

# Greenville Local History Group Newsletter

June 20001

Issue 124

Share Session / Glenn Murder

Although they would not know it, a night of murder and arson awaited another well attended meeting – Ron Golden, Rosemary Lambert, Mimi Weeks, Kathie Williams, Connie Teator, Dot Blenis, Gerald Boomhower, Harriett Rasmussen, Dot Hesel, Barbara Baron, Joe Mangold, Betty Vaughn, David Rundell, and Don Teator.

First, the news for next month is that the meeting is cancelled and we will meet again in August.

On to regular business. We spent a little while discussing the Greene County Home Tour in Oak Hill, which several of us attended. The home tour was a compact one, with eight of the houses within walking distance of each other, stretching from the Lutheran Church on the point and going to the Methodist parsonage near the base of the climb out of town. Only three houses made us drive. I would pick a highlight or two but it seemed as if each structure had something special to note. To single one might be to note the Tripp store with a feel of early century. However, I return to my noting that each of the houses were worthy.

Harriett made notes from Eleanor Goff Ingall's diary for 1913, and Harriett's summary is included later.

Mimi brought in more post cards. Several were possibly generic country scenes that claimed Greetings from Surprise, and we kept trying to guess where in Surprise the front side of the post card might be. The big wide creek that looked like the Catskill Creek was a sign that the post cards

were meant to be mood-invoking and possibly not true to the hamlet. Still, these and other post cards evoked country memories that Surprise would have been proud of. I'll try to scan a couple of them in a future newsletter.

A good portion of the night turned to last meeting's topic of the Glenn murder. Don had brought out the Glenn murder file, read from Local, which is reproduced. In addition, a picture, not unsimilar to today's tabloids style, labelled parts of Greenville's four corners and what part each had to do with the murder. This too is reproduced. Other details of this case were reviewed, discussed, added on to, and the usual stuff this group can do to any matter of local history!

Following this was a review of the 1961 arson spree, a listing of the places that burned, and a retelling of the anxiety that invaded Greenville that year. This, of course, led to the comparison with the arson spree in the 1990s which shook Greenville to its roots.

We apologized to newcomer Dot Hesel that we usually don't go off the deep, dark, dangerous end too often but it was her (mis)fortune to hear us do exactly that. Anyway, it was fun!

Let's meet in August, after I'm finished bouncing along the Colorado River's rapids with Deb.

Take care,



## The Diary of Eleanor Goff – 1913

Stanley leaves on January 9 after an 18 day visit with the Goffs in Richmond Hill. During that time, he and Eleanor took in 14 movies. People in the city used this form of entertainment very commonly while it was a special occasion in the country. One would have to get to Catskill or Albany in 1913. By the 1930s and 1940s, theatre-going was popular in Catskill, Cairo and Greenville.

On January 25, Eleanor goes to Ellis Island with a church group and, on February 14, she and brother Joe go skating. She finds out that skating is not for her because her ankles are weak.

In March, she writes that she has heard Cora Hunt and Earl VanAuken married and her mother's cousin Truman Smith has died. He was the son of Diantha Ingalls who married Zoeth Smith of Cornwallville.

In early April, brother Jerry and his wife Bessie go house hunting and Stanley comes unexpectedly for a three day visit.

Mr. Nikola, the upstairs neighbor, is the owner of an auto and, in May, he takes her and Mama for a ride to Coney Island and Prospect Park.

On June 1, 1913, her brother Joe takes her to Weehawken for her journey to the country. Stanley and Elgirtha come with Henry O'Keeffe's auto to meet her. From this time on, she does not live in Richmond Hill. She is staying at Vern Smith's with his daughters Marguerite and Ariel and Vern's wife Ida. Very often she is staying at Trum and Carrie Ingalls' where she and Elgirtha and all the kids are very close.

On June 4, 1913, Eleanor and Marguerite are walking home from Greenville when Dr. Wasson comes along with his auto and gives them a ride. (Dr. Wasson is the grandfather of Ruth Sanford Hook.)

Eleanor gets frequent letters from her family in the city and on July 2, Joe writes that he has been attacked by five men. She mentions things like Howard Spaulding bringing his grandmother to Trum and Carrie's to visit. This is Hannah Spaulding (Carrie's mother) and Howard is the son of Alonzo, Hannah's youngest son.

In August, she tells of going to Peter Stevens' store to shop. That is the store next to the church in Norton Hill – we know it later as Lawrence Powell's.

Also in August, she tells that her schoolmates Phyllis Simpson and Ray Hunt had a baby girl. She doesn't give us a name but we recognize that this chronicles the birth of Geraldine (Lockwood). Clarence is going with Hazel (Garrett), and brother Joe is planning to be married on September 24, 1913.

It appears that this will leave Mamma (Carrie Goff) alone at Richmond Hill – Joe's wife will move in

there. In any case, Mamma arrives at her sister Lillian VerPlank's and that seems to be her new home. Lillian was widowed last year and Carrie is her only sibling.

By October, Eleanor is making her home with Mary and Bert Bell. Mary is the oldest child of Lillian and Isaac Ver Plank so she is a cousin to Eleanor.

All fall, Eleanor, Mary, Mamma and Aunt Lillie have been crocheting booties. I think they were doing so many dozen and then sending them to the city for sale. (My grandmother Griffin used to do this when her children were small.)

On November 26, 1913, Stanley and Eleanor go on the New York Central to Richmond Hill where they stay with brother Leslie and Margaret while they pack up Eleanor's things from home and from Jerry's house. (Are they planning to marry?) Stanley is sick in bed and Eleanor has to go to the express office alone and sends the goods off. She had turned 18 years old on September 25. On November 30, they take the train back, and Henry and Nina O'Keeffe meet them in Cossackie with their auto.

On December 1, Eleanor goes back to Mary and Bert Bell's and she has some her goods delivered there. They live in the white house just before Peter Steven's store. The little long building along the creek, Bert Bell ran as a store.

While Eleanor is still with Mary, Mamma is still living with Aunt Lillian, fourteen year old Grace and six year old John I. Ver Plank.

From this time on, Eleanor is mostly at Trum and Carrie's but on December 12 she goes back to help Mary because her son Harold Bell is sick. Dr. Charles came (this is Dr. Charles McCabe). Harold Bell, in later years, had a store in Westerlo which is now the library.

On December 18, Stanley and Eleanor go to Peter Stevens' store in Norton Hill to get the Christmas presents for his family, and the next night they go to a basketball game in the Norton Hill Hall – against Freehold.

On December 24, Eleanor spends Christmas at Stanley's folks' home and receives her engagement ring. On December 25, Mary is sick and Eleanor goes back to help Aunt Lillie get dinner and put the things on the tree. On December 26, she goes to a dance at Warren's (Ingalside) and on December 31, Mamma and Aunt Lillie go to the Golden Wedding party for Aunt Lorretta and Uncle Harrison Ingalls. Uncle Ransom and his granddaughter Elgirtha go too. Ransom and Harrison are brothers.

New Years Eve is spent at Trum and Carries. Hazel Garrett (Clarence's girlfriend) comes to stay all night and the young people play euchre and make pop corn balls. ❖

# The Disappearance and Murder of 9 Year Old Helen Glenn, Minister's Daughter, Stirs Locality As Two Day Search Results In the Discovery of The Body and Confession of Local Slayer.

## Confessed Slayer Held for Grand Jury

The mystery in connection with the disappearance of little Helen Glenn, 9 year old daughter of the Rev. and Mrs. Ernest G. Glenn of Greenville was solved Saturday by the confession of Alfred Volckman 19 year old son of Mr. and Mrs. A. C. Volckman, new residents of Greenville village where the Volckmans own and operate a general store, young Volckman working in the meat department of the store.

This was the greatest tragedy that has occurred in our peaceful village, and has cast a pall of gloom over the entire countryside, particularly in the village is this fact noticeable.

Rev. and Mrs. Glenn had gone away to attend a conference of the Methodist church. While away, they left their family in the care of a neighbor.

Some time Wednesday night, when most of the people in the community were in the local school attending the commencement exercises, the little girl was killed.

Word of the disappearance of the girl was not made known until the following day. A search began at once and interest in locating the girl grew in intensity, as the news spread over the state and nation.

During Thursday and Friday, business in the village was practically at a standstill, every able bodied man and boy was out scouring the countryside for traces of Helen. Friday afternoon the excitement had grown to such a high pitch, that it was decided to start a search that would cover every foot of the woodland surrounding the village. Telephone calls were sent to adjoining villages for help. Drivers of trucks and tourists, passing through the village, left their cars parked in the streets and joined in the search. About twenty members of the State Police headed by Lieutenant Garry Sager, and Sergeant Walter Wheeler, H. Clay Ferris, Sheriff of Greene County and numerous deputy sheriffs and plain clothes men, directed the searching parties which numbered hundreds. At about 2:00 p. m. James Garry and a companion, John Zivillia discovered the body lying on the edge of bassic creek on the Red Mills road located about two miles west of the village.

Coroner M. H. Atkinson of Catskill directed the removal of the body to Dean & Dean undertaking rooms in Catskill where an autopsy was performed.

The findings of the coroner were that death had been caused by a knife wound in the breast, which had penetrated vital organs.

Clues uncovered by those in charge of the investigation of the crime seemed to point to Alfred Volckman who was the last known person to see the child alive. On Saturday morning, Volckman was taken to headquarters for questioning. After an all day grilling, Volckman broke down and confessed.

Friday he attempted to commit suicide by drinking a quantity of iodine and lysol and at the time of his confession was in the Memorial hospital in Catskill.

The Rev. and Mrs. Glenn are bearing up bravely under their load of sorrow and harbor no spirit of revenge toward the one responsible for their bereavement. They have requested that justice be allowed to take its course.

The Methodist church of which the Rev. Mr. Glenn, father of Helen is pastor was closed on Sunday and the services in the other churches were in the nature of funeral orations and there were many tearful eyes in the congregations.

The funeral for the little girl was held on Monday in the Methodist church and of which her father, Rev. Glenn is the pastor.

It was the largest and most sorrowful funeral service ever held in the village of Greenville. The church and church parlors in the rear being filled, and many standing on the lawn outside the church.

The small white flowered covered casket was borne into the church between a double line of clergymen, 50 in number, extending from the street to the church doors. The bearers, youthful school mates of Helen were Robert Slater, Randall Cutler, Arthur Lennon, Randall Ingalls, Har-

old Cornell and Louis Layman.

The funeral services were conducted by intimate friends of Rev. Glenn. The scripture reading was by the Rev. O. O. Rice of Woodstock, followed by prayer by Dr. Herbert E. Wright, President of Drew Seminary of Carmel, N. Y. The sermon was delivered by Dr. Joseph W. Chasey, District Superintendent of the Kingston District of the Methodist Conference, the closing prayer was by Dr. John H. Cable, Dean of the Missionary Training Institute of Nyack, N. Y. Burial was at Cornwallville.

The floral offerings were beautiful and their number testified to the regard and sympathy of the community for Helen and her parents.

As Dr. Chasey proceeded with the service, men women and children broke down and wept. At the close of the service, the casket was carried into the vestibule of the church and opened and the congregation filed slowly past it, for a last sight of the mortal remains of Helen.

This was one funeral when the entire community were mourners. Business places in the village were closed.

Helen is survived by her parents Rev. and Mrs. Ernest Glenn, two brothers, Ernest and Donald and one sister, Betty.

Early Tuesday morning, young Volckman was brought from Catskill to Greenville, being guarded by 25 members of the State Police. He was taken to the scene of the crime and reenacted it step by step and verified all the previous statements of his confession. Later he was taken before Justice of the Peace, Lavern M. Smith and arraigned on a charge of first degree murder. He waived examination and was remanded to jail to await action of the Greene county grand jury which will convene in September.

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