



South Street, Greenville

Greenville Local History Group Newsletter

November 1996, Issue 85

Share Session

A nippy November night (it is night with Standard Time) greeted the share session. With only three or four inside by 7:25, it appeared that a small crowd would brave the cold weather. But, within fifteen minutes, more chairs were needed, and our numbers included Ray and Marge Bennett, Toot and Betty Vaughn, Harriet Rasmussen, Jeanne Bear, Phyllis Beechert, Cris Ketcham, Alice Roe, Ron Golden, Kathie Williams, Joe Mangold, Barbara Baron, and Don Teator.

Keeping Veteran's Day in mind, Ray showed his Saipan metal plate, a bracelet, Okinawa chopsticks, V-mail, and the medals he has from World World Two. Harriet read the V-mail, and Ray obliged with several stories, which meant that others added a story or two.

Of course, if this sounds familiar, it should; most of our share sessions start off innocently with a story or two and, if allowed, would elongate into an hour. In fact, several suggested the chair should have a gavel but he quickly acknowledged this crowd was too tough for him.

Harriet returned the Mygatt book that Don Howard had created, and read the letter that Don had written to her. Harriet made some notes of cemetery inscriptions to be included with the book. Harriet reported sightings of June Clark in the area (Green Hill Cafe) and Don mentioned just missing June although Deb caught up with June at the airport. Hi, June!

Ron Golden brought several older newspapers, mostly from the 1920's.

Kathie Williams rescued a couple dozen pictures from Phil Ellis' recycling bin. Most of the pictures were relatively recent (with the past twenty years or so) but they of course sparked another round of stories. Actually, the meeting became a collection of four or five gabfests depending on who had which pictures. A thank you goes to Kathie for her "rescue mission."

Don brought in the past calendars again and, following Rosemary's suggestion (even though she was absent this night), reviewed all the known errors from the calendars. (The ironic part of this is the goal of producing a calendar that has no errors of fact. After seven calendars, not one can claim that. Some year it will happen!)

Oct 91 the hotel corner is the southwest corner

Jun 92 the second person in the front row is Esther DeHeus (according to sister Mrs. Robert V. Shaw)

Sep 93 the fifth person, whose name should be inserted, in the middle row is Lillie Thompson

Oct 94 Kieszkjel is the correct spelling

Jul 95 David Evans is the grandfather-in-law-to-be, and the picture is reversed

Apr 96 the Wood-Hall era went to 1956, the Harr era began in 1957

Bear 97 Orlie Bear operated a dairy farm

It was nearing nine at this point, so we stopped the official business and stayed to continue telling more stories until no one was around to listen to them.

Other notes:

This was the last meeting of this year. Our next meeting will be in April. Have a productive winter.

The exception to note #1 could be if someone wants to organize the potluck get-together in March. If that someone(s) will let me know by the end of January, I will put notice of it in the annual letter.

A genealogical request. Marlene Nelson (518-237-8274) is looking for the ancestors of David Parks (1827-1904) who married Hannah Williams. David is buried in the Little Gayhead Cemetery. For some reason, NYS does not have the death record of David Parks. Marlene indicates the 1860 Cairo census shows David and Hannah, with children Willis, Watson, and Warren. The 1850 Cairo census is somewhat confusing, showing Benjamin, Maria, David, Hiram, Eliza, Reuben, Hiram, Rebecca, Minerva and David, as well as another entry in Cairo with David, Eleanor and Hiram. The 1855 census shows a similar family but under a Parker spelling. Marlene is guessing David Parks could have a father named Benjamin, and a brother Hiram and sister Eleanor. The phone number is listed above if you can help.

Suzanne Maben of Brookline, NH has sent a couple of goodies.

One is a reasonably good copy of the 1871 Memorial Celebration. The other (somewhat tattered) is the 1819 deed to the property that would become the school house in District #8 (part Greenville, part Westerlo). A thank you goes to Suzanne for preserving this piece of history.

Anyone who has an idea for a program for next year can pass the idea along to me. Thanks for a rewarding 1996.

Winter awaits some more of our local history projects.

Here's to 50 years of just plain life

Two hundred thousand couples are striking it rich this year with golden wedding anniversaries 50 years after their postwar weddings.

April through September is an especially busy time of family celebrations to honor the triumph of love, trust and plain old stubbornness in the face of trials and tribulations that tear lesser unions asunder. These couples represent an extraordinary slice of 20th-century American life. They were children of the Great Depression and volunteered without hesitation to serve their country in World War II. When they returned home from Europe and the Pacific, U.S. demographics were forever changed with a baby boom.

As parents, they taxed themselves without flinching or whining to pay for thousands of new public schools, roads and sewer systems. They weathered the storms of family life and social upheaval, and foreign wars that were never as easy to grasp as their own.

This generation, hand in hand with their noisy progeny, transformed the culture with civil rights and environmental laws and greater equality between the sexes. While raising one generation, they taxed themselves for an older one.

Before five decades of marriage came courtships as fleeting as a weekend pass and engagements that lasted the duration of a war. This was the faith and foolishness of pure romance; no agonizing about commitment or career.

What came next were long, lean years in pursuit of stability through a job, an education and a living wage. The G.I. bill gave the nation an army of schoolteachers, doctors, lawyers and engineers. Others found steady work in companies and factories that flourished because of a demand for the spoils of peacetime.

In their own and their country's time, these durable couples paid off mortgages; built, enjoyed and sold vacation homes; raised and educated children, married them off, consoled them through divorce and laid some to rest. Now, they are watching grandchildren begin their own trek through adulthood.

Fifty years of married life. Amazing.

This article appeared recently as an editorial in The Seattle Times.



Critic at Large ^{NYT} July 25, 1961

School in Upstate Farm Area Provides Contrasts With Conditions in New York

By BROOKS ATKINSON

GREENVILLE, N. Y. **I**N view of the squalid news about the schools of New York City, here are some facts and comments about a school—probably a typical school—in a farming area in Greene County.

Most of the 6,000 people in the Greenville district would not consciously think of their central school as the major enterprise in the community. But statistics seem to indicate that it is. Nothing else employs so many people to look after the needs of so many, and nothing else has such a huge plant. The Georgian style, well-groomed building is the most imposing structure in the town. During the school term it is also the busiest.

It is appraised at \$1,267,068, and the equipment at \$182,999—colossal figures for a small town. Next year the budget is estimated at \$701,699.54, of which \$212,000 will come directly from the taxpayers. Fifty-four teachers, most of them established members of the community, look after the education of 1,000 students in the elementary and high school grades.

If Greenville were a wealthy town, this modern school would not seem like such an extraordinary institution. In fact, the economic resources of the district are limited. But every school day the children and young people participate in a civilized environment. Their scholastic achievements rank a little above average if measured by the Regents examinations and the Iowa Tests of Educational Development.

No doubt there are equally fine schools throughout the state and country. There is a fine one for the lower grades in near-by Durham. But the Greenville Central School, of which Scott Ellis has been supervising principal for many years, is the one with which I am acquainted; and it stands in the center of the town, surrounded by manicured lawns, as a silent rebuke to many of the schools in New York City.

Although the Greenville taxpayers are modest people, they would be outraged if their central school were infested by rats and roaches, if the classrooms were vandalized, if the windows were broken, if the floors were uncared for and if plaster had fallen out of the ceilings.

By and large the Greenville school is taken for granted as a reputable part of the town's activities. If it were not, the seven elected members of the school board would hear about it in no unmistakable terms, and so would the school administrators. The homes from which the students come vary. But it is agreed that at school all of them are entitled to the best.

None of the members of the school board is an educator. They are representative citizens—a summer hotel proprietor, three farmers, a truck gardener, the manager of a fertilizer plant and a lawyer. Personally dissimilar, they are united in believing that the school must be kept at a decent standard and that the money it costs must be spent thriftily. Unpaid, serving terms of five years each, they accept great responsibilities, which they discharge in the interests of the community.

Since the school buys thousands of dollars worth of supplies every year, the local merchants might assume that they were entitled to special consideration. Apparently, they do not think so. The low bids for the large items—like buses, gasoline, fuel oil, meats, canned goods, bread, ice cream—come from wholesalers outside the district, who, accordingly, get the bulk of the business.

Maintaining professional and ethical standards in the operation of a public school ought to be standard practice. To judge by the news from New York City it is not. In the country town of Greenville the school children have a finer preparation for adult life than many of the school children in New York.