

# Greenville Local History Group Newsletter

May 2007, Issue 173

GCS Centralization

**Attention:** the next meeting – June 11 – will meet at a different place and different time. We will meet at the **Durham Center Museum at 7:00 p.m.** Sencie and Doug Thomsen are our hosts, promising some juice and cookies. I anticipate the meeting will end about 8 p.m., leaving enough time to drive him in light.

Early summer seems to have sprung (spring, sprang, sprung?) after such a cool streak in April. A warmish May evening awaited the attendees: Walt Ingalls, Harriett Rasmussen, Connie Teator, Phyllis Beechert, David and Judy Rundell, Stephanie Ingalls, Paige Ingalls (a rare and welcome appearance), Larry and Dot Hesel, and Don Teator.

Harriett added more to our Taylor diary information, having found Aunt Jemima. When Richard goes up to the mountain to do work, he stayed with Jemima. Harriett found it was Jemima Hademan, adding one more piece to the connection between the diary, other genealogical work Harriett has done, and the correspondence with the Taylor descendents.

Don reminded all about the *The Catskill and Canajoharie Railroad* booklet, Thelma Bell's remembrances in booklet form, the Greene County Home Tour on June 2, the closing of the Freehold Country Inn (memorialized by copies of its menu), the opening of the Mountain View Brasserie (by the former owners of the Freehold Country Inn), and about Greenville Day (May 19).

(Greenville Day has come and gone. The plan was to showcase Greenville's businesses, groups, and town essentials. The weather could have cooperated better but the event (sponsored by Community Partners) was worth the try, and I hope plans for a second annual day is forthcoming. I led a historical walking tour from the park to the four corners, with a

look at the history associated with this half-mile stretch of road. Stephanie and Paige, along with a school board member, escorted me to the end.)

Paige had brought some pictures of South Westerlo – transporting milk on a snow sled, and the dam during its heyday. Fletcher Crouse was the name on the pictures and no one knew who Fletcher was.

The major part of the evening was a look at some documents that paint a picture about the centralization of the Greenville Rural School District. Recent correspondence with Marla Stevens added to our files, and we took a look how the beginnings of our centralized school took shape, with a handful of individuals playing key roles.

A good starting point is *A History of the Greenville Central School District* (2003), chocked full of names and stories. However, it is the paper trail that adds life to a topic that looms so large that we forget that people have always been the real story of this history. (Actually, we don't forget because we keep telling the stories of ourselves and others whenever we mentions school.)

We started with a letter from Joseph Hixson (State Ed Dept) that summarizes the recommendations why the current site was the best site. (We find out there were as many as fifteen possible sites.) Recommending this site, Hixson notes the location, size, orientation and elevation, playground, drainage, and cost. Accompanying this report is a site sketch of the property.

Also available were ads and letters to the newspapers that urged voters to reject the proposed school. One is reproduced here; another

shown was a handwritten letter.

Also reproduced is a letter from that Board of Education who proposed the centralized building. It should be remembered that Pierce Stevens, Harry Levers, Timothy Palmer, Stanley Ingalls, and Harry Long had to endure not only the planning process but also a contentious debate, something they "volunteered" for.

Among the papers Marla sent was a copy of a 1930-1931 school directory of the Second Supervisory District of Greene County. This document is also reproduced here.

There's so much more. A document with the GCS faculty in 1933 shows they gave back 10% of their salary for the second half of that school year. Another document lists all the voters on the centralized school. Also shown were the documents that Lee Brown rescued from the dumpster, authenticating the early correspondence and bills of the new school. In addition, June 19, 1935 tercentenary edition of the *Greenville Local* prints lists and facts about the history and present situation of the school.

So, Marla, thank you for instigating this meeting. Here's to remembering people like your father who gave much to see this project through.

Take care,



**PS** I received an email from a Pat Galea from Bolton Landing who has in her possession an autograph book. If anyone can think of an appropriate destination for this autograph book, Pat is willing to donate it to someone for whom this book has meaning. She lists the following information in or about the book.

Autograph book— The Landscape Album was dedicated to Miss Anna M. Maybe, Nov. 5th 1859 Anna married James Finch at Rensselaerville, NY (note spelling) September fourth, 1860. Her daughter Mary married my Great Uncle, Russell Lee of Westerlo, October 20, 1897.. My Great Uncle Russell was the son of Ruth E. Lee. He died in November 1954 was buried in Westerlo. Russell's brother Myron Lee was my grandfather that died in 1912. My dad Gordon Lee was born March 26th 1911, to Adella YOUNG Lee. I do not know the names of the all the children of Ruth E. Lee my Great Grandmother. My father

had two older siblings, Donald Lee and Violet Lee. I have the marriage certificate of Miss Anna Mabey and James M. Finch, dated 9-4-1860, that was folded in the autograph book. I tried to follow the autographs in order, only a few were not too clear to copy the signature:

These are the names that are contained within: I am guessing that the CM signature of the dedication to Anna Mabey was done by her father as the marriage license is witnessed by a CM Mabey. The dedication to Anna was November 5th 1859. Names:

Antonette Williams no date or location.

Mary L. Dean

J.B. Avery Rensselaerville, Feb. 29, 1860, note different spelling of Rensselaerville once again.

ER Mackey - Rensville Sept 1st, 1860

Nellie White

E. Wright

Priscilla Bates

Amy 1862 -Durham

Mabina White March 11th, 1860 East Durham

Aurellia ? Martin Nov. 5th 1859

JA Smith Aug 28, 1862 Durham

Harriet Losu -March 1860

Francis Chatwick June 8, 1860 Medusa

Augusta Finch Rens May 19th, 1861

Leibbie DeLea Mater Sept. 18, 1862 Medusa

Lydia Chadwick June 1860

Helen L. Hunt, Aug. 3, 1860 Westerlo

Cousin Mary A. Mackey, Dec 18, 1872 Knoxville

Helen M. Smith Aug 28 1862 Durham

Eugene A. Smith Sept. 7 1862 Durham

Ransom More Sept. 9/1860 Rens.

Hannah A. More Sept 9 1860

Emily Green 14th Feb 1860

Hannah M ? Aug 1860

Ellie Tompkins April 29, 1873 Medusa

Emma Weeden March 29 Chesterville

IN LOVING REMEMBRANCE of

Horace Slauson

Died May 19, 1890

Age 22 yrs. 4 mos 14 days

A precious one from us has gone,  
a voice we loved is stilled.

A place is vacant in our hearts,  
Which never can be filled.

God in his wisdom has recalled  
the boon his love had given.

and though the body moulders here.

The soul is safe in Heaven

GREENVILLE CENTRAL SCHOOL  
Greenville, N.Y.

January 8, 1931

To voters in Greenville Central Rural School District:

Realizing that one of the duties of the Board of Education of our school is to present to the taxpayers, parents, and other voters information of our views of school administration and problems, we wish to fulfill this obligation and to clarify at this time certain ambiguous matters regarding the proposed Rundell Site for our new Central School.

Consideration has been given to approximately ten sites for building, proposed by various groups of people; visits and investigations of conditions in other centralized schools similar in problems to ours have been made; committees of interested voters have been entertained at meetings of the Board; and, after a study of all views, we are submitting a site which we strongly and unanimously recommend for your endorsement.

2. As a Board, four members of whom are not residents of the original Greenville district, we favor the Rundell Site as a matter of geographical location and the curtailment of direct taxation against the district. If the building is any considerable distance from the village, transportation will be required for the children of the village. One-half the cost of this transportation is a direct tax against the district. The entire cost of a site must be met by a tax levy, the State paying no part of the cost of the site. It follows, therefore, that those interested in keeping the direct tax as low as possible will vote for the Rundell Site. In fact, the decision to place the Rundell Site before the voters was made with a committee of eleven men present who represented sections distant from Greenville.

3. We are enclosing for your information a sketch showing the site of 17.5 Acres with a frontage of 342 feet, and a letter from Mr. Hixson, Chief of the Division of Buildings and Grounds of the State Department.

4. The cost of the site is rightly of interest to the taxpayers. The money for the purchase of the proposed site has been raised by Alumni and others interested in the old Free Academy founded in 1814, making the cost of the Rundell Site, if voted, nothing to the taxpayers. In addition, to make the matter still more clear, if the Rundell Site is approved, the money subscribed is not a loan to the Central District for the taxpayers to repay at some future time, it is a gift; there will be no interest for the taxpayers to assume; the site is entirely free.

Finally, may we request your careful consideration of the site problem. We as a Board are anxious to get our building program under way. May we say further that we would appreciate your support in this matter which we, as a Board, have handled with the greatest consideration to the best interests of the entire district.

Sincerely yours,

*Pierce W. Stevens*  
*Harry E. Levers*  
*Linnethy Palmer*  
*Stanley L. Ingalls*  
*Harry Long*

Board of Education

## ATTENTION, TAXPAYERS!

Keep yourselves posted of the coming meeting of the Greenville Central High School District. Pass the word along to your neighbors and every qualified school voter in the entire School District. Come prepared to listen to the same old soft soap and palaver as handed out by the Supreme Knights of Invisible Town Government and their cohorts for the past decade, and when they have had their little say, just call on your own good judgment, vote as your conscience dictates, and above all, insist that full value be returned for every dollar of the taxpayers' money spent (state school funds are just as much a part of your money as any cash you have in your pocket).

Don't be misled or misguided by those that pretend to be your friends in Greenville—just inquire of them the following questions and form your own conclusions. What is the reason for the holdup in the Greenville Central School? Has not Durham made progress while our School Board is trying to cater to the Supreme Knights in Greenville? Can it be that their absorption and interest in civic matters is measured in dollars and cents, and we, the taxpayers, have to foot the bill as usual. We have done it in the past and perhaps they feel we are obligated to do it again.

Ask these Knights of the Almighty Dollar why pieces of back swamp lots without frontage on any road, street or highway are worth 1,000% more than their assessed valuation?

If village back-lots are so valuable, how is it that the owners of choice business property, who command first option on every dollar of the purchasing public entering Greenville, have escaped their fair and just share of the burden of taxation in the past years?

Greenville is supposed to be a health resort, catering to boarders, tourists and convalescents. Why are we compelled to tolerate a mammoth open village cesspool on the school house lawn at the Four Corners, and invite outbreaks of sickness and pestilence, and subject our visitors and school children to any such nuisance? (The recent order from the Board of Health is only a smoke screen. It has no meaning.) The recently installed septic tank in the school is overflowing in the pond from the sewage of two hundred or more pupils, and the overflow is not treated with chlorinated lime drip or other germicide as insisted upon in modern sewage disposal. Who are these civic patriots who are killing off fishing and polluting our streams and ponds in Greenville—these very streams and ponds that supply drinking water to milk cows and livestock?

In this, the largest central school district in the state of New York, why are we limited to locating a school in the business section of the town, at a busy traffic intersection with its dangers to life and limb of our children? What have we school busses for, with chauffeurs lounging around from 9 a. m. to 3 p. m.?

Why deprive ourselves of the benefits and financial aid of an increase in taxable valuation by not encouraging expansion and home building outside of the business section?

Why spend \$200,000 or more on a modern, scientific, up-to-date school building, and choose a location where the landscape finishing touches will consist of some old barns, chicken houses, woodsheds, unkept barnyards and countless privies?

Why move any part of the church of the almighty for the benefits of the few whose religion is the Almighty Dollar? What a blot on the intelligence of the community should this happen!

Now is the time to prepare and take these matters in hand and break up this little band of self-styled Civic Patriots who are working in collusion for the pickings that they can benefit by at the taxpayers' expense. The existing condemned condition of the school building, together with its indebtedness, stands as a fitting tribute and monument exemplifying the ability, good management and pride in civic affairs on the part of some folks in Greenville in the past years. If they again get what they are after and mess up this entire school proposition, they will sit back quietly and await their next opportunity, and in the meanwhile the overburdened taxpayers located on the dirt roads and outlying sections will have to work by the sweat of their brows to scrape enough hard-earned money together in order to pay more than their just share of taxes and contribute to the pockets of a few who relish the taste of some easy money.

Will be back with you again on other civic matters.

(Signed) VALENTINE BEECHER.

P. O. Box 36, Greenville, Greene Co., N. Y.  
 P. S.—I have no desire or ambition for public office, nor do I seek support for a school location opposite my residence. I am only interested in progressive issues in the interests of the taxpayers and their pocketbooks.

# SCHOOL DIRECTORY

1930 - 1931

Second Supervisory District

GREENE COUNTY, N. Y.

## BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS

	<b>Greenville</b>	
Dr. C. P. McCabe (deceased) .....		Greenville
Omer T. Losee .....		Surprise
	<b>Durham</b>	
Nelson G. Knowles .....		Oak Hill
John Huyck .....		Oak Hill
	<b>Cairo</b>	
Lysander Lennon .....		Purling
William Hobart .....		Acra
	<b>Windham</b>	
Elbert A. Brainerd .....		Windham
George W. Osborn, Jr. ....		Windham

## SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Robert M. MacNaught .....	Windham
Phone 60-F-2	

## TOWN OF GREENVILLE

Supervisor, Robert Van Houten .....	Greenville
Town Clerk, Ralph M. Yeomans .....	Greenville
Attendance Officers—	
Central School, Clarence Boomhower .....	Greenville
Rural Schools, Joshua Powell .....	Gayhead

### Greenville Central School

#### Board of Education

Pierce W. Stevens, President .....	Greenville
Stanley L. Ingalls .....	Norton Hill
Harry E. Levers .....	Freehold
Harry E. Long .....	Surprise
Timothy Palmer .....	Dormansville
Ford Rundell, Clerk .....	Greenville
George Vanderbilt, Treasurer .....	Greenville

#### Faculty High School Unit

Scott M. Ellis, Principal .....	Greenville
Mildred B. Stone .....	Greenville
Leona Thompson .....	Greenville
Emily M. Duntz .....	Greenville
Elizabeth Lundy .....	Greenville
Ethel L. Ray .....	Greenville
Dorothy Miller .....	Greenville
Dorothy Bates .....	Greenville
Mary E. Mabie .....	Greenville
Ruth Rundell .....	Greenville
Gladys Tuttle .....	Greenville
Ruth A. Slater .....	Greenville
Elizabeth Bentley (nurse) .....	Greenville

#### Grade Units

Eva E. Button .....	Hannacroix
Frances Swart .....	Dormansville
Dorothea Sommermeyer .....	Greenville
Hattie Wickes .....	Greenville
Goldie Wright .....	Medusa

### Grade Units (continued)

Olive P. Lewis	Freehold
Leola M. Bailey	Greenville
Pearl M. Haskin	Medusa
Florence I. Rugg	Greenville
Ruby M. Rundell	Greenville
S. Edna Story	Freehold
Euretha D. Whitbeck	Greenville
Rhodell M. Stanton	Greenville
Gladys Beylegaard	Greenville Center
F. May Shaw	Greenville Center
Eva M. Van Pelt	Greenville
Margaret Bogardus	South Westerlo

### Rural Schools

#### Trustees

C. D. Smith	Freehold
W. H. Smith	Gayhead

#### Teachers

Catherine Landers	Gayhead
Arthur Petersen	Greenville

## TOWN OF DURHAM

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Supervisor, William S. Borthwick	Cornwallville
Town Clerk, Everett Barnes	East Durham
Attendance Officer, Eli Campbell	Durham

### Durham Central School

#### Board of Education

Fred Reynolds, President	Durham
George Williams	East Durham
Floyd Parks	Cornwallville
John Smith	Oak Hill
William Campbell	Durham
John Huyck, Clerk	Oak Hill
Alton Gibson, Treasurer	East Durham

#### Teachers

Florence Griffen	Cornwallville
Thelma Cole	Cornwallville
Dorothea Jennings	Cornwallville
Anna E. McNamara	Durham
Isabel Moss	East Durham
Elvira Bullivant	East Durham
Viola M. Roe	East Durham
Mary M. Dingman	Cooksburg
Henrietta Morse	Durham
Gertrude Murta	Sunside
Harriet Spalding	Greenville

## TOWN OF CAIRO

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Supervisor, Harvey S. Olmsted	Cairo
Town Clerk, F. E. Pfordte	Cairo
Attendance Officer, W. S. Adams	Cairo

### Cairo High School

#### Board of Education

S. E. Cozine, Jr., President	Cairo
H. E. Emens	Cairo
Dr. Ray E. Persons	Cairo
Floyd Simpkins, Clerk	Cairo
John B. Earl, Treasurer	Cairo

Russel R. Colton, Principal	Cairo
Gladine D. Colton	Cairo
Lilla M. Gourley	Cairo
Mary Ascroft	Cairo
Miriam Davis	Cairo
Alice Decker	Cairo
Irene Clark	Cairo
Olive W. Simpkins	Cairo
Helen M. Chadderdon	Cairo
Onteora Freleigh	Cairo
Elizabeth Bentley (Nurse)	Cairo

**Rural Schools**

**Trustees**

John H. Chadderdon	Acra
Percy Duncan	Leeds
Wallace Chadderdon	Acra

**Trustees (continued)**

Florence Alberga	Round Top
Melvin Butler	Cairo
J. F. Campbell	South Cairo
Bruce Baldwin	Purling
William Carman	Cairo
Louis De Luca	Acra
Ira D. Vail	South Cairo

**Teachers**

Mary F. Ford	South Cairo
Esther L. Palmer	South Cairo
Alma Simpson	Acra
Syrene Barnes	Oak Hill
Edrie Warner	Purling
Ethel Ruland	Cairo
Verna Meddaugh	Purling
Mabel Meneghan	Windham
Annette Witanek	Leeds
Alice J. Hale	Purling

**TOWN OF WINDHAM**

Supervisor, Ferris Thompson	Windham
Town Clerk, Grant F. Morse	Windham
Attendance Officer, M. E. Phelps	Windham

**Windham High School  
Board of Education**

G. F. Morse, President	Windham
W. S. Cammer, Clerk	Windham
Dr. W. E. Stevens	Windham
H. T. Avery	Windham
George W. Osborn, Jr.	Windham
Richard Munson, Treasurer	Windham

**Faculty**

George L. Cook, Principal	Windham
Shirley D. MacNaught	Windham
Elizabeth White	Windham
Burdette Woodworth	Windham
Donald DuBois	Windham

**Faculty (continued)**

Abner Woodworth	Windham
Kathryn Brockett	Windham
Harriet Campbell	Windham
Catherine Strong	Windham
Elizabeth Bentley (Nurse)	Windham

**Rural Schools**

**Trustees**

John Brainerd	East Windham
Ernest Andrus	Windham
John Yager	Hensonville
John Moseman	Maplecrest
Sidney Case	Windham
Raymond Barlow	Windham
Howard Crandell	Maplecrest

**Teachers**

Alma V. Horton	Windham
Mary L. Dunham	Windham
Sheldon Peck	Maplecrest
Ernest Furgason	Windham
Birdsall Moseman	Maplecrest