

Greenville Local History Group Newsletter

April 2003, Issue 138

Share Session

Happy Spring! The warm weather turned out a flock of us – Dot Blenis, Connie Teator, David and Harriet Gumpport, Phyllis Beechert, Martha Turon, Mimi Weeks, Kathie Williams, Betty Vaughn, Harriett Rasmussen, Rosemary Lambert, Ron Golden, Walter Ingalls, Orlie and Jeanne Bear, Larry and Dot Hesel, Len Gardiner, Edna McAneny, and Don Teator. If I left anyone out, I apologize; there was so many of us, my notes may have gotten discombobulated.

NOTICE! The *Pot-Luck Dinner* is on. Save May 7, a Wednesday evening, at 6 p.m., at the Episcopal parsonage. (The regular GLHG meeting is still on for the following Monday.) Phyllis (966-5226) and Betty (966-8518) will be the organizers, so please RSVP and let them know what you are bringing (or even ask for suggestions). I would guess a few helping hands a bit earlier would help also.

We started off with a review of changes since last fall (assessment notices, the Pioneer, rumors of a store filling the former Ames building, a rougher than usual winter, Imagex, etc.

The annual newsletter's assessment roll appears to have garnered a fair amount of interest. David Gumpport even made a tally of different categories. He noted 225 farms, over a hundred of which were of ninety acres or more. So, do you think Greenville has changed in a hundred years?

Rosemary Lambert gave a copy of a Vacation Guide for the files, as well as Baker genealogy material. Also, Rosemary and I recounted our interview of Grant Mickelsen back in February. (I need to copy pictures! Thanks for the reminder, Rosemary.)

Mimi brought a copy of a Stevens store ad, something I should copy for newsletter use. Also, she brought copies of paintings of Gideon and Anna (Buckingham) Hickok. (More photos to copy!)

Kathie brought some photos of fires, post cards, a comics page, and a Good News letter from WWII.

In between we got sidetracked as usual, with at least one of the topics being the road base of our state roads, especially in Freehold and Norton Hill.

Harriett finished off the evening with her retelling of Eleanor Goff Ingalls diary for the second half of 1916, a copy of which is included in this newsletter. If you think Harriett is doing a great job, tell her. (This is my way of encouraging Harriett to keep plugging away on her wonderful storytelling.)

The next meeting will be a special program – A History of Greenville in a slide show, done by me. The community will be invited (more than our usual amount), and many of the slides have been seen before. However, with Greenville's bicentennial year going on, it is a good time to retell our history.

As I was saying, it was busy meeting. And so, the next meeting (May 12) will be in the large community room, but don't forget the potluck the Wednesday before (May 7).

Till then, let's encourage this warm spring weather to keep perking us up.

Take care,



**The Diary of
Eleanor Goff Ingalls**

1916 – Part II

retold by Harriett Rasmussen

Setting the Scene

Eleanor (20) and Stanley (23) and 18 month old Edna are renting a house from David Losee in Surprise. Originally, Irv and Alice Cameron lived on the other side of the house but moved earlier this year. They have papered and painted and now have the whole house.

Carrie Goff makes her home with them – Eleanor being her youngest child and only living daughter. During this year, Carrie often spends time at her only sibling, Lillie Ver Plank, in Norton Hill. Lillie is now a widow. She has a daughter Mary Bell living next door to Powell's store, and children Grace & John I are at home.

Stanley has bought the teamster business from his father Trum Ingalls and makes daily trips from Surprise to Cocksackie, and the next day from Surprise to Greenville, Norton Hill, etc.

1916

Eleanor, since she has returned to being a country girl, seems to enjoy keeping chickens. On the top of each page in her diary, she records the number of eggs she has collected on that day. She sells her extra eggs at the store where they trade and that is also faithfully recorded just above the number collected. May of 1916 begins with this note, "I sat a hen towards night for the folks up home." The following day she sells eggs at 18¢ a dozen although in January she had gotten as much as 34¢ a dozen. As with everything else the old principle of supply and demand is the determining factor. The hens were laying heavier in May. By July 1st, she has 54 chickens. On that day she takes 28 and 1/6 dozen and gets \$6.16 for them. Two days later she takes 11 dozen for \$2.64 so her egg business is thriving.

They are still housecleaning in May and on the 2nd there is a little squeezed-in notation at the bottom of the page which

says, "Stanley beat the carpet at night." The following day, "I got the front room ready to put the carpet down while Mamma mended it. I put the carpet down and we put the furniture back after Stanley got home." This was the normal process before the advent of vacuum cleaners which did away with that need to take up the carpets for beating in the open air.

It is in this month that she writes, "Heard that Marguerite got the West Greenville school." [This is the school house that, when it became obsolete, Trum Ingalls bought and converted into a home for him and Carrie and their youngest daughter, Leona. Leona would marry and leave this home only to return later in life. It was her last home before moving to St. Joseph's Villa. This little girl who was 10 years old in October of 1916 has now had her 96th birthday.]

And now in May of 1916, Eleanor's 19 year old niece Marguerite Smith is teaching school there on Ingalside Road. She is the daughter of Vern Smith and lives at home, with her sister Ariel, in the house we know as Bunny and Ozzie Gunderson's place.

May 5th also brings this news. "Ariel came home with Stanley. At night Carrie, Ed, Stanley and I went up to the Minstrel Show at Greenville with Rob Blenis and his wife. Had a nice time. Stayed a few minutes to the dance. Got home about 11:30." I think 17 year old Ariel Smith has come to keep her Grandma and Edna company while everyone goes to the big doings at the Vanderbilt Opera House.

On the 10th of May, while Mamma is sowing lettuce, radish, onion, cabbage, cauliflower and parsnip seeds in the garden which Stanley has just harrowed the night before, Eleanor and Stanley stop at Cunningham's to bring home their old bed which is a part of the bedroom suite they had ordered on April 26th.

Shopping trips don't come very often but the one on May 12th was worth a whole diary page. It goes like this, "The wind blew something terrible all day. Carrie and I went with Nina and Henry

[O’Keeffe] in their car to Albany – an Overland. Had a lovely ride but the wind didn’t make it as pleasant as it would have been. I got a coat, cloth for Edna’s coat and cloth for a dress for her corset cover, silk for a waist and silk to go with my wedding dress. Got home about seven. Awful tired.” It appears that Mamma will be busy at the sewing machine for a while. Eleanor has decided to have her wedding dress made over and, on June 5th, she writes of taking it apart.

The visiting back and forth between Eleanor and Carrie is pretty much daily. If Mamma is visiting at Vern’s or in Norton Hill at her sister Lilly Ver Plank’s and Stanley does not get home from an “up trip”, Eleanor takes Edna and stays with Carrie all night. On May 19th, they are at Carrie’s and Edna has one of her little mischievous spells. Eleanor writes, “Edna broke an egg and got it all over. I felt so bad.” Two days later, “Edna broke a pitcher of cream.” It seems that this is a busy little 19 month old.

And just at a time when Eleanor is preparing a Sunday dinner party to include Elgirtha (19) and her boyfriend Scott Ellis (18); Ruth (16) and her boyfriend Merritt Elliott (17); Clarence (21) and his date Florence Garrett; Carrie (25) and Ed (30) who have been married five years; and Stanley (23) and Eleanor (20) who have been married two years. I can just picture this gathering of ten young people who had “a lovely time.” The only ones in this group who did not ultimately become a couple were Florence Garrett and Clarence, who in November of 1917 would marry Alliene Beers.

The day after the party, Omar Adriance delivers the dresser and wash stand which are apparently more pieces of the bedroom suite that they had bought at Cunningham’s in April. And, on his “down trip,” Stanley brings home their rug from S. & H. Green Trading Stamps. I was surprised that those trading stamps were in use in these early years. I can remember using them in the 1950s.

Spring comes at last. On May 25th, Eleanor sows her flower seeds: sweet peas, nasturtiums, and pansies. And the lilacs are starting to bloom. Five days later Stanley finishes planting peas and corn. But it is June 3rd before he sets the tomato plants. On June 5th it hails hard and the ground is quite white but it does no damage. On June 10th, they have radishes for dinner and on June 12th they have lettuce. The garden is producing and soon the canning routine will begin.

On May 28th, Eleanor writes this about that Sunday’s happenings. “We hurried around in the morning & got ready & went up to Warren’s (all the folks were there). Drove Tom and he was afraid of autos & motorcycles. He acted quite bad. Had a lovely time to Warrens. Coming home we went over to Ransies a few minutes. Carrie & Ed took Edna home with them. Tom acted awful. He tipped the wagon over but didn’t break anything. We came the old stage road and didn’t meet only one car.”

I don’t know if that episode prompted Stanley to buy a new rig but two days later Eleanor reports, “We bought Ransies horse and carriage. It is lovely.” They drive Fanny home and Harold [Matthews] drives their team. [Harold is the son of Arch Matthews and a brother to Everett (Pic) Matthews who just died a few weeks ago.]

The next night they hurry through their chores and ride to Obadiah King’s, on to Result and home. The horse drives grand. After this initial outing they often go out for a ride in the evening if Stanley gets home early.

Mamma has been away for a while. I’m not sure where but Vern’s folks bring her home on June 4th. Eleanor and Edna miss her especially when Stanley is late or has to stay over on his “up trips.”

June 12th is a lovely day. Just perfect to wash and dry the silk of her wedding dress. It was just a week ago that she had written, “I am ripping my wedding dress up & going to make it over.” And June 14th (which Eleanor notes as Flag

Day) finds Mamma sewing on the dress. By the next day she has it all done except the underskirt.

I think movies may have been coming to Greenville around this time because on June 19th there is a reference to going up there to see "The Artist and the Girl" which was so good they hurry up and go back to see, "Tempest and Sunshine." This time they sit with Stanley's cousin Raymond Ingalls and his wife Carrie [Moore] [Eleanor's brother Leslie is married to Carrie's sister, Margaret]. Two days later, in spite of being real tired after strawberrying, when Stanley gets home they "hustled and got ready" to go up and see "St. Elmo." Eleanor was used to movies as a city girl and she has a passion for them all her life. As I read her diaries over all the years, where her entries so often told what movie she had seen, I doubted that there was any person who had seen a greater number in a lifetime. During her Norton Hill years it was rare for there to be a shopping trip to Albany that did not end with a movie.

Now that she has a horse that is gentler than Old Tom, Eleanor begins to make trips up to Greenville and Norton Hill alone. On June 27th, she writes, "Went & asked Ed if he would help me harness Fanny. He came over after he had his dinner and then I started for Norton Hill. Went and had her shod. Aunt Lillie came home with me."

1916 has an unusually hot month of July and there are recording of lots of thunder showers. But it is good for the garden and the first pickings of peas and beans are something Eleanor is proud to record. She is picking raspberries, currants and back caps to can or make jam.

This seems to be the month for church socials. She and Libbie Losee are busy planning and practicing for theirs. On July 20th, she and Bernice King decorate the church and that night they all attend the social and have "a real nice time." A week later she and Stanley have another

"real nice time" at the Lambs Corners social.

Mamma turns 58 on July 28th and her 17 year old nephew, Harold Bell, the only child of Mary (Ver Plank) Bell, rides his wheel down from Norton Hill and stays overnight. ON Sunday, after a trip up home to Trum and Carries she writes, "There is Infantile Paralysis up to Austin's (near Susie Beers'). We feel very worried about it. Stanley's mother Carrie also refers to this in her diaries and expresses her fears. Those fears seem to have been well founded because, on August 5th, Eleanor tells of "a case of Infantile Paralysis to Ed Parks." Susie (Guild) Beers took boarders. Her house was just a little below where Carol Bryant's house is now.

The extreme heat continues into August and on the 7th Eleanor writes, "Stanley says it is the hottest day he has driven a team from Cocksackie." But heat and storms are not the only news this month. There are baseball games at Greenville and extra excitement on August 16th. Eleanor tells it like this. "At night Stanley and I, also Leon [Mabie] went down to see the automobile wreck. Mrs. Sanford's car is a complete wreck & William Brady's is banged up considerable."

On August 22nd, Stanley makes his "up trip," goes on to the Cairo Fair and stays overnight at his parents. The following day explains Eleanor's fair experience. She writes, "Stanley & Elgirtha came down in the morning. Then we got ready & went to Cairo Fair. Had a nice time all forenoon but in the afternoon we had to set in our wagon all the time (thunder showers continually). It rained something terrible when we came home. Got soaking wet." They have better luck on the 31st when they go to the Altamont Fair and it is a beautiful day. They meet her brother Leslie's family there and she explains the trip home like this. "Coming home we stopped at Warner's Lake & the rest took a ride on it. Our lights were awful poor & we rode until pitch dark without

any. Got awful nervous. Got home about ten." Eleanor doesn't have very good luck on her return trips. On the night of September 4th, they go to the Clam Bake at Grapeville and she has her usual good time but the entry ends, "Coming home my hat flew off and I lost my bracelet."

The ultimate in fairs comes in September. The September 10th entry reads, "Hustled & got dinner at 11:30 as Stanley had to be up to Warrens at one. Ransie took him. Stanley started for the State Fair with William V. (Vanderbilt); Pierce S. (Stevens); George V. (Vanderbilt); Charles P. (?); & Warren with William V's car." It appears that Ethel & Ransie are staying with Eleanor because the next morning Ransie makes the "down trip" for Stanley while Ethel helps with the wash. Two days later Eleanor gets a letter from Stanley. I wonder if all the others took time to write home.

The boys arrive back in Greenville on September 14th so they have been gone four days. Of course, they have a lot to tell. Ethel, Eleanor and Edna go up to pick up Stanley and they all have dinner at mother Carrie's. Imagine the dinner table talk of what the fair was like. Ransie and Ethel go home and on Saturday, Stanley takes Mamma to Aunt Lillie's in anticipation of Bert's folks taking them to Altamont to visit Leslie's family. There are always so many in and out and sleeping over that one can understand when, on Sunday, Eleanor writes, "We had a lovely quiet Sunday."

But it doesn't stay quiet long. The following night Clarence stays overnight and Ariel comes down with Stanley and his wagon load of 49 barrels.

This is the year that Eleanor turns 21 years old on September 25th and when Stanley comes home from his "up trip," he brings her a lovely sweater. His gift of a toilet set had come two days earlier in the same package which contained shirts for Edna instead of the drawers they had ordered. Edna gives her Mom a special scare to celebrate the birthday. In the morning she runs away to the concrete

bridge and in the afternoon she runs to Carrie's house.

In spite of the hard frost the night before on October 11th, Lambs Corners has their annual picnic. Carrie and Eleanor each rush through their housework and start for the picnic with Edna. Her mother says, "Had an awful good time. Edna was real good all day – of course very mischievous." She is going to be two years old this month so that may account for some of the mischief.

Eleanor's 17 year old cousin Grace VerPlank, comes down from Norton Hill on the next morning for a three day visit. They take Fanny on a long ride down to Honey Hollow and back to Urlton. There would be no way for either of them to know how few of these good times they would have left. Just two years later Grace would be a sudden victim of the 1918 influenza epidemic.

In late October Eleanor and Edna go up home to spend the day and she reports, "Had a real good time but Grandpa is very feeble. He hardly knew us." These are the days when the family is on the homestead on Old Plank Road and Trum and Carrie live on one side of the house while his parents, Adaline and Ransom Ingalls, live on the other. Grandpa Ransom is now 80 years old and failing. A trip back up home on Sunday prompted this report, "Went in to see Grandpa. He is awful poorly. His throat is filling up. Morphine has to be injected." And the following day, on October 30th, "Grandpa passed away tonight at nine o'clock." [I have added that date in the back of genealogy of the Ingalls family published in 1978 since it only said he died in 1916.] On November 2nd, Leon drove our team for us and we went up home to Grandpa's funeral."

Grandpa's death may have started Stanley thinking about his own mortality because on November 9th, one month before his 24th birthday Eleanor's entry reads, "Orrin Stevens and Dr. Charles [McCabe] came down to examine Stanley for insurance."

It was back in January that Joe Goff, Eleanor's youngest brother, moved his family from Richmond Hill up to the country. Florence is a city girl and by August 1st it is apparent that she is unhappy. ON that day, Eleanor records, "Stanley & I went up to see Florence and tried to get her to come home with us. She didn't care to. She is awful lonesome." They make frequent visits through August and Florence and little Beatrice do come for a week at the end of the month. We don't know if Florence goes ahead of him but by November 20th we read, "We went up to the Ellis house and finished packing Joe's things." The following day when Stanley makes his "down trip," Joe goes with him. [I think that was the day he left country life behind for good.] No one explains the situation but the mail on December 19th brings Christmas cards from Joe's folks. Even his city life would be brief. At 28 years, he was also a victim of the influenza epidemic on October 26, 1918 – just one day before his cousin, Grace Ver Plank. And, even in death, he did not get to return to the country like the rest of his sibling eventually did. He is buried in a Long Island cemetery.

Thanksgiving rolls around on the last day of November. The day before, Eleanor drops Mamma off at her sister Lillie's [in Norton Hill where Walt Pierce lived]. She and Edna go on to Ingalls where all the family congregates the next day. Mother Carrie is just getting over one of her sick headaches and Eleanor says, "I helped them all I could."

After the festivities she and Stanley go over to look at the Spees house in Greenville. Apparently they are looking to move but she writes, "I don't know whether we want it or not." [This is the house which we knew as Jesse's Elm Shade and was razed about 1989.] About two weeks later, on December 12th the entry gives us this resolution, "We got ready and went over to Ford Rundell's to see about hiring the house. In the afternoon Ford Rundell and Stanley went up to Greenville and Stanley hired it." So we can expect that 1917 will

include a move to the house which then stood on the site where the Elementary School now stands. A peek ahead finds them moving in April.

The rest of this year is filled with Christmas shopping; early Christmas at Vern's and again the big family celebration at the old homestead. The joy of that day is tempered by the news that Mrs. Long's baby who was so sick when Eleanor visited her on December 21st died on Christmas Day.

The following day Libbie (Losee), Clarence, Mrs. Ed Parks, Lulu and Maud come to practice songs for what she proclaims an "awful said funeral."

On Thanksgiving evening Eleanor had ended her entry with, "A great many of them played pinochle." She may have wished she knew how to play so she would not feel left out. About a week later she writes, "Ed & Carrie came up in the evening & I learned to play pinochle. We had an awful good time." This would be a source of entertainment when the couples get together for many years to come. And Stanley and Eleanor would play tow-handed pinochle on a quiet evening alone as revealed by the close of many diary entries.