

Dear

I'd like to thank you for your interest in Greenville's local history. The following is a summary of our June 12 meeting at the Community Room. For those of you present, please review my accuracy and remind me at our next meeting of my memory lapses; for those of you not able to attend, this should be a rough sketch of this meeting.

We introduced ourselves at the onset. Present were (using the sign-in board, if I may) Harriet Rasmussen, Bunny Gundersen, Pearl Capone, Phyllis Beechert, H. Wilson Hilzinger, Chris McDonald, Bonnie Persico, Edna Adams, and three guests, whose names I've forgotten, from the Greenville Arms.

I passed out a sheet of projects and circulated some pictures of houses I had taken in March. Most of the points from this sheet (enclosed if you were not at the meeting) were discussed, several of which invited further comment. House histories invited stories of whom used to live where; Edna Adams mentioned she had taped several people during her tenure as Town Historian; Harriet Rasmussen had already completed some work on cemetery inscriptions; Bonnie Persico explained this year's 4th grade project; the idea of setting up a Historical Society, or research room, was debated; the need for a safe storage place was emphasized; and all had stories or reminiscences to share.

When asked for other ideas, the group, for the time being, added none; if you can think of any, bring them to the next meeting. I added I had purchased the federal census of 1850, 1860, 1870, 1880, 1900, and 1910; I hope to be able to transcribe these for placement in our files by the end of next summer.

The meeting shifted to telling stories, adding to the stories, and asking questions. From my perspective, the information given during this brief session is one of the types of knowledge we need to preserve in an organized way.

Before we left, we discussed the future of this one night event. The consensus seemed to be we should meet again and start preparing to preserve our town's history, as well as help others learn more about this history. Thus, a meeting was scheduled for the second Monday of July, the 10th of July, at 7:30 in the Community Room.

We hope to accomplish a few things at this meeting. **One**, I will share with the group the contents of the Town Historian's files (if Edna will let me, I'll defer to her on this one since most are of her creation). **Two**, for those of you who want to, we may want to initiate a project that will fulfill one of our goals - preservation of history or educating those interested - or at least start to form an idea what each of us might do. For those of us who like to just sit and listen, and pitch in once in a while, that's fine also. **Third**, what would a historical meeting be without some more stories of historic Greenville?

The final event was my "bribe" of pound cake and lemonade. Those of you who fell for it, I'll try it again next time, so beware.

I am heartened by the response of people who share similar goals. I appreciate and will appreciate the efforts of all who want to save a flavor of an older Greenville for the newer Greenville.

Sincerely,

P.S. I don't mind being the instigator of some of the early action of the group, but if someone, or a group, wants to take over the guidance of a historical interest group, please feel free to do so. I will help out when I can and want to be part of such a group. There is no requirement that the Town Historian must lead this group, even though it's in my best interests to be part of it. In fact, legally, the Town Historian cannot be an officer of a Historical Society.

P.S.S. I've tried, I believe, to keep this as informal as possible. For now, I prefer to call it an Interest Group. But should you want to head toward more formal directions, go for it. My goal at present is to make people comfortable with what we're doing; I'm afraid I would scare people away if I called for formation of a Historical Society. Besides, I need to learn an awful lot before I spout off too much myself. The point is - I'm just one of you in this and cannot, and will not, pretend to act for all of you. All of you must work for all of you.

As Town Historian, I'm interested in the preserving and recording of Greenville history, as well as educating people what our history is.

So much information already exists that has not been saved, but being one individual, I can't physically accomplish what I think could be done.

My discussions and observations confirm what I suspected - there are tens of people who know more than I know. With combined forces, we will come closer to the goals stated in the first paragraph.

What are these projects? Some that I can think of are as follows:

House Histories- a description of owners, uses of the house, changes to the house and property, description of architecture

Oral Histories: the taping (video and cassette) of people who remember a Greenville gone by. Regular size audio tapes and VHS video tapes are advised (8mm camcorders are also making a comeback). This is a time-intensive project; I feel a desperation knowing all the people I should be talking to.

Graveyard Inscriptions- Record the placement and wording of all the stones in our cemeteries. This may have been done but nothing is on file with the historian.

Family histories/genealogies of people who live/have lived in the town of Greenville. Town historians traditionally have been advised to stay clear of genealogy but this field can tell us much about a town's history.

Business Histories- a listing of businesses that have ever existed in Greenville, along with a description of their operation.

Social Histories- descriptions of trends and events that have influenced or defined the everyday life for the Town of Greenville, e.g., religion, entertainment, fads, politics, etc.

Active research- all are invited to research any topic of local history and submit it for file in the historian's files, or ideally for publication.

OVER

Donation of items that belong in a historical collection.

Lending of items for reproduction by photo or Xerox.

Offering, and encouraging others to offer, knowledge at a community meeting. Meetings could be general meetings, or be based on a theme.

Making me aware of resources of local history.

Expressing interest in or forming a Historical/Genealogical Society/Group in the Town of Greenville.

Making me aware of other projects of local historical significance. Please don't assume I know everything! A few minutes conversation will prove I don't!

What ideas do you have that you are interested in? What projects should/can be done? What information would you like to know more about?

I can be contacted at 634-2397, or at:
RD1, Box 147, Freehold, NY 12431

Should we meet again? and what would be the goals of these meetings?

Thank you for your interest!

Don Teator

NEXT MEETING: MONDAY, JULY 10, COMMUNITY ROOM, 7:30 PM