greene County Historical Society.

It appears that the Presbyterian Church is up for sale. I don't have many details at this point, but the topic immediately draws attention for its historic value to the community. Stay tuned for more details, and feel free to do whatever you can to keep us informed about any facts about the situation.

The demolition of the Sherrill house garnered much attention, and will continue to do so as plans for the property become available. At this point, the public information I have is as follows: The owner of the property submitted a proposal to the Planning Board to subdivide the 3.7 acres. The Planning Board (of which I am a member) was required to deny the proposal because it would have meant dividing the land into undersized parcels not allowed by town law. Next, the owner of the property will go to

the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA), which will hear the request to grant a variance so that the owner can go ahead with the project. It is now up to the ZBA to hear this request.

Thus, I would urge you to contact members of the ZBA (Jim Goode, Ken Dudley, Ron Roth, Carol Schreiber, Len DeGiovine) to let them know of your opinions about that property. In addition, there will be a public hearing which is the usual place to publicly air one's opinions. If there is a date for that meeting, I'll try to let you know. (The ZBA April meeting, usually the 4th Tuesday of the month, was canceled.)

At this point, no plans for the property have been announced, and it should be mentioned that the property owner has no requirement to do so at this point.

Our **next meeting is May 8**. What were the events and trends that shaped 20th century Greenville or were the most newsworthy? These could be national, regional, and/or strictly local. I'll start compiling your answers during next month's meeting. If you'd like to share your opinions, feel free to contact me or have someone bring your notes to the May 8 meeting.

town" there was a lot more going on then than other times. Pop(Leon Wood) owned and ran the general store on the four corners and was also the postmaster and Mother (Marguerite Hall Wood) was the postmasters. The post office was in the left back corner of the store. The mail arrived every day from Cairo, I think. Maybe from Catlike. It came in a covered pick-up truck that was referred to as "the stage". People would wait around the back of the store in anticipation of their mail being put in their boxes that had a two number combination lock. Summer also brought church fairs and boarders. It was a busy time for my folks. We pretty much lived on our front porch. My sister and I even slept out there! I remember an organ grinder, with a monkey, came around every summer and occasionally a few gypsies. I guess it was a pretty typical small town and the depression was in full swing. Bums or hobos would come to the back door begging for food. My mother and grandmother would feed them- outside- but I had to stay inside, peering at them through the screen door.

Our milkman was a local farmer, Irv Cameron, who lived up the Sunny Hill road. He delivered milk in his horse and wagon, ladeling it out of his big milk cans into our smaller containers. It was raw milk, of course. I can't remember when we were first able to buy pasteurized.

In a town where there were only about 200 people- probably less- for nine months of the year- ones social life pretty much revolved around the church. Pop was Treasurer and Mother was the President of the Ladies Aid. Every fall a "chicken pie supper" was held to raise funds and it was a big deal!! Lots of excitement !! Everyone was involved.

We ate a lot of wildlife. In the fall there were always one or two deer hanging on the tree out back which were shared with several families in the village. Often there was a pan of rabbits, birds or a fat squirrel soaking in salt water too get the gamey taste out of them- but you had to watch out for the buckshot. My grandmother would cook them in a deep iron kettle that looked like it came off of a pioneer's fire place. The men couldn't wait to get the dogs and go hunting !!

Election Day was always a treat for the kids- a day off from school- just to hang around watching everyone come into town in Model A's and T's- even horse and wagons. Voting was done in the annex of Jenny Park's hotel and Jenny always had lunch for anyone in her "tea room". The only thing I remember that was always served was oyster stew. I don't know why- it might have been some kind of tradition. The front of the hotel was an ice cream parlor -or "tea room"- with a soda fountain, player piano and those little tables and chairs.

The telephone office was in ~~Whitbeck~~ Whitbeck's house- #51. It was just a two position switchboard. When a crank was turned at a residence a corresponding tab would drop on the top portion of the switchboard- a plug was then inserted in a corresponding jack on the bottom half. I worked there several summers and it was a lot of fun!! I had left by the time the dial system came in. There were many people on the party lines. Everything considered growing up in Freehold was a good experience and one I look back on fondly.

BARN TOUR

Recognizing over 150 years of the evolution of the barn in
Coxsackie and New Baltimore, Greene County, New York.

SATURDAY APRIL 29, 2000
(Raindate – May 13, 2000)

Sponsored by the Greene County Historical Society and
Catskill Center for Conservation and Development.

SCHEDULED AGENDA

- 9:00 a.m. Slide Show Presentation by J. Theodore Hilscher, Vedder Library on the grounds of the Greene County Historical Society, Route 9W, Coxsackie, New York.
- 10:15 a.m. Dutch Barn. 13-sided Barn on the grounds of the Greene County Historical Society. The Bronck family operated this farm from 1663 to 1939. Most significant among the numerous outbuildings are the circa 1790 Dutch Barn – one of only three left in Greene County - and the circa 1833 13-sided barn.
- 11:00 a.m. Wolfe-Dietz Barn, Deans Mill Road, West Coxsackie, Mr. & Mrs. Walter Dietz. Meadow Falls Farm has been home to seven generations of the Wolfe/Dietz family. The English barn, circa 1810, is an excellent example of an early ground, three bay barn once built by the tens of thousands in upstate New York. This barn has a hay press and a rare swing beam.
- 11:30 a.m. Van Slyke Farm, Deans Mill Road, West Coxsackie, Bronck and Edgar Van Slyke. This is the last operating dairy farm in the town of New Baltimore. According to local legend, War of 1812 militiamen stayed in a barn still being used today. Also on-site is a circa 1918 bank barn.
- 12:00 a.m. Lisk Barn, Roberts Hill Road, Hannacroix, Mr. & Mrs. Theodore Hilscher. English –style, swing beam barn built in 1853. Also unique circa-1915 chicken house. The Lisks were primarily apple and pear growers but, like all farmers of long ago, “diversified” into other areas: dairy, chickens, pigs, and sheep.
- 12:30 a.m. Berzal Farm, Route 9W, Coxsackie. Brick Dairy Barns, tile silo built circa-1944.
- 1:00 p.m. Tour ends back at Vedder Library.

Thirty tickets will be available on a first come, first-serve basis.
Donation: \$ 4.00 - Greene County Historical Society Members
\$ 6.00 - Non-Members

Call: Olga Santora at (518) 731-8704

**TRANSPORTATION NOT PROVIDED. CARPOOLING STRONGLY
RECOMMENDED. SELF-GUIDED TOURING NOT ALLOWED.**