

Greenville Local History Group Newsletter

Winter 1995

Five Year Report

The crossing over into a new year is a natural time to view the accomplishments of the previous year. Furthermore, GLHG's fifth year of existence tempts me to try to present a five year look at what we have accomplished. So, instead of sticking strictly to 1994, I'll be audacious enough to look at our first five years. But, before I do that, I draw your attention first to a few other items.

First, the Greenville Local History Group will restart its usual schedule (second Monday of the month at 7:30pm) with the April share session. I hope many of you have worked on something or have found something to bring to one of the share sessions during the year, if not the April meeting. One of our topics will be the WWII program planned for June.

Working on a idea presented last summer, the GLHG will have a special session - a combination of meeting and **pot luck dinner** at the Episcopal parish house (next to the Episcopal church) on Monday, March 13 (second Monday), at **6:30 pm**. Parking is allowed across the street in the elementary school parking lot. If you want to coordinate your "pot luck" with someone else, feel free to do so. Coffee, tea, bread and butter will be provided. After the meal, Thelma Bell, on the piano, will lead the group in some oldtime singing. Also, if time allows, or interest pushes, I will bring some slides from duplicated pictures. If more information is needed, call Arlene Brown (966-8498) or Betty Vaughn (966-8518). Mark your calendars; the next newsletter comes out after our April 10 share session.

Two notes about your mailing labels. The first one: Is the mailing label addressed the way you want it? Should I be including someone else on the label? Let me know if changes should be made.

Second, the four digit number on your label indicates the year and month of your expiration date (for example, 9508 means 1995, August, is the end of your subscription. If the number is less than 9501, you will receive only this annual report unless you subscribe. If you wish to subscribe to the regular newsletter, send a check for four dollars (made out to Don Teator) to the return address on the envelope. If information is wrong, please let me know.

Now, on to the annual report, or, more appropriately, the first five years.

June of 1989 was the initial meeting. A few telephone calls had preceded this, just to make sure someone would come to a meeting I called. And about ten came out on our fledgling meeting. And then one or two more, and then one or two more different ones and so on until we have nearly 85 people receiving this newsletter. Those of you who come out know we typically have attendance somewhere in the mid-teens, with about a dozen people who have regularly shown up. Among these are Harriet Rasmussen, Dot Blenis, Connie Teator, Ray Bennett, Marge Bennett, Phyllis Beechert, Cris Ketcham, Joe Mangold, Dorothy Howard, Rosemary Lambert, Chris McDonald, Kathie Williams, Arlene Brown, and Jeanne Bear. Maybe not as regular as these but whose attendance is just as appreciated are Marguerite Simpkins, Barbara Baron, Ron Golden, Pearl Capone, Alice Roe, Edna Zivelli, John Zivelli, Millie Adriance, John Earl, Claribel Gardiner, Janet Halstead, Leona Rundell and Bob Uzzilia. A few who we used to see but now keep in touch with through newsletter or phone are June Clark, Bunny Gundersen, Lillian Weeks, Con Baumann, Elnora Phinney, Gerald Boomhower, Barbara Chatterton, Marianne Doorly, and Carol Lamb. There are

others who rarely attend or who have never attended but have let us know they are interested and help out as they can; and this help is also appreciated. In addition, some community members may attend a particular meeting because of an interest in an advertised program. Of note is the attendance of our June meetings by Hank & Joan Bruni who visit us during their stay at Pine Lake Manor. In all, the GLHG has had about 100 different individuals attend at least one meeting in these five years. Not to be forgotten are those people who enjoy local history but, for whatever reason, have not hooked up with the GLHG.

By October 1989, we had decided to form a historical society that would be called the Greenville Local History Group, intentionally named to remind us of an informal atmosphere that was sought by many. No officers, no committees, no official commitments. Our original mission was as follows:

1. to encourage active research
2. to gather, preserve, and display artifacts, documents, and photographs relating to the history of Greenville
3. to encourage a greater knowledge of the history of Greenville
4. to promote recognition of historic buildings and sites in Greenville

My own evaluation tells me we've done a good job on the first three; the fourth one is hit-and-miss.

The original format of share sessions and programs alternating is one that has proven effective for the GLHG. Our programs have included:

Nov 1989	Videotaping of Joe Mangold
Jan 1990	History of Churches in GCS District slides by Cris Ketcham
Mar 1990	House history worksheets
May 1990	Union Station preservation video
Jul 1990	How-to-tape & transcribe
Oct 1990	Early Farming Days w/Weeks & Bear
Dec 1990	Service & Social Organizations
Feb 1991	Rotary history / tape of Ciufu work
Apr 1991	One Room Schoolhouses
Jul 1991	Area Female Artists - by Clement & Thomsen

Oct 1991	Former Town Supervisors
Dec 1991	WWII in Greenville
Feb 1992	Published Sources re. Greenville
Mar 1992	D.Magee / Tn Park / Nature Conserv'y
May 1992	Cris Ketcham's favorite slides
Jul 1992	Cemetery tour w/ Harriet Rasmussen
Sep 1992	Catskill Creek: Kevin & Debra Berry
Oct 1992	Ron Palmer & Optiola Player Piano
Dec 1992	Greenville book idea
Feb 1993	Artist Rita Hoovler
May 1993	Calendar Contest Photos
Jul 1993	Entertainment in Greenville
Sep 1993	Assessors
Nov 1993	Photo selection for next three years
Apr 1994	Artist Rudi Weinlich
Jun 1994	Computers in Genealogy
Aug 1994	Greenville's Highway Department
Oct 1994	The Chronicleers of Greenville

This list should be a reminder of what we have accomplished and a standard of effort and achievement to strive for in the years ahead. The program list shows some outside sources but quite a few were ones that we created from our own experiences. The one concession to schedule we have made is the suspension of winter meetings. For the past two years, we have not held meetings from December through February. Only once in five years has a meeting been cancelled (snow). Refreshments used to be served at meeting's end for the first couple years, but when volunteers stopped bringing goodies, this routine went by the wayside (probably a good thing! I was the main consumer of these victuals.)

In addition, the Greenville Local History Group has contributed money for prizes for the 4th grade local history projects, usually in the amount of about fifty dollars. Even more satisfying to many is the watching of children work on a project we think is worthwhile and important. Special thanks goes to the 4th grade teachers. Typically, these teachers have been represented by Dave Dively or Bonnie Persico.

The GLHG, through its contributions to

the the Historian's files (I must emphasize the Historian's files, and not the files of Don Teator, because this is work that will pass on to whom ever becomes the next Historian), has contributed to the showing of our local historical resources at a variety of affairs - a couple of Catskill Valley Historical Society meetings, at a couple of our own Open Houses, at a Photo Shoot, at the Library's fundraiser at the Prevost house, and at Rainbow's 75th Anniversary. In addition, the Historian's files are available for research.

The obvious big advertiser for GLHG and Town Historian is the calendar. The first calendar produced was done for 1991, and has continued each year since then. The photos are selected from the copied pictures in the files, usually by committee consensus, with the committee made up of whomever is willing to volunteer. Thus far, members have been June Clark, Betty Vaughn, Arlene Brown, Harriet Rasmussen, Debra Teator and me. The typical content has been 12 or 13 older pictures, each having a caption unless it is the cover. Only the 1994 calendar was different, comprised of current pictures and showing 30 pictures.

The money part of the GLHG is the result of calendar sales. Typically, 500 calendars are ordered, \$1000 - \$1300 is spent for printing, and about \$1000 is profit most years. The GLHG contributed \$1000 to the Library addition fund and \$500 to the Town Park land acquisition. From the beginning, I have been the unofficial treasurer, awaiting anyone who would like to officially assume that position.

This is the time to recognize the efforts, achievements, and contributions of a variety of members. (A warning: I will try to recognize individual members for a variety of actions; I wish I had perfect memory but.... So, if I leave someone out, let me know and I'll try to make it up in the April newsletter!) Although good intentions are wonderful, it is action (or more accurately, my perception) that gets recognized in this next section.

A few of you have allowed me to tape you. A thank you goes to Toot & Betty Vaughn, Edna Adams Zivelli, John Zivelli, Lillian Weeks, Gerald Ingalls, Leona Rundell, Joe Mangold, and whoever showed up for a program that was

taped. If you haven't taped some of your memories of this area or of your life, think about doing it soon.

Many of you have submitted information about families and/or the Greenville area. The efforts of many easily dwarfs the efforts of one person. A thank you to Harriet Rasmussen, Cris Ketcham, Marguerite Simpkins, Phyllis Beechert, June Clark, Edna Adams Zivelli, Janet Halstead, Doris Hempstead, Carol Lamb, Rosemary Lambert, Joe Mangold, Chris McDonald, Priscilla Palmer, Alice Roe, Leona Rundell, Connie Teator, Bob Uzzilia, Bob & Emma Spees, Barbara Valicenti, Jeanne Bear and Kathie Williams. I do get some information from other people but they have chosen to not be involved in meetings or newsletter.

The photo collection is possible only with the assistance of others. People loaning pictures (and approximate number in parentheses) are: Harriet Rasmussen (220), Ossie & Bunny Gundersen (190), Curt Cunningham (160), Lillian Weeks (160), Edna Adams-Zivelli (145), June Clark (140), Dorothy Howard (100), Lee & Arlene Brown (85), Gerald Boomhower (75), Barbara Stevens (70), Ruth Bigelow (60), Rosemary Lambert (60), Toot & Betty Vaughn (50), Leona Rundell (50), Elnora Phinney (35), Janet Halstead (30), Nick DiBrino (30), Ray & Marge Bennett (30), Doris Hempstead (30), Alice Roe (25) and Beulah Powell (25). Also loaning pictures (20 or less) include Gus & Millie Spinner, Barbara Baron, Burdette Griffin, Con Baumann, Carol Lamb, Cornelia Ingalls, David & Harriet Gumpert, Connie Teator, Dave Dively, Dot Blenis, Gerald Ingalls, Joe Mangold, Kathie Williams, Phyllis Beechert, Len & Claribel Gardiner, and Pearl Capone.

And now I take my biggest risk. I thank all of you who have helped me be a better historian; still, there are individuals who stand out in their contributions to the Historian's files, to the well being of our meetings, etc. I offer this special recognition to:

Harriet Rasmussen: She has added copiously to the files with her tens of genealogical submissions, especially on the Griffin, Evans, Sanford families, as well as for a dozen other surnames. Her longhand transcription of the Taylor diaries have been

a mainstay for a dozen meetings. Harriet's memory for a connection usually leads to a good story or two. In addition, her willingness to write allows others to use her accounts as a basis for research in the future.

June Clark: June's seemingly limitless energy and productivity was a model for all of us. She was "president" of GLHG for two years and instigated a variety of local history projects - transcribing audio tapes, research into pictures for the Local, etc. Her love of her house and the history it represented is already a legend. Although we all adapt, the loss of June Clark to a move to NYC was sharply felt.

Arlene Brown: Her sense of storytelling is a perfect lead-in to local history (or vice-versa). Arlene was instrumental in the WWII program often has an idea for a program.

Cris Ketcham: Cris' genealogical expertise (and DAR leadership) is vital in making some of the links to our early history. Her stewardship of the Presbyterian Church and her role in National Historic Register status for the park area demonstrates by example her preserving local history. Cris allowed access to the church records and the Bogardus scrapbook

Ray & Marge Bennett: Both have a keen sense of local stories, even though Ray usually does the telling. Although a Cairo boy, Ray's life has been particularly Greenville. Marge lived the early boarding house experience.

Thurston & Betty Vaughn: Both remind us of the Vaughn and Winn influence on the area, and the stories their lives have engendered. Of course, nobody would confuse their storytelling styles - the earthy ones usually are Toot's. Betty and Toot are the type to help set up, to volunteer for a committee. Betty has represented GLHG at the 4th grade assemblies.

Phyllis Beechert: Phyllis is involved in a bit of everything, and always keeps an eye out for something I haven't seen before. She is always there to lend a hand for whatever is needed at the moment.

Alice Roe: Always a good listener, Alice is one of our Irving Road - Newry memory keepers. Her work in transcribing the Cora Brown

diary stands out.

Pearl Capone: She is our sign of spring! Pearl's enthusiasm for local history spurs others. Her transcription work is appreciated.

Chris McDonald: Chris' newspaper experience stands out. Having moved to Greenville in the 1960's when Greenville was changing quickly, Chris was around to photograph and write about its goings-on. She publicizes the GLHG better than anyone else can.

Kathie Williams: The eye of the naturalist-tourist-Local assistant is Kathie's strength in GLHG. Along with Chris, she is probably the most widely read person. Besides having a strong general sense of our area, Kathie's personal core seems to be King Hill, and the Butler family influence.

Edna Adams-Zivelli: She was the Town Historian before me and started the first real basis of a file system. In addition, her Ingalls ancestry represented a strong tie to our local history. Her written record still serves as a basis of local history research. I will remember Edna as my mentor.

Janet Halstead: Her pride in Freehold and the role her Lacy family plays stands out.

Connie Teator: My mom is a constant source of ideas, as well as lending her memories of over 40 years in Freehold.

Doris Hempstead: Although she has never attended a meeting, Doris' knowledge of families in the area is legendary. If I need information about some family, Doris is one of my starting points.

Joe Mangold: Stories of Freehold boarding houses stand out, and Joe is a good source of Freehold Church documents. Joe was also our first videotape experiment.

Dorothy Howard: Dorothy has helped with parts of Freehold history that few others can.

Lillian Weeks: She is the keeper of the King and King Hill heritage, and of the stories that go with her experiences of the King Hill - Result - Surprise area of mid-century. Her loan of the 1902 Clair Weeks diary is important in recording the local farming experience.

Ossie & Bunny Gundersen: Both are well known for their volunteer work, and have shared their stories of the area.

Zan Bryant, Carol Bryant: Both have supported

the local history cause strongly, despite not being able to attend meetings. The store was one of our main calendar outlets. Zan is good for a Civil War connection, as well as the business outlook for Greenville. Carol always had a eye for documents and stories that belonged in the files.

Gerald Boomhower: His loaning of his extensive post card collection to be duplicated in photo format will be remembered. In addition, Gerald was another of our storytellers.

Len & Claribel Gardiner: Both, with strong and long family ties to the area, share their knowledge about local history. Claribel, along with Edna, initiated the 1976 project that recorded house histories of the Norton Hill area.

Bob & Emma Spees: In addition to being the members the farthest away, they have shared with us their Spees family history and its Greenville roots.

Jeanne & Orlie Bear: Years of service to Greenville typify both. As Town Clerk for many years, and Town Board member now, Jeanne has watched Greenville change over fifty years. And Orlie carries the Bear family knowledge as well as that of the story of farming in Greenville.

Jim & Jeannette Valentine: Although the store keeps them away, their interest is always expressed. This help includes the selling of calendars in the Freehold Country Store.

Rosemary Lambert: She embodies the love of the country; fortunately for us it was the Gayhead - Pine Springs area.

Dave Dively & Bonnie Persico: They have been our connections to the GCS 4th grade local history projects, much of which is duplicated for the files.

Marguerite Simpkins: She often has an eye out for the genealogy of a family or person, and a story or two about families about town.

Gus & Millie Spinner: Gus is another in the storytelling legend, with both with stories of the King Hill - Surprise area. Gus was especially helpful with the cemetery project.

John Earl: The blacksmithing connection and the working with metal connects John with our local history.

Con Baumann: Another of our interesting storytellers of the early boarding house era and

life around Place's Corners and Greenville Center.

Bob & Marie Shaw: His work and help with the Greenville Center pictures remains the best evidence of that area's history.

Barbara Valicenti: Although seldom seen at meetings, her work on house histories is still one to be used as a model for others.

Ruth Bigelow: While she lived, Ruth was a constant source of Greenville information, especially her transcription of letters from her uncle.

There are others who have helped: Jim & (Jeannette) Valentine of the Freehold Country Store; Ellen Smith at the Library; the Town Board members for supporting projects like the photo project that need money; David & Harriet Gumpert for their perspective; Gerald Ingalls for the stories of the life of boarding houses in our town; Barbara Stevens for loaning the glass plate negatives of her grandfather; Phil Ellis for his receptive ear at the Local; for Ray Beecher for his standard of writing and writing of Greenville material; John Zivelli for him memories of his young adult years at Greenville; and a few dozen other individuals who might pitch in a piece of information or book or document.

I saved the best for last. My wife Debra's role I cannot underestimate. Using the camera, going into the darkroom at project's need, listening, cutting the picture's numbers, helping with the calendar, occasionally listening or reading to something I've written, answering the phone, sharing my enjoyment, etc., add up, for all practical purposes, to being the assistant historian. Again, I wish not to offend anyone by leaving you out, or by interpreting what you've done differently than you would have liked, but I believe it would be worthwhile to note what I felt were some of your contributions.

So, where do we go from here. Although the tendency sometimes is to try something different that will keep our interest, it is just as important to maintain an action that is worthwhile. I suspect we will do both. There are some projects that are always works-in-progress; some

projects get finished for now or do not attract attention for some time; and still others unforeseen will come into view and need our energy and resources for its completion. As many of you have shown through your contributions, there is a variety and almost endless amount of local history to be recorded, analyzed, talked about and preserved. We still should evaluate our goals occasionally to make sure we're doing what is productive for Greenville's history. And, if we happen to be as productive in the next five years as we've been in the first five, we will have accomplished a deed worth doing.

Strictly speaking, my role as Town Historian does not require any association with any local history group, nor does your interest in local history require a Town Historian. However, in my case, the GLHG's help and interest has enabled me to achieve goals as Town Historian that I could not possibly have done or known about on my own. I hope I have been able to make Greenville aware of the local history resources

we have and, more personally, I trust I have been a person who has utilized your interests and knowledge in a way you have enjoyed and have recognized as worthwhile. Many of you have acknowledged my share in Greenville's local history preservation; your interest and my interest have meshed in ways I could only have hoped for when we started back in 1989.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Don Teator". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the "Thank you." text.

P.S. Should anyone wish to add to, correct, re-interpret, etc., I'll try to include it in one of the Spring, 1995 newsletters. Of course, if nothing is submitted, people finding this document years from now will tend to accept the view presented above as the "true" one. How's that for a scary thought!