

Greenville Local History Group Newsletter

March 2022, Issue 303

Annual Report, Canvas, Burr Marker

Good Yeay-Spring-Is-Here,
Greenville Historians,

This Month

March has temperamentally teased us as many of us remember it often does. I hope your snow-drops have popped through.

The March issue is usually the annual report. This year, I have reduced it to a paragraph in the Notes section.

Village Canvas Series: Flip Flach
Aaron Burr Marker: Garth Bryant
Dumpville Addendum: Zan Bryant
Long Page of Notes: Don Teator

The Extended Village Canvas

The Start of a Flip Series
Flip Flach (& Don Teator)

It seems most times when Flip and I cross paths, wherever, a two minute conversation mushrooms into twenty, with me claiming I have to do another errand but that Flip should write some of this down or do a GLHG program.

Taking that cue, Flip has produced several programs or has written for the Newsletter: the Flachs in Alcove/Indian Fields; Flach's Bakery and deliveries; Barbershop in Greenville; Gas Stations in Greenville; Running a Tab & Oiling Down; Transportation in Greenville; Shopping in Greenville; and The Pond. A productive couple years, Flip!

Another idea that has been brewing, one that is too broad for just one meeting and too broad to know when it will end, is ready to be unveiled. The first is this coming month, April 11, 7:30, at the Library.

In Flip's words:

As a future program idea, I was thinking of how about an evening of what I will call an "extended village canvas" of "ex-buildings, ex-businesses, ex-entrepreneurs" no longer part of our present make-up, taking, say, about a half-mile or so north, south, east, west (Country Square, Red Mill Rd, Orloff and Jeanne Bears' place, Red Mill Rd again to west) as rough boundaries, and recalling all that "used to be"? Should spur a heap of audience participation with tangent stories that would encompass many of your suggested topics below (memories of Greenville landscape past, influences of change, buildings/people gone, etc.) I know I could go off on a few tangent stories, and am sure many others could/would for fun.

Just for a few examples: North - - how many would remember Reggie Clapper's laundromat on the knoll where Bank of Greene County now stands, or the Jimmy Carelas' auto salvage/junk yard covering acres where Dollar General and Walgreens are now, all along the creek (with all that oil,

fuel, debris, flowing with rest of the "good stuff" via creek through town), M&M Bakery start in building across from Country Estates Road, the Vanderbilt Farm with orchards and hay fields. South - - John's Pizza 40 years ago, of course the Drive-In, Hill-Top Acres Boarding House, Gene Morrison's Frozen Food Lockers. East - - Orlie Bears feed store in his basement and Jeanne as Town Clerk in her living room, Doc Bott's office in the little back room of his



Two of Flip's Stops
On the Village Canvas
81 west

Top: John I and his store, Norton Hill
Left: The Cabin, in a quieter life, site of today's Bensen's

house. West - - Nelson Parks "Farm Store" about where Lou's Automotive is now, The Cabin watering hole, Crow Griffin's taxi with "Speed Denton" at the wheel. Then, of course, the immediate Main Town fixtures on Routes 32 and 81 (Rundell house moved for School Construction 30's), Wessel's Garage, Signs-of-the-times beautiful corner house to Bob's Mobil Station transition, Main Street Murphy Vaughn's IGA Market, Quackenbush's Pharmacy and Fountain, maybe Flachs' Bakery, Hugo's Riding Academy, Kay DeBus' Corner Restaurant with Juke Box and Soda Fountain; Our movie theater, Mary's then becoming Lou Spinnelli's Restaurant after many other uses, etc. etc. etc.

The memories / changes would go on and on for many, and I think would be an enjoyable evening-full gab-fest. For most of us, the actual personal recollections would be only from the 50's on, of course, but that still

covers, I would say, the bulk of change and updates. Hitting both sides of Road and Street with plot-by-plot structures/activities would fill quite a time frame.

I don't know that there would be much of a plan presentation, but more of a "go with it" area by area deal. If you think it has merit, let's give it a shot. If not, or if you want to tweak the idea to a more definite setting, that is fine. The key for my thought will be group participation.

I liked Flip's presentation of the idea so much that I give you his original wording. And I will try to help Flip with some photos from the collection. And all of you/us can help by sharing memories.

After some debate, Flip suggested, and I agreed, to start his canvas unveiling with Rt 81 west of Greenville, starting with the west end of Norton Hill and working his way back to the Four Corners.

Greenville To Get New Historical Marker

Garth Bryant

The new marker will contain the following script:

Aaron Burr

1798 - performed legal work for Major Augustine Prevost near this site in an office in home of David Calhoun



Aaron Burr—stock photo

Yes, that Aaron Burr. NY Attorney General and US Senator from New York. Vice President of the United States under Thomas Jefferson. Killer of Alexander Hamilton in a duel in Weehawken, NJ on July 11, 1804.

What was Aaron Burr doing in Greenville?

Now that is an interesting story and one that is little known in Greenville. Near the end of the Revolutionary War Burr started a very public and scandalous affair with Theodosia Prevost. Theodosia was the wife of Jacques Marcus Prevost.

Jacques was serving in the British Army in the Caribbean. Before Jacques could return home and deal with this affront he passed away. Had he made it home, perhaps US history would have been altered.

Regardless, Burr went on to marry the newly widowed Theodosia. This faraway se-

ries of events would have disastrous effects for Greenville's earliest settlers.

A large part of Greenville had been granted to General Augustine Prevost and his son Major Augustine Prevost by the King of England for their service in the French and Indian War. These two British officers were Jacques' brother and nephew.

The early settlers moved to Greenville in the early 1780's believing the Prevosts would lose their claim when America became an independent nation after the Revolution. The settlers had good reason to believe this.

New York had passed The New York Act of Attainder, or Confiscation Act. The Act states that all people who fought against America, supported the Crown, or took refuge with the occupying forces would forfeit their lands. Many New Yorkers loyal to the Crown lost their lands.

For this reason, settlers, many of them veterans who had fought for their country, came to Greenville. They came in two distinct groups. New Yorkers from Dutchess County settled mainly in the western half of Town while Connecticut residents from the Woodbury area settled mainly east of the Basic Creek.

At that point neither of the Prevosts had ever spent a single day on their NY grant. The settlers went about the back breaking work of clearing the land, building cabins and growing enough food to survive. None of them ever expected to see or deal with the Prevosts. They were wrong.

The father, General Prevost, returned to England after the Revolution and died in 1786. His son Major Prevost resigned his commission, stayed in America, and fought the uphill legal battle to try to keep title to his tens of thousands of acres of prewar land claims. As these claims were disallowed one by one, Major Prevost faced financial disaster.

At this point Aaron Burr decided to intervene for his wife's nephew. He used his political influence to get Prevost excluded from the Confiscation Act. In this way Prevost kept title to his last American property, the 7,960 acres in the future Town of

Greenville. On July 22, 1786 the State of New York confirmed Prevost's claim.

For the early settlers, this intervention by Burr was a disaster. All these early settlers were now in legal limbo. They had already spent more than five years improving their farms and building their mills. They would spend the next six years waiting for the other shoe to drop.

Drop it would, for in 1792 Augustine Prevost arrived in Catskill and hired Fitch Lamphere to build his home Hush Hush in Greenville. In 1798, after all the settlers' legal challenges were disallowed, Burr opened an office in Greenville to assist Prevost with the unpleasant task of demanding either payment from or eviction of all the earliest settlers.

Few if any were able to keep their entire claim, some kept a portion, and others couldn't afford any and were forced to leave. These repossessed lands were sold to later arriving settlers by Prevost.

It is hard to overstate the one sidedness of these transactions. These simple farmers had to negotiate the best deal they could with Burr, a powerful politician who had just

come in fourth in a run for President of the United States.

This whole incident is a disturbing moment in New York and Greenville history. The treatment of these early patriots by the Government seems to be a case of NY politicians doing a favor for one of their own, Burr, at the expense of the citizens.

It is not surprising then that up till now this whole incident has been mostly missing from Greenville's history. Perhaps it was a story that everyone preferred to forget. But history should not be forgotten, but remembered and learned from.

So, we will install the Aaron Burr sign and we will remember that in the earliest days of Greenville one of the most famous people in American history used his political influence to disenfranchise our earliest forefathers and enrich his own family. Now that's a lesson that is timeless and well worth remembering.

For any who would like to read a more in-depth study of this story, it is included in *The Lake Family in Greenville* copies of which are available at the Vedder Library and with the Town Historian.



Prevost Manor, owned by Augustine Prevost for whom Aaron Burr did legal work for in 1797.
Located on Rt 81, quarter mile east of Maple Ave

Another Angle to Dumpville

Zan Bryant

[dt] (The following email came across my computer screen a couple months ago in reaction to the Dumpville article - www.dteator.com/glhg - then click #293. It is too good to not share. Thank you, Zan.)

There was a time when Greene County was trying to locate a dump in the county. Greenville was at the top of the list for a location. It was being pushed by Nils Backlund who was a county legislator representing New Baltimore.

At the same time, he was running against John Faso to be the Republican candidate for the New York Assembly. We had several customers who were upset with this proposal. Mrs. Weeks from King Hill Road was one such person.

I attended a hearing in Catskill on the subject and there was no question

the County had Greenville in mind. We were pretty much held out of the conversations. It just so happened Bryant's had hired a company from Delmar to do an environmental study for us at the store location.

I drove down to the proposed dump site on the Gayhead-Earlton Road. You could hear the water running under the surface of the fields. I hired the environmental group that was working for our company to evaluate the site.

They quickly generated a report which I gave to the Town. It was a tool they needed to stop the dump.

As a sidebar, I took John Faso door to door in Greenville and his campaign against Mr. Backlund. I was pleased John won the primary and ultimately the assembly seat.



— continued from last page: menagerie of notes —

Annual Report

I know I promised an annual report. Allow me to weasel out (my apologies to the weasel family) by saying you received my annual report last month, attached, the one I sent to the Town Board, County Historian, and NYS Historian.

The only thing I really want to add: I so much appreciate the efforts of the writers of the articles for the newsletter. They have made for a worthy alternative for the newsletter and I am so pleased to see such talent.

Eleanor Goff Ingalls Diary

A while back, Walter Ingalls donated a boxful of goodies, mostly material related to his mother Eleanor Goff Ingalls. The contents included:

- Eleanor Ingalls Diary: 1909, 1910-20, 1924-26, 1934-50
- Composition Book: 1910
- Correspondence with Edna: 1940-1941
- Several photos: children of Eleanor: Edna, Claribel, Walter; Claribel's husband Len; Walter's children

Harriett Rasmussen had started transcribing and summarizing the early years of the diary, making for good family history reading. Issues 122, 124, 125, 127, 129, 136, 138, and 151 make us wish Harriett had done them all. (Issue numbers are from my website: dteator.com and click on newsletters)

Menagerie of Notes

GLHG Program Year

GLHG Programming 2022: We will attempt regular meetings. The first one is April 11, at the Library, at 7:30. (All meetings – second Monday of April through November unless otherwise noted.)

April will feature Flip Flach, as noted earlier.

I have to figure a way to record the programs. If anyone has experience, with YouTube, or otherwise, let me know.

And May will be at Prevost Hall, the former Presbyterian Church, joining Community Partners, with a program about the Hall and the 30th anniversary of the Town Park. More details in the April Newsletter.

I will try to fill in the rest of the schedule in the May Newsletter.



Porcupine Soup

PorcupineSoup.com has started including weekly installments of Greenville history. Although I try to coordinate the flow between me and Andrea Macko and Sylvia Hasenkopf, founders and producers of the local area online newspaper, I am urging anyone with an article that could be used during an issue to please consider do so. You do not need my permission, just do it; however, if you want me to look it over, comment, edit, or anything else, my services are available.

If you have not found porcupinesoup.com yet, check it out and please consider sharing your knowledge and experiences.

Calendar Sales

The calendar sales season, of course, is finished. We came close to selling out, a very good turnout one again. I always hope the calendar adds another chapter of showing Greenville local history, and your input is both a confirmation and challenge. Your input clues me in on future ideas, so feel free to send them on to me.

We are grateful to Kelly's Pharmacy, GNH, Tops, and the Library for allowing sales. And a special thank you goes to Quinn, Marty, and staff at the Pharmacy for cheer-leading the sales. Sales at the Pharmacy accounted for slightly more than half of total sales. Without their help, the calendar would be looking for different financing or would just stop. (gasp!).

The calendar has been both a good reminder of our past but has also proven to be an opportunity to recognize current community members who make a difference.



The Kellys
aka: top sellers of GLHG Calendars
Photo from Pharmacy Facebook Page
And thank you from all of us at GLHG