

# Greenville Local History Group Newsletter

Winter 2001, Issue 121

Annual Report

First, the important stuff! Food! The pot luck dinner that often begins our year will take place on Thursday, March 8, at about 6 pm, at the Episcopal parsonage. All are welcome. Those of you who want to coordinate food choices, call Betty Vaughn (966-8518) or Phyllis Beechert (966-5226). A thank you goes to Betty and Phyllis (and I hear Dot Blenis is another co-conspirator!) for undertaking this event again.

Now, back to the annual report. A welcome goes out to all who have endured the worst this winter has thrown at you. The whiff of spring has teased us just enough that we can almost see the buds of spring.

I often say that it seems like last month I was mailing out the annual report from the year before. This past year has zipped by as quickly as the one before it. A look back at 2000 found the Greenville Local History Group still using its usual pattern of meetings, rotating programs with share sessions. Our programs included the revision of the Top Events of Greenville's 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Bob Titus' presentation of the Geology of Greenville (July), and the selection of 2000's honorees (October).

Alternating between the programs were our share sessions, our chance to show off stuff we have found and done. Harriett filled in information about the Norton Hill school picture, we all helped with the historic house list update, and we scrutinized the aftermath of the Sherill House destruction. One of the consequences of this last piece was the town passing a zoning ordinance that recognizes the importance of historic preservation. For those of you who lobbied for some action, you deserve a pat on the back for being part of a town decision that may serve us well. Otherwise, the details of the share sessions have been covered by the monthly issues, and those who subscribe know about these.

The 2000 calendar represented our efforts of serving slices of local history to the community. This project is perhaps our most visible stamp, and I have received a few dozen comments about the calendar, not only for sharing pictures, but also for remembering the people who have made a difference in Greenville. Again, a thank you goes to Bryant's, Rite-Aid, and the Library for their help in selling the calendar. If you get a chance, take time to remind the owners/managers that their cooperation is appreciated.

One hope is that the winter fur-lough has allowed some work on local history projects to be shared during the coming year. People contribute in many different ways. One of the most useful is to preserve some piece of Greenville's history. This may happen by the saving of an artifact or knick-knack; however, the part that is tougher to save is the collection of memories and stories. And thus, I urge you to audiotape or write your memories of Greenville people, events, and places. Daunting at first, this recording becomes more and more useful with the continual adding of sources.

Our membership numbers about 70, with about 45 receiving a newsletter, and the average attendance at meetings often numbers about 12-15. Our schedule will continue to be the second Monday of April through November.

Looking ahead, I foresee help needed in scheduling programs. To be frank, the program director for the GLHG is running dry, at times, for ideas, and it is the programs that tie together our share sessions. If you have an idea, please let me know.

A note about subscriptions. Your address label has a four digit number above your name. The first two digits

represent the year; the last two digits represent the month. Thus, a number less than 0101 (2001, January) means your subscription has run out and are receiving only this annual issue as has traditionally been done. (An x above your name also means your subscription has expired.) If the number is 0107 or 0108 (representing July or August of this year), you still have issues coming until summertime, when the usual summertime reminder to re-subscribe will be posted. If the number is 0201 or greater, you're set for all of this year. Subscriptions of \$5 for a year (usually April – November issues, plus the annual) can be mailed to Don Teator, 3979 Rt 67, Freehold NY 12431. Checks should be made out to: Don Teator.

I hope to see you at the April 9<sup>th</sup> share session (2nd Monday of April). However, please consider accepting the invitation to the pot luck dinner.

Until then, take care.



PS: Following is a report Leona Rundell had prepared for the Ingalls Reunion, a report that ties in with her mother's diary.

## Ransom Benjamin Ingalls

My grandfather, Ransom Benjamin Ingalls, son of Truman and grandson of Jacob Ingalls, was born February 3, 1836, on the Homestead Farm at Lambs Corners.

When Ariel asked me if I could give a few details such as sayings, etc., of Grandpa Ingalls, I remembered that his Diaries were stored at our house, so I have looked some of them over for material. As nearly as I can check, there are Diaries from 1860 through 1914, with the exception of three years.

I realize that their contents could not be of interest to the majority of the people assembled and I haven't been able to read every one. They are written with pencil, practically no punctuation, and the writing is very dim.

For the most part I will try to tell of early events and modes of early operations.

Grandpa and Grandma were married December 29, 1859 and, on January 1, 1860, he writes of moving from his home to the farm where Adrian and Edna Elliott now live. This being the case, our Homestead has been in the Ingalls Family for a century.

Probably no one living or any here today with the exception of our family realize that Grandpa loved to sing. In April, 1860 he mentioned going to a concert in the afternoon and getting home about a "dozen o'clock" and of going to singing school often.

He also went to Olin Chapel (Lambs Corners) to church and referred to going to Norton Hill to Sunday School. He later attended church in Greenville and usually went twice on Sunday and sometimes during the week. He also mentioned going to Camp Meetings and to an Anti-Tobacco Society at Addison's.

The "Domany" often called at Grandpa's; there are several mentioned in his records. On July 10, 1863 he wrote "Father and Mother Losee here, went up to the Chapel to meeting, Mrs. Adaline and others baptized after service".

On September 7, 1863 he went to the Chapel in the evening to a Soldier's Reception.

Speaking of soldiers, on November 6, 1860, Grandpa went to election and "Voted for Lincoln" and on November 3, 1868, voted for Grant.

On November 27, 1861, he stated Harrison, his brother, who is often referred to as "Tip", was home from the army and on August 30, 1863 Har-

ison was home from war, gone about two years.

[Ransom] Spoke of going to Norton Hill to raise a Liberty Pole and July 24, 1861, "Bad News from the South".

On August 23, 1861, Lewis Tremmel who worked for him went to Cooksburg to a Secession Meeting.

Taxes in the 1860s were considerably different from today. Following are some of the amounts paid:

1/5/61 - \$16.77                      12/28/61 - \$16.78

2/13/65 - \$54.00                      1/11/69 - 43.15

Prices of 1860: buys 3 pigs for 12 shilling per head - \$1.50; sold a calf for 3½¢ per lb.

1861: Milk 3 and 4¢ per quart. Beef 4¢ per lb.

1862: Sold wool for 38¢ per lb. and in 1863 for 65¢ per lb.

1863: Rye \$1.00 per bushel and Hay \$23.00 per ton; Oats \$.86 per bu.

1870: buckwheat flour \$3.40 per hundred.

The modes of farming compare very differently with present methods. Grandpa mentioned sowing plaster, plowing among the corn, cutting and raking rye, cradling oats, fitting corn or planting ground and cutting wood at the door, cutting slat timber, pulling stumps, going to raisings and bees to help other people, husking corn, cleaning oats with a fanning mill, banking the house, grafting, salting meat, making soap, trying out tallow, ditching, salting worms on the corn, drawing chip manure, oiling harness, laying stone wall, drawing rails. A number of the men and women here today will remember some of the above chores, but the children no doubt would not know the meaning of some of the terms.

As early as 1861 mention is made of going to an insurance meeting, no doubt, quite different from the insurance business of today. Also in 1861, he wrote that a peddler came along and stayed all night. In a later diary he refers to a pump peddler coming and on March 23, 1866, someone staying over night with a drove.

They held debating school at the brick school house and he also sat as juror for lawsuits. Lawsuits were referred to quite often. He didn't always tell who was involved. For one case, he was subpoenaed as a witness and that case lasted two day; anyway, he was there all night.

He wrote often of watching with the sick.

On July 3, 1861, he went to fireworks at Norton Hill and remarked "Comet visible"; also recorded a total eclipse of the sun on July 18, 1860. As early as September 25, 1861, mention was made of going to the Cairo Fair and in later diaries of going to the Lambs Corners Picnic and in 1861 he mentioned going to Coxsackie with hay and to circus.

Grandpa and Grandma seemed to usually have hired help in the house and outside. The men were hired for wages as low as \$9.00, \$14.00 and \$15.00 per month. It would seem that they needed help as Grandpa surely enjoyed company; he would tell of going some place "on a visit". This seemed to be only for the day, however. He not only visited but, time and time again, he tells of company at their house. Some of the people mentioned as visiting in later years were Leslie Goff, Ray Winans, Gideon Palmer, John and Antoinette, John Winans, Addie Smith, Aunt Eleanor Winegard, Carrie Goff, Lillie VerPlanck, Harrison Ingalls and many others.

All through the years, an entry was made when a baby arrived and, when our family arrived, this was often. Unless anyone knew who was born, they would have to guess, as he had peculiar ways of recording the event. When Uncle Edgar was born he wrote "Johnny Came to Town" and when my gather was born he wrote "Abraham Lincoln Came to Town". Maybe that is the way Pop got his name "Truman Lincoln".

I noted especially the entry of Joe and Smart calling, Joe was Grandpa's brother. On January 15, 1862, he wrote that he went to Joe's in the evening to see the baby. I looked in the Genealogy and found that the baby was Lillian Ingalls, later VerPlanck, John I's mother, who was born 1/13/62

It was in 1870 that a barn was built at Grandpa's; this one burned in 1903. Probably it was a good thing that he was interested in the weather and the possibility of the bear seeing his shadow as it was "Ground Hog Day" and he

had gotten up in the night to see the prospects of a fair day, for the bear to see his shadow, when he discovered the fire. Ruth Elliott was three years old at the time and she remembers the fire: because of this we often jokingly ask her about dates and things which happened before she was born, thinking that she will know about them too.

On June 12, 1865, Grandpa wrote that Adaline rode down home, which was Surprise, on the Market wagon. Knowing Grandma, I can hardly imagine that.

They had a hired girl working for them and he mentions that Don called to see Julia and "popped the question". Later in the year he wrote that he went to see them married.

In the 1888 Diary, Grandpa writes of the blizzard, "The worst storm and banks since America was discovered".

Not being able to read all the diaries, I skipped to the last one – 1914.

I am told that Grandpa retired at an early age and after reading his accounts and reading some between the lines, I find that it was probably necessary to give up manual labor, as there were so many hired hands and grandchildren and company around to keep track of that he had a full time job in just that field.

He has some expressions peculiar to himself such as "All hands helping", "gone to the river 'mit' hay", "choring", "raining like 'Sam Hill'". He used to call me "Little I", I don't know why, and his favorite was "Helping Zeke", which meant doing nothing, and as far as I could make out, "Zeke" had lots of help.

In the 1914 Diary on September 14th he wrote that Smith girl home with Ruth I assume that was Ariel, our President of today.

My grandparents celebrated their 55th Wedding Anniversary on December 29, 1914 and on December 31, 1914, Grandpa wrote "Thus ends my 55 years of Diary writing".

Grandpa died on October 30, 1916 at the age of 80 years.

10/15/60

Written by Leona Ingalls Rundell