

Greenville Local History Group Newsletter

October 2005, Issue 161

Share Session

A dozen braved the wet Columbus Day Monday: Larry and Dot Hesel, Ron Golden, Connie Teator, Mimi Weeks, Phyllis Beechert, David Rundell, Martha Turon, Walter Ingalls, Kathie Williams, Stephanie Ingalls, and Don Teator.

Walter filled us in on the Ingalls Reunion, 2005 version. Which led to Ingalls stories (the love of ham, for one), other reunions (surprisingly few), and a couple of land deeds.

Walter brought in a deed from Augustine Prevost (yes, that one, the one from Hush-Hush) to Jacob Ingalls (of homestead fame on Elm Lane) in 1792. Another deed involved John Ingalls. The wax seal of Augustine Prevost decorated the deeds and was certainly a center of discussion.

Don brought in info from a visit with Betty Welter, especially her genealogy involving the families Woodruff, Conklin, and Lockwood. Also shown were some school photos and a photo of the dance hall next to the hotel (today, the Town Building, better know as the Pioneer). Betty is the daughter of Harold and Helen (Conklin) Woodruff.

Stephanie brought in some duplications of old photos – Warren Ingalls sawing wood, filling the silo at Ingalside, a Packard car being readied for a contest in 1930, and,

quite dramatically, an aerial by Elmer Newkirk of the Catskill Mountain House in 1932.

Don read a piece from USA Today newspaper about the celebration of Columbus Day, and how its focus is changing from years ago when Columbus was the center of attention. Today, the effect it had on the native peoples is drawn in closer attention, as is the events going on in the world in 1492.

Connie Teator shared a souvenir book, “The Mohican Trail, Catskill Mountains, NY.” It contains about 30 scenes along the Mohican Trail, mostly Rt 23B from Catskill to Cairo, on to Rt 23 to Windham. (I have to start scanning some photos so those of you not at the meeting might enjoy some of what we see.)

The November meeting will be another share session, and the last meeting of the year.

Copied in this newsletter is Harriett’s piece about working at Balsam Shade, referred to in the last newsletter. Thank you, Harriett. Also included is a duplication of a travel column, mentioning a place we all know.

Enjoy,



Boarding House Routine

Harriett Rasmussen

June 2005

With the recent sale of yet another one of our summer resorts, it is apparent to me that, in time, there will be no one to tell the story of how they touched our lives. And so, I have it written down what a typical day was like for me during the three summers as a waitress and chambermaid at Balsam Shade.

Up at 5:45 a.m.; 6 a.m. sweep sidewalks and porches and clean the two outside bathrooms.

On Friday morning, washed the windows along the front porch and side of dining room. There were four of us girls and window washing was done in teams of two so that a team only had this job every other week.

Windows done, I wash up and put on my striped uniform. Eat breakfast in the back kitchen. Put the butter, cream and milk (in big pictures) on the tables. Each girl was responsible for one of these items for the whole summer. Mine was the dreaded cream. You are also responsible for getting it off the table in a timely fashion. [All the milk, cream and butter were produced by the farm] Milk was brought up from the bar in big pails or cans and put in the cooler. Any spoiled milk was to Doris Lamb's fault. Likewise, any sour cream was my fault. Skip Covenhoven had to guard against melting or runny butter.

7:45 a.m. Took turns walking around the buildings ringing the bell for breakfast. 8 a.m. Served breakfast. Then three waitresses cleared tables while the fourth scraped the dishes. These jobs were rotated. If you

cleared at breakfast, you scraped and stacked for dinner or supper. If you washed at breakfast you tried at noon and night.

One girl was at the kitchen sink washing glasses and silverware while two dried. The fourth girl was sweeping the dining room floor. After glasses and silverware, sometimes the washer and one of the dryers would change places to do the dishes. Pots and pans were done in the kitchen by the cooks and helpers. The girl in the dining room stayed in there and reset everything for the noon meal.

Now, out to the clothesline beside the Palace to hang the wet dish towels. Get out of uniform – bring up the cans of tomato juice or fruit cup, etc. from the cellar and put them in the cooler for lunch.

Now you become a chambermaid and do your assigned rooms and bathrooms. My assignment was the downstairs and annex rooms. There were no rooms with private baths so there were just the two larger bathrooms to be shared and cleaned. Used towels and sheets were carried in big bundles over your shoulder to the garage where you counted and prepared them for the laundryman to pick up.

Now you bring in the dry dish towels. You fix that and go back to the Palace and to get into your striped uniform. You are a waitress again. You go through the same routine with the milk, cream and butter and now the fourth waitress is in charge of getting the tomato juice or fruit cup on the table. You served the noon meal, clear the tables, put things back in the cooler and eat your dinner. Then it is wash and dry the dishes and reset the tables, rehang the towels and get out of your uniform. If you didn't get all your rooms done you assume your chambermaid role and finish them.

On normal days you may have one-half hour to one hour or off. You might lie down on your bed or on a blanket on the lawn in your bathing suit.

At 5 p.m. it is time to washed up, get into your white uniform and it repeat the milk, cream and butter ritual -- cut the pies or cakes, dip up to putting, etc. Ring the bell, serve supper, clear, scrape, eat supper, wash dry and reset for the next morning.

It is now somewhere between 8 and 8:30 p.m. You hang up your uniform and ended up at the casino for a movie or to watch the dancing or talent shows. Or you might write letters or just hang out in the back kitchen -- sitting around the table talking overt you fans of the day and eating leftover chocolate pudding or watermelon. Often Aunt Vangie would join us. Occasionally we would walk to Greenville to a movie

Then it was back to the Palace and bed [the Palace was actually a bar with the floor space cordoned off into sleeping rooms -- a little like camping]. 5:30 came around early. This routine was seven days a week. Saturday was change over day so there was no afternoon break.

The pay was \$12.50 a week but I think the last year it went to \$15 per week

Tips were usually five dollars for a couple for the week or even if they stayed two weeks. But it wasn't uncommon to have a two dollar tip for a couple staying a week. Room tips were anywhere from \$1-\$2 a week unless you had these same people at your table. In that case they considered the table tip to include their room to. So you hoped that you didn't have your roomers at your tables.

The dining room floor had to be mopped (to see but I can't remember how often) to see. Aunt Vangie didn't want anything splashed against the baseboards. Some were good at playing that game and she didn't want them to mop, so it became my job. But she always worked right along with me.

One year we thought we could save the money and do our own uniforms. No wash and wear. They had to be starched, sprinkled and ironed. It soon became apparent that it was just too much and we sent them back to Mrs. Louisa Campbell in South Westerlo. Aunt Vangie would take them there and pick them up for us. I don't remember what we paid.

I had spent the summer at Balsam Shade in 1943 after recovering from an illness. That summer I helped Aunt Vangie with the reservation letters and I hung out with the girls so I knew the routine.

I arrived at Balsam Shade as soon as I had finished my last exam at Albany State in 1944, 1945 and 1946. During these three summers I had one day off. It was August 6, 1944 when I was Maid of Honor at my sister's wedding in Cairo. I remember I got Margie Smith, who had waitress the year before, to fill in for me.

My college classes started right after Labor Day so as soon as the big weekend was over I left the boarding house scene and took up my residence in Albany on Ontario Street. I was a college student again until summer rolled around and boarding houses came alive with activity once more. Then I traded my books and term papers for dishes, trays in arm loads of sheets and towels. The hours were long; the work was hard but the camaraderie was great and we built memories that still make us smile these 60 years later.

Travel

10 great places to learn your heart's desire

Never a better time, now that the kids are back in school, to travel and learn something new — just for you. "Whether it's a day, a weekend or a week, a learning vacation is a renewing experience," says **Dortlene Kaplan**, publisher of *ShawwGuides*, which puts out educational travel guides covering more than 5,000 learning vacation programs worldwide (shawwguides.com). Here, Kaplan shares with USA TODAY's **Shawn Sell** some exciting educational travel spots to explore.

Toscana Saporita

Tuscany, Italy

"During a six-day cooking vacation in a 15th-century Tuscan villa near Pisa, learn to make 42 innovative dishes using seasonal ingredients, then pair them with local wines," says Kaplan. "Classes are in the morning, an outdoor lunch features the lesson menu, and afternoons are devoted to touring the walled city of Lucca, the seaside resorts of Viareggio and Portovenere, and the marble works of Pietrasanta." 212-219-8791; www.toscanasaporita.com

Toronto Pursuits

Toronto

"The Great Books Foundation partners with this travel company to offer overseas trips (Classical Pursuits) or local discussion groups (Toronto Pursuits) focusing on culture, literature and art," says Kaplan. The emphasis is "shared inquiry," in which discussion leaders provide background and participants explore questions raised by the material. In Toronto, readers choose one Tuesday a month to meet and discuss specific literary works. 800-387-2977; classicalpursuits.com

Aviara Golf Academy

Carlsbad, Calif.

"Choose from one-, two- and three-day programs taught year-round by Kip Putterbaugh and his staff of six PGA instructors," says Kaplan. "Emphasis is on fundamentals and learning what works for the world's top players using stop-action video. Students take home a video of their swing with voice-over instruction." 800-433-7468; aviaragolfacademy.com



Picture-perfect setting: Workshop students paint on the grounds at the historic Greenville Arms during the Hudson River Valley Art Workshops.

Hudson River Valley Art Workshops

Greenville, N.Y.

"Three- to six-day workshops are scheduled year-round at the historic Greenville Arms 1889 Bed & Breakfast inn in upstate New York's scenic Hudson Valley/Catskills region," says Kaplan. "Choose from watercolor, oil, acrylic, pastel, drawing and collage, plus fiber art and quilting. Instructors are nationally recognized artists." 888-665-0044; artworkshops.com

Orvis Fly Fishing School

Multiple locations

"This fishing-tackle and sports-clothing manufacturer offers two-day schools in a variety of states," says Kaplan. The curriculum: "casting techniques, knots, gear and tackle selection, stream entomology, fly selection and how to 'read' water, in addition to covering how to play, land and safely release fish." 888-235-9783; orvis.com

Algonkian Novel Workshops

Luccoon

"Sponsored by webdelsol.com, a publisher of periodical contemporary fiction, these five-day workshops (in other states, too) are led by experienced fiction editors," says Kaplan. "Eight hours a day is devoted to writing a publishable novel; students will begin one and those who have started will learn to restructure it." 800-250-8250; webdelsol.com/Algonkian

Skip Barber Driving School

Multiple locations

"One- and two-day high-performance driving programs (available in a variety of states) teach defensive driving as well as the car-control skills that professional drivers possess," says Kaplan. "Topics include downshifting, emergency lane changes and road etiquette." 800-221-1131; skibarber.com

Van der Meer Tennis

Hilton Head Island, S.C.

"Named Teaching Pro of the December by *Tennis* magazine, Dennis Van der Meer offers three- to five-day programs for beginner to advanced players," Kaplan says. They feature "video analysis, stroke development, strategy drills and competitive match play." 800-845-6138; vandermeertennis.com

Santa Fe Workshops

Santa Fe

"This year-round photography educational center offers four- to seven-day traditional and digital photography workshops," says Kaplan, which cover topics in black-and-white and color, "including portraiture, lighting techniques, visual storytelling and on-location photo exploration." Instructors are published professionals. 505-983-1400; santafeworkshops.com

Cornell's Adult University

Ithaca, N.Y.

In addition to an on-campus summer program, Cornell professors lead seminars and worldwide study tours, which range from three to 17 days and cover topics that include art, theater, politics, astronomy and nature, says Kaplan. Still open: "A Million Monarchs: The Butterfly Kingdom of Highland Mexico," Jan. 3-10. 607-255-6260; see.cornell.edu/can



Totally fly: An Orvis fly-fishing school is a great place to hone one's skills. Orvis equipment is supplied for the fishermen. Photo: Orvis Co.

USA TODAY Looking for more travel ideas? Review "10 Great" lists on the Internet at 10great.usatoday.com