

Greenville Local History Group Newsletter

May 2019, Issue 277

Greenville in the 1970s—Audrey Mattot

Members of the Greenville Local History Group met on Monday, May 13 on a cold and rainy spring evening. Despite the deluge, the group traveled back to 1970s Greenville. Approximately 20 folks attended the meeting, among those who signed in were Sue and Bill Von Atzingen, David Tschinkel, Edna Huffman, Kathy Smith, Robert and Johanna Titus, Olivia Matott, Flip Flach, Rachel Ceasar, and Richard Ceasar.

Audrey Matott compiled and presented the program, 1970s Greenville. Matott read through The Greenville Locals from the 1970s and took over a thousand digital clippings. The clippings were then organized and presented chronologically in a slide show.

Among the highlights from the presentation were the audience's memories and reminiscences of special events, businesses, and people that made up 1970s Greenville.

The group began by looking back at the blizzard that began the decade and some recalled attending the then widely popular Winter Carnival that was hosted by the Greenville Area Association of Commerce and held at Rainbow Lodge and Golf Course during the early 1970s. The Local noted that the event drew "thousands" to the area and by the looks of the photos, it sure did.

The presentation also looked at the Greenville's iconic pond at the four corners of State Route 32 and 81. At the time, the pond was continually maintained by the community, especially members of the Rotary Club. The Local reported regularly when ducks were released to the pond and returned

to their farm home for the winter. Articles noted the beautiful stone wall that was once built around the border of the pond and the unfortunate incident in which an unknown person(s) pushed some of the stonework into the pond water. During the later 1970s it was noted that the pond was "renovated" and dredged, as it had accumulated significant debris and silt, so much so that the fountain that stood in it was noted as being "the Leaning Tower of Pisa".

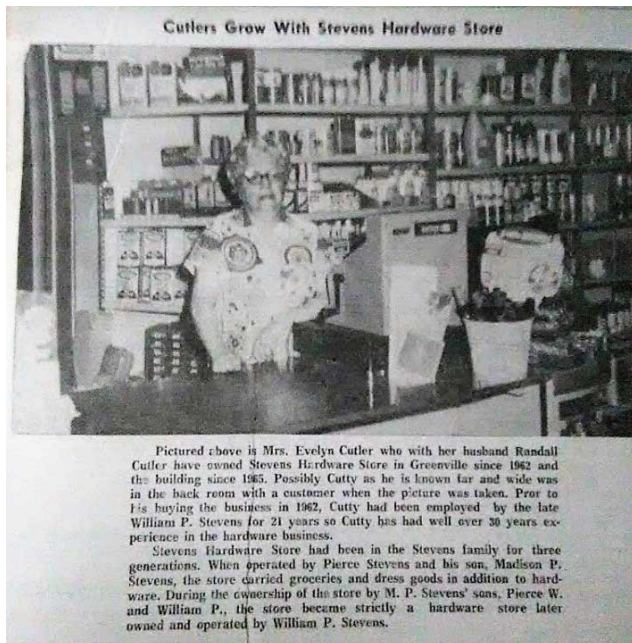


The Local also noted a few times throughout the decade the demise of trees throughout the center of town. In one heart wrenching plea, Local editor Phil Ellis called on readers to reconsider cutting trees by asking, "Why is it so easy to erase the years of growth for a moment's whim?". Ellis noted that some trees were diseased and needed to be removed but were not in turn replaced with seedlings. He painted a picture of

Greenville that was once well adorned with many more green tree canopies than it is today.

Numerous businesses seemed to come and go or grow during the 1970s in Greenville. The presentation noted that Ver Planck's Furniture and Appliance store in Norton Hill was constructed in early 1970.

The group recalled The Chatterbox Restaurant that saw its last transfer of ownership in the early 1970s before becoming the "Bargain Box" thrift store and then a pre-school.



Members of the group recalled a peaceful protest by GCS students in 1970. In protest against the school board's action calling for High School Principal Videtti's resignation, the students left school with signs and walked to the center of town. Following support from the school faculty and staff, the board rescinded their action.

The '70s noted the end of A.J. Cunningham's Ambulance Service as they were no longer able to meet state regulations and staff the ambulance service 24/7. Soon after, the town saw the formation of the Greenville Rescue Squad which was financed by a large community effort of fundraising.

The presentation also took a look back down the "Miracle Mile" in Norton Hill. State Route 81 through the heart of Norton Hill was flourishing with numerous businesses during the 1970s, some of which were well-established already, some were new and have since come and gone and others are still going strong. Among some of the businesses on the "Miracle Mile" were Ver Planck's Furniture and Appliances, Rich's Floor Covering, the Kilcar, Chimes Market, Husted's Garage, GNH Lumber, Yeoman's Garage, Diane's Beauty Salon, and the Chatterbox.

The presentation also recalled the nearly decade long project and local protest against the proposed power transmission supply line that was proposed by the Gilboa Power Authority. Over the course of the decade, meetings were often held regarding the project and a group continually advocated that the large and invasive structure line not be placed through the town. The early protest led the proposal of an alternate route for the power line that would be less intrusive to the landscape.

The presentation reviewed the closure of the Far Hills Nursing Home and the success the town felt when Greenville finally found a permanent doctor, Dr. Martin Kosich, who purchased the Greenville Medical Building.

The group also looked down Main Street in Greenville 1970s. The presentation brought back memories of Main Street Garage, which was located where Stewart's Shop now is today. We remembered Cutty at Steven's Hardware Store, which by the end of the '70s was sold to Napa after three generations in the Steven's Family. The Stevens-Hahne Insurance Agency which had begun on Main Street in the '70s built a new building on South Street that is today home to The Giving Tree Preschool and the Frozen Spoon Ice Cream Shop. The group also remembered "the two Bills" from Greenville Pharmacy, which was owned by the Quackenbushes and was known to be one of the oldest pharmacies in the area at the time. Clippings of Baumann's Appliances brought back memories of Tommy Baumann and Edgar Jennings. Al-

so fondly remembered from Main Street was Von's Department Store, which began on Main Street in the '70s and would move the Bryant's Country Square Plaza as it expanded in 1976.

Other businesses that were part of the Country Square was the Hearthside Restaurant, Ingalls Service Star Home Center, and George Kitchen. The State Bank also built their building in the plaza in 1979, the building is now home to Zeitler's law and accounting firms as well as Pioneer Bank.

Perhaps one of the most documented businesses in Greenville during the 1970's was Mary's Snack Bar, which over the decade expanded to become Mary's Luncheonette and eventually, Mary's Restaurant and Truck Stop. Numerous clippings from the Local feature the shop, before and after its addition, and the servers and cooks who worked there.

To view the entire slideshow, 1970s Greenville, click on the link (it may take several minutes to load): https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1H_6lkfSLpu-hZ6S3m5l4tb5CS1PZVmIXGeHMvnrnc3w/edit?usp=sharing

To view the numerous digital clippings from 1970-75 that were cut for time from the main presentation, here is the slideshow, 1970s Greenville Cutting Room Floor: https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1vtG9gOG9b1aiNX94H0Z_z-9zGPaoXrdvIXIWPv_gr9Y/edit?usp=sharing

--change of authorship--

These beginning paragraphs was written by Audrey, and prompts a huge thank you from the Historian who was cavorting in Italy this past month. As I read Audrey's summary, I was thinking that one of the rewards of doing research is the discovery of area and people, as well as self. So, I asked Audrey what she gained from this program for which she had prepared over the course of this past year.

And in her words:

"As Greenville is my hometown, I am familiar with what Greenville was like and how it

has changed since the late 1980s. But looking through the lens of The Greenville Local in the 1970s, I saw changes take place that I think changed the character of the town, particularly on Main Street. Due to the success and expansion of Bryant's, businesses that once bustled on Main Street were drawn to the Country Square. During the '70s, business growth was greatly encouraged in Greenville. Big box stores such as Napa, moved into town by the end of the '70s. There were numerous small businesses that came and went during the '70s. Some were in business so briefly, it was challenging for Greenville Local History Group Members to remember them at all. At the same time, there were locally-owned businesses that continued to hold on and stay strong.

"I think Mary's Snack Shack is a great example of Greenville's growth and character during the '70s. Mary's started as a "Snack Shack" and by the end of the decade, it was a "Restaurant and Truck Stop". As it continued to grow, Mary's was a popular small business for locals and travelers alike. Overall, from my perspective, Greenville seemed to begin making the transition from a town with a small, busy, locally-owned Main Street, to a town with a more expansive commercial footprint.



"Also, a "greener" Greenville also began to become a thing of the past. The "Local" sited a time when trees lined the streets in town, creating a magnificent cano-

py. The "Local" noted that these trees were removed because of disease, or just carelessly, and never replaced with seedlings, forever changing the visual character of North, South and Main Street.

"Bottom line, the '70s were a decade of change in Greenville. I am looking forward to what the '80s bring. Thank you to all who came out for my presentation."

-Audrey Matott

I urge you to try her two links for more info (and to witness the work Audrey expended on this program!)

More Notes:

Our Monday, June 10 meeting, *Freehold and its Church*, will meet at the Freehold Church, not at the Library. Time is still the same time – 7:30. Please park cars carefully to maximize space.

And I have concocted a walking tour – notes below.

A conversation with Tom Teich over the winter detailed his concern for the building and I agreed that a GLHG program there would draw attention to the building's needs, as well as present a worthy local history program.

Tom is scanning some of the photographs hanging in the Freehold Country Store

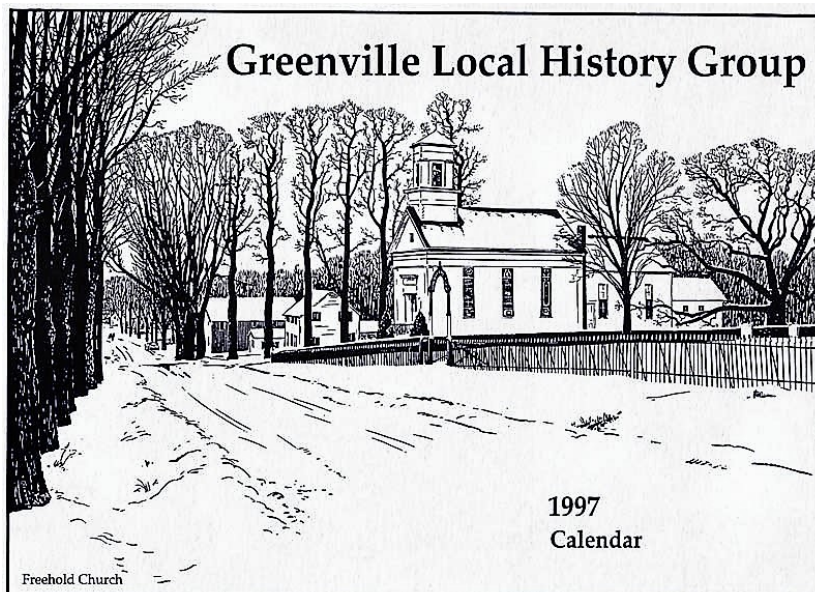
and in the Freehold Country Pub, to be combined with scans of older postcards he has collected.

Also, Warren Eckler will read a brief history of the church.

Walking tour: Weather permitting, I will lead a walking tour, starting at 6:45 from the four corners. You can get there by walking from the church or by parking in the lot across from former Freehold Country Inn.

From the Four Corners, we will walk to Ruby's and the Basic Creek Bridge and then reverse course to the church, noting some of Freehold's history as well as memories that you share. Total distance: about a half-mile. Terrain is mostly flat but can be uneven in spots. Use your best judgment whether you want to venture on this side excursion. And let me know if you are planning to do the walk, if you wish, and I can email a change of plans at 6:15 if needed (weather). Otherwise, assume we are walking and arriving back to the church for the program's start at 7:30.

Thank you, Christine and Stephanie, for making the promised light refreshments happen once again.



A sketch of the Freehold Church looking to the four corners