

Greenville Local History Group Newsletter

November 2016, Issue 256

Sylvia Hasenkopf

A pleasant mid-November local history night welcomed the nearly 35-ish who came out to hear Sylvia Hasenkopf: Stephanie Ingalls, Stephanie's sister Edna Huffman (welcome, from Hawaii!), Sue & Lew Knott, Kevin Hicks, Donna Willard, Mary & Allyn Shaw, Bette Welter, Arlene DiBello, Mary Heisinger, Marie & Bob Shaw, Marilyn Snow, Rachel Ceasar, Richard Ceasar, Flip Flach, John Garofalo, Peter O'Hara, Mary Lou & Nick Nahas, Marvin Smith, Katja & Paul Rehm, Ron Golden, Doris Vedder, Audrey Matott, Don Teator, and the usual dozen who evade both signing in and/or recall from my memory bank.

Sylvia was the show this evening, and it was/ is quite a show.

Born and raised in Canada, Sylvia settled in the States about 1990 although she had visited many times before. Since then, and especially since 2000, Sylvia has been a whirlwind of activity—researching, writing, and posting. She has three Facebook pages: North River Research, Tracing Your Roots in Greene County, and Cairo Historical Society. Check any of them, especially Tracing, to explore the depth and detail of Sylvia's efforts. We local historians applaud her efforts.

Sylvia's web site: (www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nygreen2/) is chocked full of Greene County material. Take a look to see what Sylvia has contributed to our local county history.

I had approached Sylvia last year about a program and we agreed on a three part program: one part Greenville, one regional, one business.

The Greenville topic was the Know Nothing Party. Sylvia spent about fifteen minutes describing the formation and main characters of this national nativist party. A particularly harsh 1850's complaint by the Greenville Academy principal singled out the bad behavior of the Know Nothings but further research softened that condemnation (a little).

The Know Nothing Party had a chapter in Greenville for about two years in Greenville in the mid-1850s. Sylvia had a lengthy list of Greenville names who partook of a short-lived but significant element of American political history. The comparison may be imperfect but I have the sense that the Know Nothing Party is similar to our current Tea Party, or some variation thereof.

Part Two involved the life story of a Henry Sherman Backus, aka the Saugerties Bard. Backus's birth in Coxsackie in 1798 led to Sylvia's speculation, based on other research, as to how close to Greenville Backus may have lived. Before 1800, Greene County does not exist, it forming from sections of southern Albany and northern Ulster County to become a new county. And the Greenville we know was part of the Town of Freehold and before that was part of the Town of Coxsackie. More research may reveal more of Backus's whereabouts.

Back to Henry. He attends the Greenville Academy and, in 1824, marries Anne. When Anne dies in 1845, Henry seems to become a tad unhinged, taking to drink, being placed in an insane asylum but eventually returning to Saugerties. From there, he would travel south to NYC, north to Canada, west to

western NY, telling stories, often in ballad form, selling pages of the songs for some income. This was in addition to his peddling.

One of these stories that became memorialized was the story of the pedlar who is robbed and beaten badly in the Murder Bridge Hill area of Greenville (near intersection of West Rd and SR 81). Before the pedlar dies, he testifies as to what happened. Backus captures much of this in his ballad (a version of which I have re-printed).

Backus dies in a state of poverty in 1861.

The third part of the program, upon my insistence, was Sylvia explaining her business model. Sylvia had run an ad in the Pioneer in the spring, detailing the levels of house history research she does.

And I talk to people who see her research in the Pioneer or on Facebook. And even though Sylvia has performed some research *pro bono*, her business is her research and thus accepts paying propositions. So, for those of you seriously considering getting research done, I am reproducing information below from here NorthRiver.com web site.

Services:

Genealogical Research and Analysis

(from web site) North River Research accepts both large and small genealogical research requests. Projects begin with a free initial consultation to determine the scope of the project. Projects are charged on an hourly basis with a two hour retainer fee to start the project. Both parties will agree to the scope and length of the project before research commences. A final report can be expected at the completion of the project.

House Histories

(from web site) A complete house history report provides a unique architectural and genealogical history of your property from the time it was built. The report will contain information from deeds, census records, probate records, tax records, historical maps, patent documents, local histories, pictures and many other sources. Historical newspapers are searched to learn as much as possible

about the previous residents. Both parties will agree to the scope and length of the project before research commences.

Costs:

(from web site) Typical house histories include in depth research on the house and its owners and includes the exploration of surrogate, census and land records, tax assessments, bible and cemetery records, local histories, newspapers and maps. Research findings are placed in a binder and include a time line of the property, family genealogy and color pictures. Depending on the age of the home and scope of the project, costs will range from \$1500 to \$3000 for a typical house history. Multiple copies of the entire binder are available for an additional cost.

Contact Information:

North River Research
518-821-3852
Sylvia@NorthRiverResearch.com
Facebook links were given above.

(I know of several people, myself included, who have hired Sylvia for research and are pleased. My opinion: there very few local researchers with Sylvia's competence and knowledge of the region.)

One more major announcement from Sylvia.

In a project that could consume several years, or more, Sylvia is authoring a three volume set: The Letters of Thomas Cole: Founder of the Hudson River School. "The goal of this project; to deepen the understanding of Thomas Cole, the man and the artist, his passion for painting and his life's work, the masterpieces he created."

The local Flint Mine Press is/will be the publisher of the three volumes, collaborating with the Cairo Historical Society and establishing funding for this project. Anyone who wants to help sponsor this project can do so. Make checks payable to: The Cairo Historical Society / Cole Letters Project, PO Box 803, Cairo, NY 12413. Donors of \$1000 or more will receive a personalized, signed copy of the first volume. (I believe this offer is true for each of the three stages.)

I am not sure who to contact for more info but my best bet would be Cairo Historical Society or Sylvia, both on Facebook.

And so our program year has ended, to be resumed in April.

Many thanks go to the many of you who helped during the year. I will try to capture the essence of the year in the annual report, probably in late winter. Contact me anytime if you have ideas, comments, suggestions for improvement, etc.

One thank you that cannot wait until then is to Stephanie Ingalls and Christine Mickelsen who supplied the monthly "light refreshments" I kept promising in the newsletters and newspapers.

And I will encourage all of you to tackle some local history project, or even a part of a project. Think of a topic that matters to you and then start working on it. Contact me if you want help getting started.

If you have an idea for a program, contact me.

Reminder: The calendar is available at Kelly's, Library, Tops, and GNH. If you can help sales, thank you. It would be welcome to break even. And be sure to thank the owners and managers of those businesses who help us.

One more local history note:

MSGT Robert Whitbeck of Freehold was honored at the Greene County Veteran of the Year at a Main Street, Catskill ceremony in early November.

I have reproduced one version of Backus's telling of the Murder of the Pedlar. And I have reproduced a couple of the pictures that comprise the 2017 calendar.

Here's to good health over the Christmas and New Year holidays, and beyond.

Take care,



From 2017 calendar: The Ford Rundell house sat on the west side of Rt 32 before GCS centralization. It was moved across the street to its current site, where son David and Judith Rundell live. The calendar shows an inset of David standing on the GCS elementary building front lawn where the house stood.

(from <http://www.nyfolklore.org/pubs/voic31-3-4/mayhem.html>; background text available)

The Murdered Pedlar, printed in Catskill in 1854

*On the Plank-Road, in Greenville town,
A Jewish Pedlar was shot down.
Ah, by a wretch, called Warren Wood,
Who shot the Pedlar in cold blood.*

*With murder rankling in his heart
From the Empire City did depart,
Arm'd with revolver, six-barrel'd true,
With which he shot the peddling Jew.*

*When first he shot, the Pedlar cried,
Whate'er you want shall be supplied.
His pocket-book to Wood he gave,
In hopes by this his life to save.*

*Again he shot! O, cruel man!
What mortal can your feelings scan.
Infernal spirits astonish'd stood,
Awhile to gaze on Warren Wood,*

*Who did the Pedlar's head then pound
As he lay bleeding on the ground,
Until he thought him truly dead,
And then the monster quickly fled.*

*Back to New York he sped his way,
To promenade with Ladies gay.
In Cherry Street they did him take:
He now his pleasure must forsake.*

*Though filled with dread and guilty fear,
Before the Pedlar must appear,
Thou art the man, the pedlar said,
As he then raised his dying head.*

*I know that coat, the boots likewise—
A dying man will tell no lies,
To Jail the murderer then was sent,
His awful crimes there to lament.*

*In Christ, the Saviour of mankind,
Repentance he may truly find:
O, soon he will suspended be,
To pay the law's just penalty.*

*A faithful Jury did convict,
The Sheriff must the law inflict,
The penalty to justice due,
To all the guilty, as to you.*

*No costly gems or diamonds bright,
Disarms the law or aids his flight,
Nor thousand tons of shining gold,
Yet for a groat Wood's life was sold.*

*No more, poor man, while here you stay,
The birds will chaunt their cheering lay,
Or friendly neighbors greet again
The wretch that hath the Pedlar slain.*

*On January next, the twentieth day,
The Sheriff must the law obey,
Upon the gallows him suspend,
And thus poor Wood his life will end.*

*Let all a solemn warning take,
And every wicked way forsake,
For soon we all will ush'rd be
Into a vast eternity.*



The Chester Phinney family pose in front of their house in Freehold, today the site of the Freehold Country Pub. More info in the 2017 calendar.