

# Greenville Local History Group Newsletter

January 2021, Issue 292

COVID #7: Rich McAneny, Flip, Audrey

Happy New Year!

Should we wish for a kinder 2021?

And, yes, you are seeing right — a January newsletter. The last time that happened was 31 years ago.

Thank you for your feedback about the the Covid newsletters. I have enjoyed finding a few goodies as well as sharing the stories of others.

## **This Month:**

Interview with Rich McAneny  
More of Flip's Delights  
Audrey—Demolition Perspective  
And Notes

## **An Interview with Richard McAneny Don Teator**

I recently spent a couple hour-long sessions on the phone with Richard McAneny who shared some of his coming of age experiences in Greenville. Although the topics wandered a bit, I hope I have stitched together a narrative that fairly portrays Richard's love of his hometown.

Richard was born at on March 5, 1939, to Ed and Roberta (Roe) McAneny. However, soon after his birth, Richard's parents separated, got married to other people, and raised their own families. (Roberta married John Jennings, and we interviewed Roberta at the September 2013 GLHG meeting.)

Richard went into the service, married, lived in Westerlo until 2000, worked for Central Hudson for 40 years, and has spent the last twenty years in Catskill. However, it is his first twenty years that is this article's focus.

At some point, age eleven or so, Richard, not comfortable with either family, moved in with his grandmother, Elsie

Olmsted Roe, until he was about 20. His vantage point of those ten years was from the center of town, next to the pond, on the site where National Bank of Coxsackie sits today. The house was torn down in the early 1960s to make way for the bank. Elsie worked at many jobs to support herself, from being the town's phone operator in her house, renting out rooms, editing the Greenville Local, and working at the movie theater across the street. The last one had some perks for Richard; about the only thing he had to buy was the fifteen cent popcorn.

Richard talked about his best friends as he was growing up: Curt Cunningham, Jim Kiley, Ken Baker, Ron and Tom Baumann, Stanley Gutkaiss. He remembered riding bikes all over the village and beyond. A favorite haunt was Shepard's Resort in the summertime, where they would swim in the pool and sell soda at the resort baseball games. They walked back to the orchard in back of the school to pick apples. And they would pick the silk off of ears of corn, make a corn cob pipe, and then smoke the corn silk, sometimes in the cemetery. One adventure is shown in the photo of



The captains of the Buccaneers of Greenville, 52 years ago, were Tom Baumann, Ken Baker, Rich McAneny, Jim Kiley and Curt Cunningham.

the S.S. Greenville, as Richard called it, with the friends setting sail on the Greenville Pond.

Another boyhood memory was riding bikes with Harold Ross to the different resorts—Baumann's, Shepard's, Breezy Knoll, Rainbow Lodge and Ingalside—on the nights each resort had their movie night.

One more boyhood memory with friends, sort of a prank for which he got in trouble, was he and friends picking up empty returnables on the back porch of Gus Baker's and then turning them in for money at Gus Baker's. Eventually, Gus got wind of that unprofitable trade.

Richard confessed to being a so-so student at GCS. His favorite elementary teacher was second grade teacher Margaret (Boomhower) Bogardus, who was an even keel teacher who never lost her temper. His favorite secondary teacher was Ralph Breakell who taught history and geography, subjects Richard liked. Mr. Breakell, Richard said, would cut some slack if he liked you. Richard did not enjoy science, especially outer space stuff.

Playing basketball in high school was a source of enjoyment. Richard started playing for varsity team as a sophomore. He told of having four different coaches for each of his four years of high school, starting with Mabee or Marquardt, then Randall, then Lamburg, and finally MacTavish, which happened to be Coach MacTavish's first year at GCS.

The Cunninghams were his closest neighbors. Carol Cunningham (m. Reed) was born a day (actually, six hours) earlier, making Carol the older neighbor as she was/is wont to remind him, Richard says. They still trade birthday cards. They graduated in 1957 and were/have been friends their entire lives. Carol was a cheerleader at GCS. In the winter, Lee would take his Jeep and, after plowing the driveway between the two houses, would go on to plow the pond when the ice was hard enough, allowing the community to enjoy ice skating. Richard remembers he and the other boys gathered wood and made a bonfire on the pond, playing Red Rover, Come Over.

Richard remembered Elsie occasionally commenting someone must have died. Looking out the window, they would espy Ambrose Cunningham (father of Lee) coming out of the basement with two pails, dumping them into a dry well. They contained embalming fluid, Elsie let Richard know.



Neighbor Carol Cunningham, Rich McAneny, on Grandma Elsie's front yard; in background: elm trees of pond, white Corner Restaurant, brick Pioneer, shed by creek

Another wintertime memory was climbing Stevens Hill behind the Catholic Church, coasting down it on a toboggan. On a good day, they could slide all the way to Rt 81 in front of The Cabin.

As youngster, Richard remembers he and Elsie attended the Methodist Church. One memory was his Sunday School teacher Eva Bott who would teach her class outside near her car in good weather. At some point, perhaps when the Greenville Church moved to merge with the Norton Hill Church, he attended the Presbyterian Church. An odd memory he has, he says, is of Mr & Mrs Hauptmann being active in the church and having good attendance, somewhat puzzling to Richard since they were the parents of the young man who killed the minister's daughter in 1935, a shocking crime that reverberated in regional newspapers.

As for his grandmother Elsie's socializing, Richard remembered she was friends with Roy and Ethel Abrams. They lived near the corner of Ingalside Rd and Rt 81. Roy was a Ford mechanic and had been a brother-in-law to Elsie. And then there was Charlie and Eva Hoose who lived near the Scripture Bridge (across the creek from today's Lou's Automotive). Elsie liked to take trips to East Durham to George O'Neill's tavern, today the Saloon, where Elsie would enjoy a whiskey sour or two. And she liked to go to Harry's Steakhouse (Rt 23 below Point Lookout) for a drive and a whiskey sour. Elsie did not have a driver's license and thus a number of friends would offer to drive her.

I asked Richard if they ever went out to eat a meal. In Greenville, where might they go? Occasionally, they might eat at Gus Baker's or Kate & Herb Terpylwitz's Corner Restaurant or, later on, Mary's.

As for places to go for a drink in or near Greenville: Henry Sohl's The Cabin with its duck pin bowling, Gus Baker's, Stamas's bar at Happy Days, Biscupich's Better Days, Paul Dodane's bar on Rt 32 north of Shepard's, Rainbow Lodge in the summertime, Franzen's Blue Inn in Norton Hill, Elsie's Brass Rail (O'Connor, McIlheny) on North Rd in Norton Hill, the small bar at A-Bar-A, Kuhn's in Freehold, and even as far afield at Bullseye (Sugarloaf) near Earlton before Brennan's.

As for memories of the hamlet's houses, Richard recalled on East Street (Rt 81 east) that Ralph Yeomans, the Greenville Local editor,

lived in a back apartment of the Baumann's business building; of Gus Baker's steps being occupied by the story spinners Crow Griffin (had two taxis), Abe Lockwood, Phil Butler and Cy Story; and he would go to Bill the Barber (Neidlinger) for a haircut, which cost 25 cents a kid and 50 cents for adults. The barbershop had a candy case where Richard could buy a Milky Way for five cents.

On North Rd, there was the Perkowski house where his mother and step-dad lived for a short time. (John Jennings was the brother of Webb who, with wife Marie (sister of Richard's mother!), took boarders at House on the Hill); next to that was Wessel's Garage, a dilapidated building that had farm machinery; behind that was the Stevens feed mill and Farm Store that sold International Harvester (another farm machinery seller was Max Wood in Freehold who sold John Deere); and there was the two-story Story house that sat beside the cemetery driveway, lived in by Edna Story with children Ray, Cy, Charlotte and Margaret Story, and a grandchild Stanley Gutkaiss who was a friend of Richard. The Story house was demolished almost the same time, or before, Wessel's Garage was torn down.

Richard remembered the ping pong machine at Kate and Hugo's store; the little shop and souvenirs at the Flach Bakery; Frank Ales of the pharmacy who sold to Quackenbush when Richard was twelve years old; and Annie Gelchion, who lived in the second house on Irving Rd, who was a three star mother (three sons serving in WWII).

An eccentric memory of Richard's: his grandmother was born in 1886, the same year Geronimo died. Interesting what facts stick in our heads!

One last memory was a story, or stories, his grandmother told him, about the cross burnings on Stevens Hill (behind the Catholic Church) in the 1930s and before. (Sylvia's November 2017 meeting detailed the KKK's activities in Greene County from the 1800s through mid-twentieth century).

Of course, there is a lot more to Richard's story during his first 20 years of life, not to mention his past 60-some years. He spoke with enthusiasm that some of his early memories of Greenville might make some of us remember similar accounts. And the recorder of these notes hopes it might inspire some of you to make your own notes or account.

## **Good Ole Country Doings Flip Flach**

In the last couple newsletters we reminisced about Gas Station / Garage businesses in Greenville. This month, I have a pair of related tangent topics for you to contemplate and tolerate How many remember for themselves or have heard about the common practices back in the day of garage owners “Running a Tab” for their regular customers and their “Oiling Down The Lots?” Both were acceptable ways of doing business—one as a help to many people and the other as a problem cure.

My recollections stem from my memories of, and stories from, my Grandfather Phil Schwebler and his Tydol Station/Garage of the 40’s and 50’s, as well as those of his successor Virgil Clow, to whom he sold the business and building to.

### **Running a Tab**

To encourage business and rally up customers, station owners would allow regular patrons to get their gas, have their vehicles serviced and repaired, etc. when they needed it and then pay up when they could; sometimes weekly, or monthly, or even seasonally, depending on their work/financial situation. You would hear “Put that on my Tab”, “Write that one down”, or “I’ll square up on payday” as customers would leave. My Gramps, and Virgil after him, had a thick, black Daily Journal/Ledger with hundreds of names in the “Owe/Paid” columns - not a great financial situation for them, since they were not afforded such a deal with their suppliers / creditors; but nonetheless a gesture to promote business while helping people. The vast majority were trustworthy and dependable and would conscientiously pay their bill. Of course, there were always some who would take advantage. The problem really arose when / if you sold or closed the business; Gramps later told me, that back in the 50’s when he sold, and a buck was a buck, he had over two thousand dollars “on the books” that he never saw. And remember, that was when gas was 20 cents a gallon and about a hundred dollars a week was considered a very good business income! (A side-story: Gramps told me in later years that I found very inter-

esting was that one of his most steady, as well as one with a large continuing Tab customers was George Vanderbilt. Certainly out of convenience, George himself, or one of his hired workers, would fuel his car, truck, and tractors and have Phil “write it down” to be squared up about once a month. I found that quite comical. Gramps did confirm that when he had sold the station, George had paid “his tab” in full).

As Gramps put it: “In those days, that was a regular customer’s expectation and the cost of doing business if you wanted to be in the garage game.” (see Note section)

### **Oiling Down the Lot**

This common practice would have EnCon locking up my Gramps today. Before black-top paving became the norm for business/ parking lots, many consisted of just hard-packed dirt. Hard-packed - how? By “oiling ‘em down.” My Grandfather’s entire lot was dirt, even around the gas pumps. The traffic dust and/or mud mess was awful. So how did he cure it? All the waste drain oil from all the vehicles he serviced was saved in five-gallon cans. Then on a good hot day, gallon upon gallon of that black, gooey liquid was poured on and spread over the dirt yard section by section. He made his own wide, long-handled squeegee-type push trowel to smear his “black gold” coating over the lot. Most saturated in to leave a hard, shiny glaze while, especially if caught with a shower or overnight rain shortly after applying, some (and sometimes a lot) would run off to the east into a small ditch, which would of course flow its way into, YES, our very own favorite and beloved village pond creek, then traveling south and beyond. GONE. No problem, right? Out of sight / out of mind. A routine, acceptable then, seemingly with no knowledge of ill effects, a common practice that was done to many lots and driveways. Nobody thought anything of it. It packed that dirt nicely and cured the dust problem. It only took about a hundred years for anyone to finally think: “Maybe not such a good idea for our Great Earth!”

—Respectfully Submitted  
Flip Flach

## Perspective - Demolition of Vanderbilt Theater By Audrey Matott

1980s Greenville was a transitional time for the town. Nothing made this more apparent than the physical changes that occurred right in the heart town, on Main Street. One of the most drastic historical changes to the local landscape during the 1980s was the demolition of the Vanderbilt Theater building and the construction of the Cumberland Farms convenience store in its place. The Vanderbilt Theater building stood on Main Street for over a century and many know the history of the Vanderbilt Theater; that the building had previously been a play-house, an opera house, and an Episcopal Church. Many also recall that the building was not originally built on Main Street but had been moved there from County Route 26 after standing there for over 50 years. Others will recall that after it served as the theater, small businesses, including Napa, occupied the building during its final years.

In June 1982, when the Greenville Local reported that the theater building was to be razed in order to make way for Cumberland Farms, a brief but detailed description of the building's history was provided, as follows:



*First it was the Episcopal Church, next an opera house, then the Vanderbilt Theater, a play house, then a series of stores and soon it will be no more for it will be torn down and replaced by a new Cumberland Farms Store, according to owner Lou Spinelli.*

*Mr. Spinelli purchased the building which was included in the purchase of Mary's Restaurant in the heart of Greenville. He reports that construction of the new Cumberland outlet will begin in the near future.*

*The building as it appears today and a drawing as it appeared originally when it was built in September, 1825.*

AY, JUNE 24, 1982 25 CENTS PER COPY NUMBER 2

### Cumberland Farms Store Coming



*The only identifying feature is the half-moon design over the front door. Christ Church was organized as a parish and was in-*



*corporated and recorded in the County Clerk's office, Sept. 7, 1825 under the direction of Rev. Dr. Samuel Fuller*

*The site for the church was chosen just east of the present Pine Lake Manor resort and the Church building was dedicated on Sept. 6, 1827, by Rev. John Henry Hobart, Bishop of the State of New York.*

*In 1877 the Church was in an embarrassing financial situation and in 1878 a resolution was passed by the Vestry to sell the property and the old Church building. It was sold at auction on Nov. 23, 1878 and was purchased by Dr. Botsford for \$7,610.00 and moved to its present location in Greenville and became an Opera House.*

As for the local reaction as reported by the Greenville Local on this happening; there was clearly an appreciation for the history of the building, but given its age and lack of public outcry, there was no clear concern for the historical preservation of a building with such a history. Furthermore, the construction and opening of the Cumberland Farms store was well covered by the Greenville Local and overall, it seemed like a welcome, modern change for the town. Cumberland Farms has been a part of Greenville for the past 38 years and to many local adults, it is as much a part of the fabric that makes up the Greenville landscape as the Vanderbilt Theater once was.

I find it fascinating to consider the many purposes the building served during its 156 year life and how that ties in with the progress that occurred during the 1980s. Whereas historically the building was refashioned many times over the years in order to repurpose it for business needs, the building was now torn down and replaced with a modernized structure. We see this throughout the 1980s with the demolition of buildings to make way for new buildings that to many local adults, seem like they are an ingrained part of the Greenville village landscape today. Buildings like the Post Office, National Bank of Coxsackie, Stewart's Shop are historically established but both occupy spaces with significant historical ties. How curious history can be through the eyes of human experience. Is history in the eye of the beholder?

## NOTES:

Ever wonder why the newsletter is usually three pages long? Even in email times? Once upon a time, when only regular mail existed, three pages seemed to be the limit in weight before further postage was due. With fifteen people still receiving regular mail, I still use the same measure. Besides, it might be just long enough for our attention spans.

Rewriting history. The 2021 calendar cow photo is identified as sisters Clarice and Betty Elliott as the riders (told to me by Irene Elliott Williams). However, I received from Jeannie Williams, daughter-in-law of Irene (sister of the cow-riders), the following identification:

*Of the image of the two Elliott sisters on the Holstein - Irene is in front and Clarice is behind her. I remember Irene telling me this when we once looked at this image. I also believe she said Ruth Elliott was the photographer of many of their early family images. -Jeannie*

So, here is a case of conflicting "facts," using the same source. Thank you, Jeannie, for the info, and the rest of us will have to accommodate both versions of the truth until further developments provide a definitive answer.

from Connie Barrett: After reading all the history on Flip Flach's history of the Greenville Barbers... I just wanted to add that my Grandmother Sarah Chatterton lived across from the gas station where Joe cut hair back in the 50's next to Cunningham's Funeral Home. I used to go over to the shop, then at the gas station, to have my hair cut when I was in elementary school.... notably it was always a straight bowl cut..... I vividly remember jumping up into the barber's chair and feeling a little odd being given a hair cut in a Barbers Shop. [dt: thank you, Connie, for more local color!]

Calendar Sales: Stupendous! A Wonderful Surprise! With the last five copies gone, the 2021 GLHG Calendar is a sell-out, something I did not dream could happen, especially with no meetings to promote it. However, both GNH and Tops sold twice the normal for them. And then Quinn and Marty Kelly watched 125 change hands off their counter. Although the sharing and making of local history in calendar form is worth doing, it is also gratifying to see it a financial success. Thank you to everyone who makes possible one of our most visible endeavors for the community.

I am planning another historical oddity: a February newsletter. One feature will be more Turner table (I have to include one more account). Another might feature Dumpville (a landfill story that got squeezed out of January) and another a 1940s telephone directory (this piece has been waiting three months, always on the cutting block when space was getting tight. It might not make next time either).

Reminder: Sylvia's and Andrea's new venture – [www.porcupinesoup.com](http://www.porcupinesoup.com) – is up and running with news and features of the Cairo, Durham, and Greenville areas.

After interviewing Richard McAneny, I read him my write-up. He remembered even more details which he and I will record via text, to be compiled in a file for future use, perhaps. For example, did you know that in Richard's early years that Hill Street was also known as Jenkins Hill, named after a black family?

Lots of local history online: Facebook pages: Greenville Local History Group (moderated by Audrey Matott), Greene County History, Cairo Historical Society, Boarding Houses Hotels and Resorts in Durham NY, and more; and on PorcupineSoup.com, try the columns: Noon-Mark, Tracing Your Roots, Oak Hill and Vicinity; and if you find others of good note, let me know.

I ran out of room on Flip's page to include a photo. So, here is a photo of a tab my father was running. I could have picked another ten businesses that utilized the same practice.

GREENVILLE FARM STORE  
GREENVILLE, NEW YORK  
TEL. YORKTOWN 6-5322  
PROP. NELSON PARKS

DATE Oct 1, 1992

Donald Teeter  
Freehold  
New York

STATEMENT  
DETACH AND MAIL WITH YOUR CHECK. YOUR CANCELLED CHECK IS YOUR RECEIPT.

Balance June 1st -	813.75
June 12 - Invoice #3929 - Receipt	10.00
July 11 " #4317 "	10.00
July 25 " #4481 Invoice/Receipt	12.75
Aug 27 " #4797 Credit	164.75
	37.00
Balance due	\$77.15

BASE PAID PAID BY CHECK NO.

TAX TOTAL