

Greenville Local History Group Newsletter

July 2022, Issue 307

Flip's Extended Canvas—Part II

A pleasant early July evening (unlike the torrid later month) awaited attendees: Bob Shaw, Loretta Gardner, Linda & John Mormile, Eileen & Ed Volmar, Jack Van Auken, Kathy Smith, Stephanie Ingalls, Nicole Ambrosio, Mary Connolly, Gail Nicholson, Linda Berger, Frank Potter, Bette Welter, Al Hulick, Jeff Pellerin, Barbara & Flip Flach, Don Teator, and perhaps a few more that escaped the sign-in sheet.

GLHG welcomed back Flip Flach for a continuation of his local history idea: an "extended village canvas" of "ex-buildings, ex-businesses, ex-entrepreneurs" no longer part of our present make-up – north, south, east, west of the Four Corners.

Although Flip will modestly downplay his expertise, the GLHG is fortunate to have a person of Flip's perspective that can draw in as many aspects of Hamlet Greenville lore as he does. And there are many more of you who know big chunks of this lore also, and your participation is much appreciated.

Along with the photos from the Historian's files, Flip's program is a wonderful appetizer and main course of knowing our local history. (I am still thinking of the desert part!)

This newsletter will cover in more detail than usual the proceedings of the evening because of the likelihood that Flip's program will be a future reference.

A few months ago, Part I of Flip's "extended canvas" had started at the western end of

Norton Hill on State Route 81, traveling eastward toward the town center. We had paused at the Catholic Church, the starting point for this evening's Part II. Anyone wishing to follow this evening's slideshow and the commentary below, go to the link given in the notes section.

We repeated the slide of St John's, the nicely painted white church next to the newly constructed brick community hall of the mid-1960s. The juxtaposition threw some people off, not remembering that the church was torn down just after the Church Hall was built. The next photo showed the new structure going up for the new St John's the Baptist.

Across the street was the classic white colonial clapboard house, sometimes known as the Vanderbilt - Stevens house. The focus of that photo was not the residence of the house but a little side building that used to be the firehouse. A better picture of that firehouse, or where it used to sit near the four corners, was shown later.

And then came a couple residences, one of them being today's GCS district office. Next seen was the house that sat across the GCS driveway. This photo showed a post card for a boarding house then known as Hilltop Cottage.

We turned our attention to the second house above the post office, the multi-colored house, known as the Botsford House, that is on the National Historic Register. In the

1990s, June Clark had it repainted to its original color, much to the wonderment and awe from the community, somewhat surprised after living with the white or the gray house for so long. (Ms. Clark follows Greenville happenings from England nowadays.)

The next slide, reproduced in this newsletter (below), was a Grandma Moses-esque photo taken from the Presbyterian steeple looking toward Lee Cunningham's house (photo 1). In the photo, left to right, a viewer sees the funeral home, then Lee Cunningham's house just in front of it is a car driving on a snowy road, then the "Maxwell House," and to the far right, the Botsford-Clark House. To the left and up on the ridge is the Crow Griffin house. This was a wonderful photo with the next slide showing a similar scene but during springtime.

Another photo from the Historian's collection was a photo of the brick telephone office – the Greenville Central office. It was built in 1947 with the additions as late as 1971. Flip

told his story about telephone service.

And then came the classic photo of Lee Cunningham's house when his father AJ was still alive. The two of them were clearing snow in a 1939 snow storm.

Across the street where the post office rests today sat a service station – Nort's Auto Service Station. Two additions would be added, with the western one (left) becoming the barbershop for Flip's grandfather.

Beyond Nort's sat Cunningham's Funeral Home, still known as that today. It was one of the most photographed buildings in town.

At this point, and for the rest of the program, we were in Four Corners territory. Still heading eastward, we made the loop counterclockwise around the four corners till we got back to the pond.

First on our Four Corners roundabout was the Elsie Roe house. Of course, some of you



know that the Bank of Coxsackie sits there today. Roberta Jennings gave an interview some years ago. A big part of her story was her mother – the same Elsie Roe. More details of that interview can be found in this newsletter link: #229 of <https://www.dteator.com/glhg/glhg.htm>

Across the street, where Cumberland today sprawls from the creek to Nevin's Insurance (Lee Cunningham's house), many of us remembered Mary's when it was the small building, then added on to, and added on to again, with the name Spinelli attached to it near the building's end.

The Vanderbilt Theater has a long history in Greenville, starting in the mid 1800s when the building, which was a Presbyterian Church in East Greenville, was moved, according to sources, by the Vanderbilts, who relocated it and had it used as a community asset. It was a theater, a movie house, a community center, a graduation site, a place to play basketball and so on. At its end, the church/theater served as a NAPA store to be torn down in the early 1980s to make way for the first stage of the Cumberland Farms business. When Cumberland Farms bought and then razed Mary's, the business built the second stage of its building that it is today. Today, that very busy little acre is filled only by the Cumberland farm and the gas tanks. Everything from before 2000 is gone and a "fig newton of your imagination." (I apologize for the punnery.)

Intermission time for the readers.
A round of applause for Flip.

Back to the program.

Next, we started to the southwest corner, today occupied by Town Hall. (We regret not having a photo of a tannery and mill that Garth [and I] suspect may have been in use more than 200 years ago. Photography was not invented yet.)

Sitting on this corner was, perhaps, Green-

ville's most distinctive building of our photographic history. The Greenville Hotel, or one of several other names attached to this building, served Greenville for longer than our records show. I am guessing the Hotel was probably built in the early 1800s; our earliest photographs showed a full size building serving as a hotel, accommodating guests from the 1880s on to its demise in the 1920s. Also known as Coonley Hotel or, at its end, as Glen Royal, the hotel fully filled that corner. In 1928, the Glen Royal was torn down to make way for the new Pioneer Insurance building. At the turn of this century, the brick building metamorphosed as the Town of Greenville Office Building.

Between the corner and today's Ciani & Morris physical therapy house sat three structures. One of them was the hotel, which in imagination is all that there should have been. However, the building next door was Hartt's Store, a structure that I have never heard anyone talk about from first-hand experience. It seemed to be a full service goods store occupying the site that would be on the parking lot of today's Town Offices. At some point the Stevens family rented part of it for their new insurance business before moving into the new Pioneer building.

Right next to Hartt's Store was the residence of a person who ran the town's telephone operator system from the house. Bunny Gunderesen talked about how she used to work in that house as an operator. These two structures sit in a space where the parking lot of the town office is.

On the southeast corner set a large structure, The Corner Restaurant, as it was known in its last days, had served Greenville for decades before it was torn down in the 1960s to make way for the re-widening of Route 81. To the south of it was a small building, today's realty shop, and before that was used for a number of purposes. A 1990 pictures showed it being used as a café, perhaps used for that for only a year or two. Many remember barber Mike Anatriello, and Flip remembered his father

telling about another barber, George Grasso (sp?), who operated there.

Just behind the Corner Restaurant and Baumann's apartment building sat Hugo's Riding Academy. As late as the 60s people were renting a horse ride that they would take them as far as Newry.

South of the realty shop is a space that shows Hugo's and also shows the Hahne-Link Agency that was built in the seventies. Before that it was an empty space; the photo shows the letters of Hugo's on the barn that still stands today.

The next slide, reproduced in this newsletter, is a view from the Pioneer's second story looking diagonally across the street. It was a bit disorienting. A person was standing in the Four Corners but on a snowy day it was hard to tell exactly where the four corners were. On the left hand side was the large white house that filled the northeast corner, and on the right hand side was the building that was The Corner Restaurant. A stairway went to the second story to a shop that served a num-

ber of businesses. Orrin Stevens remembered it being a cobbler shop and that he kinda hit his shins on the steps many a time as he went up. In the middle of that photo showed the store fronts of the buildings of East Main Street that we know mostly today, with a few alterations.

The second most distinct building in Greenville, in my opinion, is the house that used to sit on the gas station corner.

This house was torn down in the 1940s to make way for the Esso station, and we had several perspectives of that, with one of them showing prices a bit less expensive than it is today. Today, of course it is Tiny Diner. Does anybody remember the name of the restaurant before it was Tiny Diner (just a few years ago – answer in the notes section)?

To the east side of this site sat a small building. Most of us remembered it being a place for a hair stylist. But it served one summer as the State Bank of Albany. Today it is gone, a lane now for the fire company.



To the north of this site, an old photo showed a building that might be 20x20, a shop used for the printing of the Greenville Local. It has been long gone.

We did not include any photos of Matt's hot dog stand. Just across the pond entrance sat Wessel's Garage. That building was shown in many photographs. When it was torn down it made way for a building that many of us remembered as Flach's Barbershop, which then transitioned to Mangold's Realty. A new business, Lola, just established itself there this year.



Hart's Store, later shared with Pioneer Insurance; Located in today's parking lot of Town Offices

And now we have almost completed the circle. Just off the northwest corner sat the Greenville Academy and Presbyterian church, part of the two acres site that Augustine Prevost gave for educational and for religious purposes. And of course there was the Greenville Pond – perhaps, the most photographed body of water in the whole town. Several pictures show wintertime scenes with people skating and playing snap the whip.

churches. And every picture we have of that corner also shows a stone block that was used as a planter today. It originally was used as a watering trough for horses - a memorial created by a grandfather to memorialize his grandson who was killed in an accident in the early 1900s.

And thus ended Part II. More on Part III in a future newsletter.

Although the gazebo does not qualify for being called old, it is such a benchmark photo for Greenville that its construction should be remembered. The year was 1989 and was built as a thank you to the community by the GCS band.

We finished with a couple pictures of the pond being dredged, as it should be done every 10 to 20 years, and some you suggested that it's been long overdue now. We showed a couple signs that used to be on the corner. One was the World War II Honor Roll (1995 calendar). Another one was a listing of area



Early bank, 1960s, later Mary's Restaurant, today site of Cumberland parking lot

Notes:

Thank you, Flip, for your story-telling. I know you will say it was the audience that made it, and that a photo is worth a thousand words, but credit is due where it is due. And the program director of GLHG is most fortunate to have someone of your caliber and flexibility.

Speaking of which, this program was originally scheduled for early next year but a cancellation left me an opening that was easily and capably filled by Flip.

And if Flip has any gray hairs, it might be, for the second time, a result of a technical malfunction. After a half hour, with Barbara Flach's help upstairs, we made a good enough Plan D. Thank you, Barbara, for your availability. Lesson learned, I hope. And I will try to stop scaring Flip.

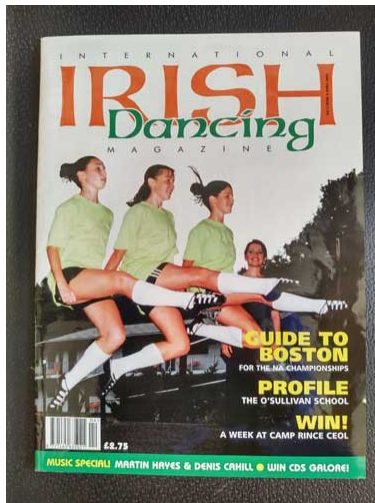
A thank you goes to Stephanie and Christine for the light refreshments they dependably provide. Much appreciated.

If you are a regular visitor to PorcupineSoup.com, you have seen Garth's articles.

Tiny Diner trivia question: in its earlier life, it was known as Corner Station Café.

August Program: Artist Debra Teator. I had promised myself that we would have an artist program every two or three years and I started looking. Lo and behold, a worthy example lives in my (her's also) house. Having hatched this idea a couple years ago, Covid came along and delayed everything until this year.

And, the first ever Artists Studio Tour in June, organized by Arts Around Greenville and sponsored by Community Partners of Greenville, now leaves me a pool of quality artists to connect with. I am hoping many of you visited the Art Show.



Two pieces of Deb's art:

Far left:
cover photo for
international magazine;

Left:
an early stained glass,
2' x 1',
still in kitchen
forty years later

Link to slide show:

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1SkXgopgaPKsKChGRWDFPNm5hVdWcZeLrqHbLUUSI7-I/edit?usp=sharing>