

Greenville Local History Group Newsletter

Winter 2002, Issue 129

Annual Report

First, the important stuff! Food! The pot luck dinner that often begins our year will take place on Monday, March 11, at about 6 pm, at the Episcopal parsonage. All are welcome. Those of you who want to coordinate food choices, call Phyllis Beechert (966-5226). In addition, please call to let Phyllis know you're coming. Meat will be provided, and a thank you goes to Phyllis for taking on the coordination of the event.

Now, back to the annual report. 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 2001 found the Greenville Local History Group still using its usual pattern of meetings, rotating programs with share sessions. Our programs included the Glenn Murder Case, Pat Lambe and Agriculture in Greenville, the selection of 2001's honorees, and an interview of George Jones.

Alternating between the programs were our share sessions, our chance to show off stuff we have found and done. An important strand of the share sessions was Harriett's summary/storytelling of the Eleanor Goff Ingalls diary. This past year's work started with 1909 and has continued through the first half of 1915. (Enclosed in this report is the second half of 1915; those

of you who don't subscribe can see what you're missing!) Otherwise, the details of the regular and share sessions have been covered by the monthly issues, and those who subscribe know about these.

Also, during the last couple of years, our attention has been drawn to the survival of historic houses. The town passed a historic preservation review for whenever a structure in the four hamlets needs a building permit or a demolition permit. At this point, I think things have worked out satisfactorily. Four or five buildings have been demolished, and Zoning Enforcement Officer Bill Silk has contacted me whenever a demolition permit in the hamlets has been requested. So far, so good. All (about a half-dozen) building permits in the hamlets have met the review standards, with one exception (a metal Quonset hut in Freehold was turned down). Again, I think the process will, at least, make people consider the community they live in.

The 2001 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 positive 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 furlough 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.

One project I'd like to see us start this coming year would be a walking tour brochure for the hamlet of Greenville. Put your thinking caps on for the kind of details and/or structure of information.

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

Looking ahead, I still can use help in scheduling programs. The program director for the GLHG will welcome ideas

for programs, for 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 your subscription expiration date. Anyone wanting to receive the newsletter can subscribe for \$5 for a year (usually April – November issues, plus the annual) and mailed to Don Teator, 3979 Rt 67, Freehold NY 12431. Checks should be made out to: Don Teator. (I don't mind multi-year subscriptions but that's a real test of your faith!)

Also, if your address has changed, let me know. And, if you'd rather I address your mailing label differently, let me know. In addition to my address, I can be reached at 518-634-2397, and for the computer literate, I can be emailed at teator.surferz.net

I hope to see you at the April 8th share session (2nd Monday of April). However, please consider accepting the invitation to the pot luck dinner.

Until then, take care.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Don".

The Diary of Eleanor Goff Ingalls

1915 continued

by Harriett Rasmussen

When last we left the story told in nineteen-year-old Eleanor Ingalls' diary for 1915, her Mamma had just arrived home from the Albany Hospital where just one month before, she had had a serious hernia operation. It was an arduous trip in Henry O'Keeffe's taxi and poor Mamma Carrie was real sick to her stomach all the next day. She has her 57th birthday on July 28th and there begins a procession of visitors everyday straight through August 8th.

People like the Galatians from Red Mill Road; Aunt Lillie VerPlank and John I; Mary and Bert Bell with Harold; Florence Rugg; Stella and Lin Mabie; Edith Cameron; Annette, Peter, Vera and Gertrude Stevens all come bringing sunshine boxes or gifts of flowers, etc. For those of you who are too young to know about sunshine boxes, they were often made up by groups or organizations (like Ladies Aid, etc.). Each person brought a small gift to be put in the decorated box. Sometimes the idea was for the patient to unwrap one surprise gift each day of recovery.

On August 8th, Ida brings Ariel back to help them and on that day Mamma takes three steps and sits up a while. On August 11th, Eleanor writes, "Drewed Mamma out in the livingroom so we could clean her room." And on August 12th, Mamma took some steps alone from the bed to the chair at the window.

So Mamma is progressing nicely but Eleanor complains that she has a sty on her right eye. That does not keep her from a night out on August 14th when she and Stanley take Leona and go to the Drama. One wonders where this Drama was presented. She says only that it was fine and called "Escaped From the Law." When she speaks of a Drama at the Opera House on December 9th, it gives us a clue that the Opera House was in use for these events.

The following day, Dr. McCabe comes to check on Mamma, and Eleanor notes, "The doctor pricked my stye and it hurt bad." But that must have done the trick because she doesn't mention it again.

On August 17th, Eleanor writes, "Bertha's baby was born today. His name is Edgar Clarence." If we recall Carrie Ingalls' early diaries, we remember her speaking often of Addie and Bertha, the little daughters of Trum's brother Edgar who lived across from the family homestead on Old Plank Road. Bertha had grown up and married Clarence Jennings of East Durham and this was their first child. Ten days later, Eleanor takes Edna up to see cousin Bertha and little Edgar.

From time to time, Stanley stays up home all night when he has to make the trip to Catskill the following morning. He does that on August 18th and Eleanor complains that she is real lonesome. On August 19th she makes this entry, "Washed and had awful luck all day. My soap boiled all over the stove and everything bothered. Awful lonesome at night."

Then on August 20th, the Nikolas come with their auto to spend a few days taking the folks out riding. These are the people who lived upstairs and rented to the Goffs when they were living in Richmond Hill. This friendship would last many years with Eleanor recording visits to Norton Hill nearly every year.

This visit seems to usher in a cheerier time for the family. August 25th finds everyone except Warren's wife having a "real good time" at the Cairo Fair and even Edna is good all day. Three days later, Mamma goes upstairs for the first time and the doctor feels she is doing fine. August goes out on a happy note as Eleanor writes, "Edna & I got ready and we went up home with Stanley on the big wagon. We all went up to the Lamb's Corners Picnic. Had a good time. A large crowd there and lots of people I knew."

September begins with Eleanor getting a head cold; Edna cutting two more

teeth, which made her cross; and Ruth Sanford calling in her car. The latter must have been something to note in your journal because I doubt that many young girls in that day had a car of their own.

On September 16th Clarence brings their two baskets of peaches from Bert Griffin's. [This entry is interesting to me since Bert Griffin was my grandfather whose family lived, at that time, on the Stevens Farm on what is now Rt. 81.] A few days later Irve Cameron and Stanley go to Ford Rundell and get two baskets which Eleanor finds lovely. I wonder what this means. Are these some sort of handmade baskets?

Eleanor turns 20 on September 25th and Stanley gives her a lovely sweater – a complete surprise. We learn that Mamma is apparently getting back to normal and has gone for a visit to her son-in-law, Vern Smith. On October 9th, Eleanor records, "Elgirtha told Mamma I wished she would come home from Verns. Ida brought her home with a flour bag of Sheldon pears."

Edna has her first birthday on October 23rd and "She is getting so she can take a step or two alone." The following day her Aunt Leona turns 9 years old. This same aunt, now in 2002, is in her 96th year, having already outlived her little niece by six years.

November 2nd is Election day and Eleanor records the day's events like this. "Pop [Truman] is 51 yrs old. Grandpa [Ransom Ingalls] is quite miserable. At night we all set up to hear the returns. Pop didn't get his office for Supt. of the Poor by a majority of 400." She didn't tell us who he ran against. I consulted "Dear Old Greene County" for 1915 and found Ira Tolley of Cairo the incumbent.

There is often mention of Eleanor's brothers Leslie, Jerry and Joe and their families. In the Fall of 1915 Jerry turns 28. His son Clifford turns 5 and his daughter is one. [She would grow up and become the wife of Merritt Roe.] In October, Eleanor had written simply, "Heard that Joe was going to move out." I think 25 year old Joe and his wife of

two years, with their one year old Beatrice, must be moving from the house in Richmond Hills where Mamma, Eleanor and the boys had lived in earlier years.

Now, on November 23rd, Eleanor gets a letter from Catskill saying that she and each of her brothers had inherited \$920.42 from Aunt Mary Mattice's estate.

On November 25th, they leave Edna with Mrs. Cameron and go home to join all the rest of the family for Trum and Carrie's 30th Wedding Anniversary. They love being all together. Four days later, Henry O'Keeffe comes down to Surprise to bring Eleanor to meet Stanley up home. I think it is probably that the nest egg from Aunt Mary Mattice has made it possible for them to realize a dream and Stanley wants Eleanor there to help him finalize the deal. She records this big investment in their future lives in just two short sentences. "We bought the teaming business for \$750. We take possession the first of January." But these two sentences would be the forerunners of much that would be written in diaries for years to come. The teaming business was their source of income and became the influence which drove their daily lives. It is a big step for 20 year old Eleanor and her husband about to turn 23 years old on December 7th.

On December 8th, it is time to think of the holidays ahead. She writes, "I hurried up and got ready and went up with Stanley [on his 'up' trip] and stopped at the school and saw Marguerite [She is now 19 and probably teaching at the school on Ingalside Road which would ultimately become the home of Leona Ingalls Rundell until the late 1990s]. I walked up over the hills to Norton Hill so as to get my trading done. [Can you picture her walking up from Ingalside Corner past Albert Bryant's, the Prevost house, corner of Maple Avenue, up the hill into Norton Hill and Peter Stevens' Store? [last run by Lawrence Powell]]

The following day, they leave for Albany with Henry and Nina O'Keeffe where Eleanor gets her eyes fitted and buys a new

coat. She likes it "awfully well" and so does Stanley. They take the 2:15 train to Altamont which tells us they are going to visit the family of her oldest brother Leslie.

On December 13th, they start for home, stopping in Albany to do some more Christmas shopping. Then they get the 2:15 train to Coxsackie where Henry meets them with his taxi. Eleanor ends her diary entry with, "The worst snow storm I ever was in."

The next day she writes, "Blizzard! Snow and blow all day – about 28" has fallen. We butchered. At night we cut up the pig – weighed about 150 lbs." On December 15th, Stanley helps open the roads with his team and shovels paths out to the barn. And on the 16th she records, "Clarence and Stanley went to Coxsackie with a four horse team. They had an awful hard day. got my glasses in the mail."

In the next couple of days, they grind and pack, in sugar bags, the 23 pounds of sausage; mischievous Edna cuts a double tooth; Carrie and Ed come home from Cheese Hill; Leslie's folks come out to dinner and bring Edna a little doll's high chair. And suddenly it is Christmas Day. They take Ed and Carrie, pick up Mamma at Vern's and join the rest of the Ingalls clan at Trum and Carrie's for what sounds like a wonderful day.

She describes the following day and their trip home like this. "Terrible rough day. It snowed and blowed awful hard. We got up at seven and stayed until after dinner. Then we got ready & came home. Clarence came with us. [He is 20 now.] We got quite cold

coming home. Edna kept us warm as toast. We were awful glad to get home."

This entry on December 29th tells us that daily life goes on in spite of the storm. "We got the chickens ready to send to Joe and Jerry & in the afternoon Dorothy [11 years old] & I drew them to the store on Edna's sleigh. Got the buttermilk on our way home. I set it on the cabinet & it slid off on the floor. I had a terrible mess to clean up."

December 30th, "Dorothy went home with Stanley & I went up to Vern Smith's. [I think Mamma has been staying there since Christmas Day. She never could have stood all the traveling in the storms.] Stanley had to lay off 7 bags of grain in Lew Hickok's as the road was so drifted up Murder Hill. We had to shovel some. Ariel & I had to come home on a load of straw. On Murder Hill Stanley had to pull John Lennon's load up so Ariel & I walked home." This must have been an adventure for Eleanor and 16 year old Ariel.

The year goes out quietly. It is cold but the wind has stopped. It is a lovely day and when she and Ariel go after the milk they bring back the butter milk which I am sure never got set on the cabinet. One learns!

The first of January, 1916 would be the day Stanley officially takes over the teaming business. Eleanor makes no mention of it in her diary. But Stanley's mother, Carrie, begins her new diary with this account, "Stanley was up with his load. He commences business for himself today. We have sold him the 3 black horses & a whole outfit for trucking. Hope he makes a success of it. It seems like a big undertaking for the kid."