

# Greenville Local History Group Newsletter

April 2022, Issue 304

Extended Canvas of Greenville—Flip Flach

GLHG is at it again, with an opening meeting in April meeting for the first time since 2019. Present: Judy Rundell, Eileen & Ed Volmar, Barbara & Flip Flach and daughter Kristen, Paul Augstein, Bob Shaw, Jackie Massaro & Jonas Havens, Bette Welter, Jeff Pellerin,

Stephanie Ingalls, Johanne & Robert Titus, Audrey & Bill Matott, David Tschinkel, Rachel Ceasar, Richard Ceasar, Mary Lou Nahas, Jack Ver Planck, and Debra & Don Teator, and a few others that slipped my memory cells and eluded the sign-in sheet.

---

**Notes** (a change from usual placing)

++ **May 9 meeting**, 7:30, at **Prevost Hall** (for you old-timers, the Presbyterian Church! next to Library); light refreshments. Collaborating with us is **Community Partners of Greenville**, one of my favorite community groups. Audrey, as well as Barbara W and other members of CPOG will present a history of Prevost Hall as well as mark an anniversary of the G.V.V Town Park.

++ A large **thank you goes to Flip Flach** for another quintessential local history program. There is more to come, in segments over the next couple years. The link to the Rt 81 slide show is: (long box on bottom)

++ **PorcupineSoup.com** is serving up Greenville local history material. I have been responsible for some, and I am serving as gatekeeper. If you have an article you would like to share on this site, please contact me and I will send it on after review. Garth Bryant started the Greenville section in grand form with his five articles on the historical markers and the ponds/lakes.

++ Another **PorcupineSoup** connection is an article about Debra's paintings now on display at the library. She has enjoyed your comments. And there is a raffle of a painting for Friends of the Greenville Library. For the article, the link is:

<https://porcupinesoup.com/70-of-teator-s-pastels-on-display-in-greenville>

++ The **Vedder Library** has played a significant role in the Teator household this winter. First, Deb donated her forty years of aerial photography archives to the Vedder Library. Jonathan Palmer's write up is found at:

<https://porcupinesoup.com/donation-of-teatoring-on-the-edge-photography-archives>

++ The second **Vedder Library** connection is the placement of thirty years of GLHG Calendars on its web site. Click on the link and go to the digitized section:

<https://vedderresearchlibrary.org/greenville-resources>

++ The light refreshments committee once again provide their excellent service at GLHG meetings. A big **thank you, Stephanie and Christine.**

For slide show: link, or copy & paste

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1LOcOJOG7NPa2dcSwRl2IAPOCuVFLFvkwNjSRknf4MG4/edit?usp=sharing>

## Flip's Canvas—Rt 81 west

After a couple conversations with Flip, he concocted the worthy idea of a series of programs he tentatively titled: An Extended Village Canvas. The intent would be to present his memories of "ex-buildings, ex-businesses, ex-entrepreneurs" that graced and inhabited the roadways a half-mile or more from the Four Corners of Greenville.

Considering where to start, we settled on State Route 81 west. A first thought was to commence at Red Mill Rd and wend our way back but Flip's Norton Hill connections were strong enough to make it worthwhile to start from the Greenville-Durham town line.

It is worth a reminder that this not a thorough encyclopedic survey of every structure. Instead, it is Flip's memory trip, and he generally chose to pick businesses, including stray memories.

A wild card in the presentation would be the attendance of other people who could

add to those memories, perhaps adding an angle or perspective that Flip did not have.

One of these wild cards, of course, was the presence of the Town Historian whose collection of photographs accompanied Flip's path.

The meeting was indeed fortunate to have a second wild-card in the attendance of Jack Ver Planck who has lived his 80-some years in Norton Hill and whose ancestors were active in Norton Hill.

And thus, Flip started. A modest person, he discounts his storytelling abilities, rather deferring to the photos available, or to those in the audience who have worthy memories. But Flip's gee-shucks style somehow results in some of the best story-telling in Greenville.

First slide: a 1990 slide of the Blue Inn, or Silo, or the Franzens, or a host of names that memories serve up. Flip maintained that it was not the bar, of course, that he remembered but the ball fields that he



Debra Teator aerial—Norton Hill—GNH upper, Methodist Church lower



played on at a time when ball games in our towns were a summer things to do. And Toad Yeomans was one of the coaches. More on the Yeomanses later.

However, the historical importance of the building, even if before any of our time, is a story most of us are aware of. A burgeoning student population at the Greenville Academy caused an addition, about where the current library addition is, to be built somewhere in the early-mid 1920s. With school centralization, this addition, as well as the Academy, was no longer needed as school space. The addition was sold and moved. Guess where? Yup, to the Norton Hill property of this slide and repurposed into a bar. Flip still maintains his warm memories are of the ball fields.

The next slide was the Miracle Mile sign that everybody hazily recalls, located on the east side of Norton Hill. It listed the businesses on the Main Street. The title Miracle Mile is often credited to Phil Ellis. The photo was taken after the heyday of these businesses, lost in a tangle of sumac branches, later used for a calendar photo.

A slide of an aerial taken by Deb Teator showed Route 81 in Norton Hill stretching from New Ridge Road eastward to the church and to Powell's Store, today's thrift shop. We enjoyed identifying places even if our names depended on our own past history vantage point.

Slide #7 was a 1976 photo taken from SR 81 looking across the pond and the area that would become the Norton Hill Park. It also showed New Ridge Road, something that did not exist before the mid-1950s. Jack told the story how his father sold Charlie Mesow 30 acres of land which became room for the roadway and houses lining both sides. We call it the first subdivision in the town of Greenville, our version of Levittown.

Slide #9 showed a very small building, with a bit of history behind it. It is identified as the former plane sputter tower, at one time located on the eastern end of town. It was manned by citizens of Norton Hill to spot possible German planes during World War II and, as Jack remembered, even during the Korean War because he said he was part of the ID team during that conflict.



Other slides included a picture of Jack and his wife posing for the calendar picture to commemorate the founding of the Norton Hill Park; a picture of Len Gardner's LBJ plumbing supply shop; and several pictures of GNH and its buildings including the house and the post office. Of particular note was the letter that alerted the community of the closing of the Norton Hill Post Office. And one of Flip's stories was the generosity of the Ingalls family to allow use of one of the barns as a basketball court for the local kids. (Trivia: what did the LBJ of Len's shop stand for? Answer: at the end of this account)

Another big section were the two or three slides that focused on Jack's grandfather Isaac and his father John I in front of the wagon-making building. Also included was John I standing in front of his general store in its final days, leading to many stories about John I. Flip noted John I's math abilities, especially adding shopping bills in his head. As a youngster, Flip asked him how he did it and John I shared his method, a lesson that Flip learned well and still knows, even almost 70 years after the lesson. Another Ver Planck chapter was of the furniture and appliance store and additions.

During all of this, we learned a lot of biographical info about Jack, who graduated from GCS in 1956, about early marriage years and residences, about his early adult working years, and stories about his father.

Other slides in this section included Chime's Market and the professional building that Ruth Chiamese built and where the dentist Dr Moskowitz had his office. Another chunk of content involved the Yeomanses and Yeoman's Garage. We saw an early picture, when cars were just entering the scene and one of a mid-1970s vintage. Yeomans' was a Chevrolet dealer with a loyal local clientele until the parent company decided the Norton Hill dealership was too small. Another photo, one from the calendar, featured Junior in his work

shop. Junior was Harry, Toad was Irwin, and Fogg, well, I forgot. There is a Galatian in there some place! And there was a story about how they got their names.

After a reminiscence about Kilcar, Flip turned up North Road with a bit of history of about the Brass Rail, McNaughton's Resort, and Coogan's Bluff. Flip recalled stories about the Kilcar – the Carr family, the Cavanaughs, a band called the Microns with the Ommerborn boys, and more. And the Brass Rail drew notes about Elsie Chamberlain, O'Connor, and McNerny.

The next sizable section looked at the Methodist Church. Alongside and separate stood the Norton Hill one room school house, something no longer needed when GCS centralized. Years later, the church took it over, using it as a daycare center, with an addition connecting the two separate buildings. We saw versions of both, in addition to the cattle herd running the streets in front of the old school house. Another photo showed the classes of 1906 in Norton Hill, a photo that that has been seen in the calendar before.

After that we spent time on the Powell Store, also known as Stevens Store, also known as the list of different businesses that have populated that building over the last 50 years. Jack and Maureen even owned, and lived in, the building for a few years.

Other slides in this time related to the Elliott House, the house just to the west of



John I, in front of his General Store

the church, which was a thrift shop; a bird's-eye view of Main Street from the Methodist steeple; the Yeomans-Ostrander-Gardner house on the corner of North Road; the Ver Planck house with its stately columns; and the house across from the church which some of us know as Mitzi's house.

Flip helped us remember the Chatterbox building which is still known as that even though it hasn't operated as that in several decades. We took a turn down Carter Bridge Rd, looked at pictures of the old creamery, today the Bergman house. We also looked at the blacksmith shop. Coming back to the main road, we found ourselves at the house on the corner. Continuing on Route 81, we came to Husted's Garage, house, and hatchery, once one of the largest of its type in eastern NY.

We then took a right hand turn on Old Plank Road and took a quick peek into the GNH Sawmill that was built in the 1970s.

Heading back, we crossed Rt 81 onto Maple Avenue to visit the American Legion building and the Prevost Cemetery. (I have been getting questions about the correct pronunciation of Prevost – long o accented second syllable, silent s; or accent on first syllable

with the s sound. Old-timers like me have grown up with the first one and will continue saying it that way!)

Back on SR 81, we talked about the Prevost house, is nickname Hush Hush, slave quarters (myth, until evidence is provided), and the beauty of the house that has been on home tours for most of our lives.

Just beyond that was a grand picture of Breezy Knoll. Just a bit down Rt 81, we turned southward on Red Mill Road to visit Red Mill, Baumann's Brookside, Van Auken's Trucking and Panzarino's house on the corner.

A quick turn on Ingalside Rd brought us to the one room schoolhouse, a house that some of us remembered as Leona Rundell's house. After GCS centralized and the one room school was no longer needed, Leona's parents bought it to be their residence and lived out their lives there. A little further up the road lies a bare foundation. Accompanying that photo was a picture of the residents of the house that was that site, the Evans family, related to Harriet Rasmussen. The house burned in the 1920s, I believe, and a hole belies the stark testimony of the invisible past. The woods picture had us commenting how fast black locust grows.

Back to the main road, we visited Marble Pillar, the big house on the corner of Ingalside and Rt 81, which was the Griffin house. No one could recall when it was torn down. After that we visited the current site of the gun shop of Lou Kraker. Before that it was Mario's Glass Works and before that it was the Greenville Dairy. And we talked about Scripture or Scriptor Bridge over the

Cattle drive though town;  
one room school house in back



Basic Creek. Which name is the correct one? We decided we did not know. Next, and one of the few residences we did talk about was Russ Carlsen's house a little ways past the bridge, which also was the Wakely house back in mid-century and before.

Next came a photo of Flat Rocks, a popular local swimming spot up the Basic Creek, behind Ingalside, and just close enough to school to be inviting for some truancy!

The next slide was an aerial taken by Deb Teator again of Route 81, stretching from about the Carlsen house to the Catholic Church, allowing us to get an overview of the current business of John Bensen and of the dug pond behind it.

The photos of The Cabin, of course, garnered many a comment since most of us remembered it when it was a very active place. But in its former mid-century heyday, it was a family establishment with duck pin bowling. We also saw photos of John Bensen's property – Greenville Power Saw, and a look into a driveway that would have led up to his former shop and also to the first car wash.

The next couple of shots showed the Catholic Church – both the older one, a nice white one, that puzzled some by its jux-

taposition with the brick building beside it, and the early construction of the 1960s modern building that we know.

Just when it looked like we might make it to the Four Corners, Don declared a cessation in activity. The clock was nearing 9:00, and the light refreshments, as touted in the promotional material, needed consumption.

Flip's next slideshow, Part II, will continue next year. We will start where we left off and the plan is to then proceed from the north end of North Street (Rt 32) and work our way back to town to uncover more interesting stuff that no longer exists. GLHG may have to have two Flip programs next year.

Flip, thank you for providing, and allowing us to provide, so many memories, done in a genteel way, with good will for all. Your, and our, Greenville was and is a warm, friendly hometown.

-----

Answer to LBJ trivia question: NO! not Lyndon Baines Johnson. Len would not have stood for that. Instead, the LBJ stood for the family members: L (for Len), B (for Bel, short for Claribel), and J for "Jimmy" (or James Adams, a nephew who lived with Len and Claribel; Jimmy was the son of Claribel's sister Edna Ingalls Adams who summered next door).

1960s Catholic Church, Hall

