

June 21, 1990

Happy Birthday to us, Happy Birthday to us, ...

Enough already! The June 11th meeting is the one year anniversary of our first meeting, one in which about ten people attended. Someone suggested we should have brought a cake, but that might be more appropriate for the October meeting, the actual month we decided to form the Local History Group. So here we are, bragging about being older than we really are. (Now that's a change!)

This is the first newsletter mailed only if \$4 postage expense was paid. If you didn't get this letter, call me.

This share session saw a lot of activity. As usual we started about fifteen minutes late and, if we weren't scared of ignoring June's pleas for quiet, would have kept going. Twenty-four were present (for the record: Uzzilia, Boomhower, Beechert, Valicenti, Rasmussen, R. Bennett, Mangold, both Vaughns, Blenis, both Howards, Phinney, Ingalls, Persico, Lobb, Weeks, K. Williams, Bear, Brown, Clark, McDonald, Golden, and Valicenti).

June Clark gave credit to the 4th grade teachers for the local history project of interviewing older residents about their work experiences. June's reading of Becky Palmer's paper, the first place paper, brought unanimous approval. Thanking the Group for their openness and help, Bonnie Persico displayed the prizes, a \$50 savings bond for first place, and a well illustrated architecture book for the second place entry in Greene County (the Rensselaerville Historical Society awards for Albany County). The House History project was to be completed soon. Our Group has appreciated watching the progress of the students' projects; thank yous go out especially to Dave Dively and Bonnie Persico for their sharing of work, and to the other teachers - Mrs. Bader, Mrs. Henke, and Mr. Halley - for their participation in encouraging young researchers.

The Local History Group has been represented at two events. June Clark, Debra Teator, and Don Teator worked our table at the Catskill Valley Historical Society's Hobby Show at St. John's. The same trio, as well as Harriet Rasmussen, Bunny Gundersen, Ossie Gundersen, and Marilyn Lobb, represented the group at the Rotary Fair. At both, people showed their interest in what we were doing; some offered to contribute work or to attend meetings. Our presence increases the community's awareness of our existence and our purpose. Thank you to all who helped.

The topic of donations arose upon the mention of people wanting to donate money to the Group during the Rotary Fair. We felt somewhat awkward refusing the money (it ain't natural), but we're not sure quite how to handle this situation. Several people have donated money - the latest, a \$50 donation from Carol and Zan Bryant - to our Group. At present, we have \$90 and, since I don't particularly like having money lie around, I've put it into one of my accounts for now and will account the best I can until the

group has a better solution. One opinion was the opening of an account for such a small amount wasn't worth it; since we are not a chartered non-profit organization, the Town can't sponsor us. We agreed that money, and our purpose, should be a topic of discussion at a meeting soon.

Arlene Brown shared her letter about some childhood experiences in Athens where she grew up. Tidbits like Mussolini Hill and playing nurse, while not crucial moments in New York State history, are the type of memories many of us have about our experiences. Writing them down as Arlene did allows others to share and relate their own experiences. We wish to encourage people to start writing some of their stories about any aspect of their lives and, as it may pertain to Greenville, to increase the awareness of people after us what certain time periods were like. (For example, another 20 years and very few will be around to explain the Depression years.)

Bob Uzzilia, the Cairo Town Historian and Catskill Valley Historical Society president, donated a few Greenville items. One was the Greenville Local's Greenville section from a 1915 paper. Other items included a few old report cards of Greenville Free Academy students.

Don Teator updated the Group about the photo project. Photos of every structure in the Town of Greenville were taken in April. This meant six different, sunny days, driving along all the road, one person driving, the other in the back seat sliding back and forth shooting pictures. Debra Teator and Ken Leanza assisted Don in the 25 hours of driving; without such help, Don would still be roaming the countryside, hopping in and out of the car.

Many of you have seen the gradual accumulation of pictures and the creation of albums for structures and people. Each print for which we have a negative has a number attached, representing the page in the negatives book and the frame number of the negative. Nearly half the pictures have been entered in a computer database; the other half should be done by the end of the summer. Thus, anyone, upon finding a print they like, should be able to look up the number on the database for more information if such exists, and to find the negative should a duplicate or enlargement be needed.

The structures are placed in albums by areas within the Township, and within that area, by road. Even then, we've tried our best to place the pictures in order along each road, new pictures mixed with older pictures.

Contrary to popular public opinion, this has been a project very logically done, insane and obsessive, but logical.

Barbara Valicenti displayed her most recent contribution to local history - the house histories of four houses: the house in which she lives, the house in which her sister lives, the Ramsdell house, and the blacksmith's house. Barbara has made extensive use of deed searching.

Gerald Ingalls passed around a sheet of songs, representing the entries in a contest by the Greenville Free Academy for their alma mater. A copy has been made and put

into the Historian's files.

Harriet Rasmussen contributed a file on Hughes Budd, which prompted more discussion because Jeanne Bear was considering doing the house history of the house across the street from her in which Hughes Budd lived.

Bonnie Persico displayed the map the 4th Grade project produced and had sold during the Home Tour and Rotary Fair. The proceeds from this sale, nearly \$400, has gone to the Presbyterian Church Steeple Restoration Fund. Another pat on the back for the work of the 4th Grade and the work of the teachers.

Other notes, ramblings, and digressions:

1. Ruth Bigelow, through Phyllis Beechert, has donated and loaned about 30 pictures to the Local History Group. Featured are the Talmage-Atwater house and the Academy. Ruth has contributed much, in pictures and letter transcripts, this past year and has greatly added to our knowledge of Greenville.

2. Some house histories have come in. June Clark (the Botsford house), Marge Bennett (the Garrison-Manchisi house), Barbara Baron (the house just south of her), Gerald Ingalls (his house), Harriet Rasmussen (her house), and Phyllis Beechert (her house, the Surprise Firehouse, the Norton Hill Firehouse, and the Greenville Firehouse) have added to our fledgling house history collection. As mentioned previously, Barbara Valicenti is focusing on Norton Hill. And not to be forgotten is the four album collection of Norton Hill houses that Edna Adams and Claribel Gardiner created in 1976. If the rest of us can do one or two a year, eventually we'll have a substantial base of knowledge.

3. A thank you goes to Marilyn Lobb for donating a copy of Capital, the WHMT magazine, that features Greenville as one of the "places to live" in the Capital District. June Clark's house is featured in color; The Fish-Carelas-Cohen house is shown in black and white.

4. Betty Vaughn donated a copy of the 1942 GCS Pioneer. Please be on the lookout for pre-1939 (although I've been told that 1939 was the first book), 1941, 1943, 1946, 1948-1962, and 1980-present. I'm in the process of having Debra enlarge the pre-1939 class pictures we have and have some of you identify as many as possible.

5. Elnora Phinney is our newest "member". Beside adding her name to our list, include the her address: 2421 Phillips Rd, Castleton, NY 12033. Elnora brought with her a board signed by Henry T. Phinney, a farmer from Freehold (and an owner of land that my house sits on).

6. At one of my genealogical conferences, I met an Audrey Madison who has a few lines that enter Greenville. Some of these are Finch, Waldron, Losee, Betts, Blaisdell, and Townsend families. I'll have her information copied by next meeting if you wish to look it over. If you wish to contact her, write to: 326 Wellington Rd, Delmar, NY 12054.

7. A Xerox copy of two albums brought in by Bunny Gundersen will be on file soon. These albums contained newspaper clippings of births, marriages, and deaths of local people. Thanks, Bunny for the loan.

8. I (or rather the Town through my budget) bought the microfilm records of the Town of Greenville census records for 1810, 1820, 1830, 1840, as well the 1890 list of Civil War Veterans. Of course, it would be real helpful to have a microfilm reader. Fortunately, I can borrow the Cairo-Durham HS reader and will have the reader at my house for the summer. So, if anyone would like to research any of the Federal census records from 1810-1910, give me a call between the 4th of July and Labor Day. (Pre-1810, we are Albany County, and post-1910 has not been released yet.) If someone sees a microfilm reader cheap, let me know; actually, I'd rather have a combination microfilm-microfiche reader.

9. During the past month, with June and Tom Clark's help and Debra's help, I put together a leaflet that explains the existence of the Greenville Local History Group. One is enclosed if you weren't at this meeting. This new "venture" should reassure most of you that we are not going in the printing business!

10. A little bit of history: the Clematis Garden Club celebrated their 50th anniversary with a Flower Show at the Freehold Firehouse on June 8th.

11. Our next meeting will be July 9. June and I will discuss some aspects of audio taping and transcribing. We should have time for an half hour share session afterward so please bring in whatever you've done. Our demonstration of taping and transcription is one more chance to remind everybody to go out and write down the memories of the person that is "the so-and-so I should have talked to". Ten people recording one person each will accomplish much more than I will ever get to this year.

12. An aside: Looking over past newsletters reminds me how much I exhort people to be active, to feel as if they (you) can actually contribute, to help others in researching, to remind you how little (and how much) we have. Part of me will continue to do that, but whenever I become overbearing, kick me in the shins under the table, and I'll try to take a hint. (Warning: I can be dense, or blind, or obstinate, or any combination.)

13. A thank you to Phyllis Lilliental for her donation of two prints of the gazebo under construction.

Don Teator

P.S. The practical joker in me couldn't help but include the second paragraph.