

# Greenville Local History Group Newsletter

April 2008, Issue 181

Share Session

Greetings, Happy Spring, and a good start for our new year!

The dying embers of a mid-April sunset splayed across Greenville's center as a dozen or so came out to our share session. A week of classic, slightly-above-average temperatures (except for the weekend) preceded this meeting and, since I'm writing this a week later, was followed by weather that was perfect summer weather. Attending this meeting were Stephanie Ingalls, Harriett Rasmussen, Dot Blenis, Larry & Dot Hesel, Phyllis Beechert, Ron Golden, Walt Ingalls, David and Judy Rundell, Lori Blair, Bob and Marie Shaw, and Don Teator. A welcome to newcomer Lori (Lambs Corners) and to long-time residents Bob and Marie.

We did our usual introductions whenever new faces show up. Lori bought one of the older Ingalls' houses in Lambs Corners, and works for a preservation organization. Welcome.

Much of the talk was about the winter display of old photos of structures (January) and of people (February) that Debra and I produced. The displays generated many pleasant conversations, a gathering of memories, a few corrections, some questions, and a nice round of applause of our preservation efforts.

In fact, the photos will be the topic of next month's program, for a purpose to be explained later in this newsletter.

Harriett had worked up a summary of the Richard E Taylor's 1871 diary, another very welcome addition and continuation. It is reprinted later in the newsletter.

Jeanne Bear had given a photo of the Ames' grand opening, with the usual dignitaries, one of which was Jeanne. We identified as many people as we could. In addition, we noted that many of us remembered the opening of Ames, already one of the artifacts of Greenville's business history.

Other topics included a 1956 GCS varsity baseball team photo (verified from the yearbook), Judy's efforts in collecting the Taylor summaries for use at the Vedder Library, the question of where to place material about Shady Glen, a reminder about collecting menus from the area's eating establishments, note about two dinner reviews of the Mountain View Brasserie (one in this month's newsletter), and notice about the early publicity of the opening of the Freehold House (the former Freehold Country Inn; and listing of some info on a web site – freehold-house.com).

The buzz of the night was Don's announcement that the local history cal-

endar has life for next year! Jeannette Rose and Linda Berger will donate money to cover most of the costs of the calendar (with the remainder to come from sales) to memorialize their parents and their role in local history. At this point, a likely product will include a biographical piece and a month's photo, possibly of Alberta Lodge.

Which brings me to May's meeting (May 12). I will bring out the photos from the winter display, review which photos we have already used, look over past calendars, and make some choices of photos for the 2009 calendar. Come on out if you'd like a say, or just to look.

Take care,



### **Characters in 1871**

(for better understanding of the summary)

Richard Edwin Taylor – father, diarist, 42

Louisa Utter Taylor – wife, 40

Howard – son, 11

Addie – daughter, 9

Isabelle – daughter, 7

Dwight – son, 3

Adelaide – Louisa's sister, 31

Cynthia – Louisa's mother, 73

Sarah Lord – RE's sister, 45

Charles Lord – Sarah's son, 15

Rosa Lord – Sarah's daughter, 13

Charles Taylor – RE's brother, 38

### **1871**

New Years Day in 1871 falls on a Sunday and R. E. Taylor starts his year off on a good note by going to hear Mr. Cale preaching at a New Year's sermon. But Monday it was back to the mundane things

and I. More comes to help him butcher his nine pigs. That calls for a trip to Catskill with his 1730 pounds of pork. The going price must have been \$.10 a pound because he gets \$173. I was not surprised to learn from this entry that he has a subscription to a newspaper because he has an active mind and, I think, is ever ready to learn. Besides the \$.18 expenses for the trip, he pays \$2.25 for the Recorder. There was a paper called the Oak Hill Record at that time and I feel sure that is what this notation refers to.

The January 6 entry tells us he paid \$57.55 town tax. It is a reminder that he is the owner of a considerably larger farm now. In the last year on Sunset Road he was paying \$24.97.

This year there is the introduction of a new farm product when he reports in fact, "Mr. Lake finished his 2000 hoops and went home." He is referring to Reuben Lake who lived on Red Mill Road next to the Red Mill pond in the house I would know as my Griffin grandparents' home. I think the men were in Taylor's woods that cutting wood for hay hoops.

January seems to have its share of cold weather this year. On the fifth Sunday in January he writes, "Windy and severe cold - snowed a little in the night - we remain near a good fire all day." And the next day was the coldest of the winter which prompts him to bring the sheep to the barn for the first of the season.

While the beginning of the month was devoted to taking care of the pork, the end of January was a time to butcher Major and divide up the 483 pounds of beef. No part of poor Major was wasted. He doesn't say what he did with the 41 pounds of tallow but the 88 pound hide was sold at Catskill for \$5.28. It reminded me of an old expression my Dad used to have. When there was just a little bit of something left he would say, "Might as well let the tail go with a hide."

It was good that all this extra work was now finished because on Friday, Janu-

ary 27, he writes Hiram Alger came down and employed me to teach the Oak Hill school at \$12 per week until the first of April and I went and got Franklin Spaulding to do my chores for me." Possibly the hired man, Matty Powers, he had from April to November last year wasn't available.

R. E. had not taught school since early 1870. The last teaching job was at his own District from December 6, 1869 to March 15, 1870. Now he was sick on this Saturday, January 28th, and that night he "took a sweat and remained in the house all day." But Monday, January 30, he was teaching at Oak Hill and stayed overnight with Louisa's youngest sister, Adelaide and John Burgett. They now have a baby daughter, Della, who will not be one year old until March 6th. Twenty days after Della's birthday R. E. makes this Sunday entry, "Went up to Mrs. Thorman's funeral and heard that John Burgett had hung himself this morning & we went up to see him."

There is nothing written which would give us a clue why this sad thing happened but I remember that the first day of school R. E. had gone on with John to sign on for work on Daniel Doolittle's farm.

Whatever the cause, the deed was already done and on March 28 "Lizabeth and children came over to take care of Addie and Dwight" while R. E. and Louisa went to the funeral. No mention where Isabel stayed and maybe Howard, at age 10, was thought old enough to go. Lizabeth was brother Charles Taylor's wife and they were living on Wright Street on the Taylor Homestead.

It must have been decided that it was too far for Taylor to drive to his own farm every night after school, so on the second night he began boarding with Louisa's brother, Almeron and Mary Utter. He would spend eight weeks there at two dollars per week. He felt generous enough when he paid the bill to give Mary two dollars to get herself a new dress.

In the evenings while he is boarding, he visits people like Ruth and Ezra

Cleveland (Louisa's sister); Alanson Lord (sister Sarah's brother-in-law); Mrs. Tripp (cousin) and Edward More, or he goes to Lodge meeting at Oak Hill.

Every Friday night either his brother Charles or Louisa and Howard come after him and bring him home for the weekend. Other couples like Jacob Rockefeller and wife and Aaron Jennings and wife or Adelaide and John often come for an evening visit. On one such Sunday visit, "brother Charles and family came over -- Dwight got badly scalded."

On Monday morning, Taylor is back at his teaching job and we are left to wonder how that accident happened and how three year old Dwight is doing. Not another word about it. Were Louisa the diarist I'm sure she would have written it differently.

By March 9 they are looking for a teacher to teach the next term at Oak Hill. R. E. does not teach these terms when the farm is busiest. Peleg Richards, the younger brother of his early hired man, William Richards, comes on in that position on March 20th. R. E. closes his school on March 24 and is ready to be a full-time farmer again. He has earned \$96 teaching. We think that must have been a help when we you read this April 1st entry, "Went up to C. Mygatt and paid Augustus Mygatt \$245 interest and \$500 of the principal," leaving me \$3000 on the bond unpaid. So he is paying the mortgage on the farm he has had for the second year.

During this visit to Mygatts he does not mention seeing his nephew Charles Lord, so I think Charlie must not be working on the Calvin Mygatt farm any longer. He had gone there at age 13 to work eight months for \$50. Now he is 15 years old and I hope his situation is better. Note: My correspondence with Ruth Porter, who was Charlie Lord's great-niece, revealed that he was a successful merchant in New York and took his mother Sarah and youngest sister Rosa there to live with him. The gravestone in Medusa Cemetery would reveal that both he and Sarah died in 1915.

Just after my realization that the Lords had not been mentioned in quite a while, an entry, on April 25 ends, "Sarah and Charles and Rosa came here." They are not mentioned again but they must have stayed over night because on Sunday, "Charles had Jack (the horse) to carry Sarah and Rosa to Oak Hill." It still leaves one wondering because he doesn't say to whose house they have gone. On May 15th he sends Sarah \$35 in a letter but doesn't give us a destination. Remember, he has managed Sarah's finances since the death of her husband. So this \$35 is probably an apportionment from her own money.

There seems to be a large number of visitors this year. After having done 13 previous diaries, one becomes familiar with the names, so when the entry on April 16th reads, S. Lobdell & wife & Mary Hunt & Ida stopped here to dinner on the way home, I recognized that Lobdells were the people who bought his Sunset Road farm two years earlier. They now brought old neighbor Mary Hunt and her daughter Ida for a visit. And I could picture Louisa setting four more places at the table. That would make an even dozen, counting Peleg Richards, the current hired man, socializing in a farm kitchen. Farm wives were used to the ritual of unexpected extra plates at their tables so I am sure Louisa wasn't flustered.

On April 20, Mr. Gibson comes to set up the hay press. Since it is not yet hay-ing season, this must be hay left over from last fall. On April 21, he writes, "Gibson and Kirtland came to press the stack and after pressing for 4½ tons it rained the rest of the day – wet the hay bad – we got it in building." The next day they finish pressing and he pays Mr. Gibson \$6.25 and ¾ bushel potatoes. He now has 7502 pounds hay in bales. And for the next three days he carries a nine bale load of hay to Catskill to the River – about 2300 pounds each time. He lists \$.84 expenses on the road each day but he offsets a little of that by "bringing a basket of bread to Lacy." He gets 25¢ for this Freehold store delivery.

Likewise, on May 2, when he takes a fourth load to the river he receives \$.70 for carrying feed to Leeds. May 9 he carries another load and does another errand for \$.50. In June he, "brought passengers enough to pay the gates." And he does not list the usual \$.84 so that may have been the cost of the tolls for the wagons. He is always figuring so he probably feels comfortable when on one trip he spends \$.30 on 50 clams and eight cents for two oranges.

From April 20 through July there were 18 trips made to the river with hay. When his is all transported he carries some for Theodore Elliott. C. H. and Company of Catskill are the ones buying the hay and on June 21 of this year there is a great fire and some of their buildings are burned. Undoubtedly this causes big excitement in the river town of Catskill

This year has not been one of only students; labor in the fields; hay hoops; barrel staves, bartering eggs and butter; transporting hay, straw and apples to the river for consumption in New York City. There are memorable times like being summoned on the coroner's jury at East Durham. Perhaps these tiny diary books do not give him room to elaborate. All he can tell us is, "was summoned to coroner's jury held on the body of Mrs. Emma Mudge who died under mysterious circumstances -- and adjourned until Saturday at one o'clock. Saturday he spends one half day there and adjourns unto Thursday when he writes, "to East Durham on jury again -- it rained and didn't get home until 12 at night and have to go again tomorrow morning at eight o'clock." On July 8 "Finished up our rendering to the coroner about three o'clock this afternoon and came home." All this traveling back and forth over a period of 11 days and he doesn't tell us what the jury decided or even if he was paid for his troubles.

June 24 is another memorable day when he goes to the river with two loads of hay and then goes on a boat to Albany, "to see the corner stone of the new Capitol laid

by the Order of Masons -- paid \$.75 fare -- \$.80 refreshments -- arrived back at Catskill at eight in evening, wet through -- stayed at day's hotel overnight." It cost him \$2.20 for his room and keeping his horses in the stable and he arrives home the next day at noon. And now we know when the Capitol building in Albany was started.

In September there is the usual day at the Cairo Fair with Louisa and the girls. And he and Louisa are looking forward to a trip up the mountain. Louisa goes to Durham to get her mother and Adelaide. Apparently they are to keep house and take care of the children. On Saturday morning, before they can get started on third trip, the entry gives us this insight, "Howard broke his arm -- took him to Dr. Reed to have it done up and then Louisa & I came over the mountain." And so, Grandma Cynthia, and Adelaide must have been left to comfort 10 year old Howard.

On Sunday they take dinner at Aunt Mima's where R. E., William and Charles Taylor sometimes stayed when they had masonry jobs on the mountain top. I never knew how this person fit into the family but I have since learned that R. E.'s mother, Phoebe Haddaman Taylor, had a sister Jemima.

On October 19 even though it is cold and rough, he, "Carried Louisa and the children to Cairo to Barnum's show and paid \$3.32 all expenses. We aren't told where this event was held but I picture a circus being held on the Cairo Fair Grounds. And the expenses covered mother and father and four children.

And a week later he hires out to teach at Freehold. School does not actu-

ally start until November 13 which gives him time to have Calkins measure him for a new suit of clothes. The diary hints that his 34 students take a little time to adjust to their new teacher. On the day before Thanksgiving he writes, "School full -- had to lecture them severely to get them to study." And so, now this 42 year old teacher has "laid down the law" which seems to bring results. On December 6 he reports, "Full school -- it begins to improve." This school term last until March 22 of the following year.

The year ends with the whole family going to the funeral of Mr. Gage at Freehold. This is just one of the twelve attended this year as compared to six the year before. One in July was of particular interest to me. It documents the death of John Purinton who was the brother of my great grandmother, Elizabeth Evans. The family folklore had been that on his way home from his service in the Civil War he had eaten poisoned pie and died soon thereafter. So the real fact is that if he did eat the poisoned pie he made it home to Wright Street where he lived another six years. He was buried on September 2, 1871 in the Wright Street Cemetery where Owen and Phoebe Taylor were buried 18 years and two years respectively before him.

Interesting to note that R. E.'s last act of the year is to hear Elder Jones preach at Wright Street. Remembering that he begins New Year's Day by hearing Mr. Cale preach, we realize he is both beginning and ending the year 1871 on a good note.

By **RUTH FANTASIA**, Food editor (Times Union)

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When dining out, many people choose to order something they can't cook as well at home. It's these same people who usually don't want anything too exotic, like sweetbreads or foie gras, either.

For these people, the Mountain View Brasserie in Greenville is perfect.

Perched high in the Hilltowns just over Albany County's southern border, the Mountain View Brasserie opened in May, the latest project of Ben and Terry Buel; they co-own the restaurant with chef Max Suhner. The trio is beginning to make a habit out of rehabbing old Greene County restaurants: They purchased the Freehold Country Inn in 1999, rebuilt it and ran it until 2006.

The atmosphere here, even in the bar-room, which is well separated from the dining area, is subdued. Fine linens and Wedgwood flatware grace the tables, and exposed beams and French-country accent pieces accessorize the room, where soft jazz plays in the background.

Even the servers are reserved, watching the tables from a discreet distance yet taking care of every need.

Despite the conservative atmosphere, there's no need for men to don suits and ties. All the guests were comfortably dressed, some in clean and nicely fit jeans.

The food is a step up from home cooking, but nothing too fancy. The menu is Continental, and much of it, including the shrimp cocktail and rack of lamb, is commonplace.

Three of the four of us started with appetizers, choosing from a list that includes stuffed portobello mushrooms, lobster bisque and fresh mozzarella with tomatoes.

Two Maryland crab cakes (\$11) were made with blue crab meat and contained very little filler and nothing that would detract from the taste of the crustacean. They were served on a pool of lobster sauce, a cream-based concoction that always seems to be flavored more with aromatic vegetables and cognac than lobster.

A serving of French onion soup (\$7) came bubbling hot and oozing with Swiss

cheese. The broth was light and not overly salty.

Goat cheese on salad (\$9) is ubiquitous in restaurants these days. Suhner's version has the chevre coated in chopped hazelnuts and gently warmed before being served over fresh mixed greens with a light vinaigrette.

Although we found them all quite enjoyable, you needn't spend money on appetizers here just to feel full. Dinners are served with warm bread and a choice of soup du jour or salad.

The Sunday night we dined, the salads, although unremarkable, were fresh and crisp. The soup was the better choice, a Mediterranean seafood chowder. It was a tomato-based broth scented with saffron and fennel enveloping halibut, tuna, shrimp, scallops and mahi mahi.

Our meat entrees, pork tenderloin with an apple cider sauce (\$24) and prime rib (\$28 for a 16-ounce cut), were perfectly cooked, juicy and tender. Served with a starch and vegetables, they made hearty meals for the big guys in our foursome. My husband wished only for a bit of au jus to add a little more dimension to his beef.

The lobster sauce served with the crab cakes was also on one of the night's specials, a salmon filet with crab-meat crust (\$24). The fish was some of the finest we've had, with a taut flesh and a clean flavor.

But perhaps the favorite of our main courses was the vegetable risotto with shrimp (\$21). The creamy rice was rich and hot and studded with broccoli florets, zucchini and summer squash, carrots and onions and then topped with seven meaty, perfectly cooked shrimp. The dish is also available with chicken for \$18 or without meat for \$15.

We finished by sampling Suhner's chocolate mousse, a decadent, dark-chocolate version flavored with orange liqueur, and the dessert special for the night, the last of the summer strawberries enveloped in rich, flavorful English vanilla cream. (\$6 each).

Dinner for four, including a bottle of pinot noir (\$33), coffees, tax and gratuity, came to \$240.