

Greenville Local History Group Newsletter

July 2024, Issue 326

Flach—Extended Canvas IV—Rt 32

Despite toasty mid-80s and humid weather, another exuberant crowd filled the Large Community Room with an extra dozen chairs brought in from the other meeting room. Those in attendance:

Jeff Pellerin, Mary Griffin, Judy Rundell, Kathy Maggio, Anne Foster, Margaret Donohue, Barbara & Clark Ryndak, Carolyn Savery, Caroline & Bruce Pollard, Terry & Garth Bryant, Curt Cunningham, Barbara & Flip Flach, Charlene & Ken Mabey, Rachel Ceasar, Richard Ceasar, Steward Wagner, Susan & Peter Keitel, Al Hulick Anita Orsino, Lew Knott, Albert Woelfersheim with Elijah & Rachel & Shalisha, Bob Shaw, Paige Ingalls, Stephanie Ingalls, Johanne & Robert Titus, John Garofalo & Peter O'Hara, John (Hancock) Earl, Debra & Don Teator, and perhaps a wily few more that evade notice on a busy night.

The siren call of the evening was Flip Flach, with Part IV of his Extended Canvas of Greenville of "ex-buildings, ex-businesses, ex-entrepreneurs" no longer part of our present make-up,

The April program started at Wheel Inn and traversed as far as the Al Bryant's house, plus a dose of the Chatterton house. This month was meant to finish the journey on SR 32 to the Four Corners.

Disclaimer: Flip's memory is an excellent one but he will confess that there are a raft of blanks that other people can fill in.

Grammar note: quotations marks are Flip's words. You grammarians will have to

check to see if I correctly marked consecutive paragraphs of quotes!

Route 32 – Bryants to Four Corners

Flip's memory tour started where we had left off in April – the house bordering the Tops shopping plaza on the north. Many of us knew it as Al Bryant's house. Flip remembered a Werner family, and Mr. Werner repaired televisions and tube radios.

Then comes Bryant's Plaza. The store has been wonderfully documented by Garth at the July 2016 meeting ([July 2016 Newsletter](#)). Even better, Garth left behind a booklet with much more info, something I should put on my website someday.

I think the earliest memory of that plaza area was the Rennick farm area, before there were any of the modern buildings. Flip's memory:

"In the '50s, Jimmy Carelas was doing a lot of things. He liked cars and mechanics and he owned a shop where Dollar General is. He owned along the creek where the driveway goes into Country Estates. He used to haul in wrecked cars and disassemble them there. The cars then would go to crusher. In the meantime he would remove gas tanks, motors, transmissions, rear ends, etc., and sell parts. However, when the creek was trickling toward town, everyone would spot an oil slick on our beloved little pond and some foam in the creek. I still remember Gordon Simpson and Bert Butler

commenting about the creek and discharge from area business.

“Then, on the same car crusher property, Main Care Oil took interest in this area and they put two gigantic stands holding tanks of unknown thousands of gallons. Then their tank trucks loaded gasoline, perhaps not so neatly. The whole area was just a stained mess of fuel tank oil. When you drove by it was terrible.”

(Flip sidetracked on a few minute story about Jimmy C and his partner going south to make big bucks. Jimmy ditched his partner who was stranded, taking many months to work his way back. They were still friends.)

“Eventually, Jimmy sold his property. But before it was Bryant’s, Gordon Rennick had a brown shingle two story house set right on that spot. In back is where Rudy Klimple had a golf driving range in the about 5 acre hayfield back there.”

Interruption: The day before this program, someone put on Facebook a photo of the golf range building! It was the first time I have ever seen this photo. It is included in the newsletter. It would have been about where GNH is today.

Back to Flip:

“Rennick got the land nice and flat and smooth. Paul Willig took the hay off because Willig got a hay bailer. My dad and Paul were friends and we took the hay off taking the wagons of bales over to my house when I was a little guy. With the driving range, he put signs of 50 yards, 100 yards, and so on, indicating the distances on the golf driving range. The house became Reggie Clapper’s laundromat, visible at the bottom of the aerial photo.

“Back to the store: The store opened and I remember going in with my mom. Al Bryant opened the new store with two cash register and it was self-serve. Every other supermarket, and those markets in town, were not, never were. I would go with my mother when I was



Mid-1970s Bryants

little to Murphy Vaughn’s store. She would give him the list as he was standing by the door. She then left to get her drug stuff or whatever she needed. In the meantime, Murph was gathering list items off the shelf and my mom would go back to pick up her groceries.

“But not in Bryant’s new store. Everyone was talking about handling and picking up you own food and stuff, and that was never going to work. I was never aware of that difference until much later. But sure enough Al Bryant’s new method worked out just fine as we know today.

“Years went by and the Bryant’s acquired more property and he opened more stores, added on behind the original market.



“Across the street is Jim Mulligan's house. Just north of that was Dennis Statham's electronic repair. There also was a shop that sold collector bears. That space eventually became Lane's Café. All of that is vacant now. And next to that, just north was the Central Hudson building, erected in the 1950s.

“Below Mulligan's is the dog grooming business and also the hair-stylist. Before these, there were many other businesses over the years.

“One of them was a bakery. Recently passed away was Andy Marrone, of the M & M bakery. His father founded the business before moving it off site. Andy was a young man when he started. Some may remember Jimmy Danner had a car business or two there.

“Marrone and my dad played in the band together. In the summer, Marrone worked for Callanan Construction doing roads. They were were laid off all winter. We used to go visit him and watch him roll open the big oven doors and roll out all the loaves of bread by the dozens.”

Flip skipped the Chatterton house since it was done so well at the last Flip program by Connie Barrett.

Next was Jesse's Elm Shade, today the site of Greenwood Apartments. The apartments were the motel units. Chuck Jesse wonderfully detailed the history of the resort in August 2023 ([August 2023 Newsletter](#)).

Next is the Town Park. “It has grown into a beautiful setup - ball fields and such. It sits right next Country Estates. That build up necessarily has changed the makeup of Greenville. It took hayfields and turned into housing”

At this point, Flip stayed on the west side of Rt 32.

“Next is the Sherill house, or the Vanderbilt house. I remember a niece or grandniece to George Vanderbilt and a possible marriage to Carl Birmann from rainbow Lodge. (Then they eventually did split and he was running the bar which is now what they call Woodhouse Lodge.)

“After the big open lot, and the two small houses, is the big white house. In the '60s that was a Jansen house. After that it was Ma-

zera. It was a Mazera connection that got that narrow house next to it

“Then the Westerner. That started when I was young. It had garage sales, then clothing and Indian jewelry and all that kind of stuff. I think he tried a restaurant just before.

“The gold colored house was Marian Irving.”

(Side note: At some point, both Flip and I realized we really knew little about the houses from there to the school, begging for someone to add more stories, in case anyone out there is tempted.)

“There is the Stanger house. Been there a long time. Don't know too much more.”

“Skip a couple houses and the house with the locust trees in front. That was Mr. Moody. I don't know who owned a house before him but he bought the old 1834 house. I think it's the third one up from the school driveway. He had been forced-retired at age 70 from an insurance company. I remember him coming in to the barbershop and quite bitterly telling me that from right out of college he went to work from his Manhattan apartment and at age 70 it was mandatory retirement. He said that his job was his life, that's all he had, and it really tore him up. He actually got mad at the whole city and he moved up with his wife and bought that little place. But every day you could see him 8:00 sharp. He'd come out of his front door with his white shirt, white tie, and full suit on and he would stand there as kids walk by to school. As people would drive by he was a steady fixture there until 5 minutes to 9:00 when he would take his 5-minute walk down because Quackenbush opened their pharmacy at 9:00. He would go in and get his Wall Street Journal and then I watch him walk back up and never see him out the rest of the day. If he read that Wall Street Journal or how long he did, I do not know.”

(We stopped at school boundary and returned to Irving Road and the east side of Rt 32)

“The first two houses on Irving: one was the Byrnes house; cannot remember the name of the house closest to the corner.”

Heading south on Rt 32:

“There are three houses that look similar in construction but different colors. Fancher is one of the current residents, I believe. Again, do not have much about houses or people. Too new.

“Then comes several houses, all reached by driveways of varying length, one or two hard to see the length of the driveway. Flip remembered Ray Albin but not much more.”

A confession: At some point, Flip shrugged his shoulders and admitted he knew little about so much of the street in total. And I admitted I was in the same boat. So, if anyone wants to add stories about people and/or houses, email me.

Then came the main section of the older houses. The first one, across from the Westerner, is the Ron McGee house. We thought it was the Alice Moore house. If so, there was a past history that was getting fuzzy in the mists of time gone by.

And then comes the Muriel Falkey house. It seems she has always lived there until the last couple years although she still owns the house. Stories from the audience of Muriel as a teacher were told, fondly, as well as that of her husband, long deceased.

The Baumann house, with the historical marker in front, evoked stories of the Christmas craft shows that allowed people to do seasonal shopping as well as visit one of Greenville’s oldest houses.

The O’Keefe house, relatively new in the old scheme of things, evoked the family. The father was a Pioneer leader, the mother Lorraine taught at school at times, and some in the audience were friends with the children.

One connection with this past house to the next one, Father Clark’s house, was the marriage of neighbors – Kathy O’Keefe and Bill Clark, area residents for a long time before moving to New Hampshire. Father Clark served the area with his ministry at the Episcopal Church and still has a memory-connection with many. Flip thought the house might have been the barber Bill Neidlinger’s house.

Then came the Powell house, the second one north of the creek by the school. Ella Powell was remembered by many and the

Powell family, of course, is still a mainstay in the community.

The next building, the one next to the creek, is known as the Baumann house or the Vaughn house. This reminded us that names of places are fluid or, in this case, a combination. (I am reminded that the Teator house is also the Lusk house and the Phinney house. Two hundred years allows for such melding.)

Then comes the creek that starts behind Bryant’s and Griffin’s, wanders between Greenwood and Country Estates, wraps alongside the Rt 32 west side houses before crossing Rt 32 once again by the school’s upper driveway, goes around the Episcopal Church, crosses once again by the hot dog stand, enters the pond before crossing under Rt 81, and that will be part of Flip’s South Street memory program some year.

At this point, Flip went back and forth from side to side of Rt 32.

The school’s history is 90+ years in the making and is worth its own book. Wait! It does have its own book, and GLHG has spent many programs – entirely, partially, coincidentally – with our stories of the school. We let it go at that.

One of Greenville’s fascinating stories is the Rundell house across the street from the school. Originally, it sat in the front yard of today’s elementary school. It was moved in the early 1930s to its current site, taking two days for the moving job. That move has been documented in photos, one of the most interesting being the one showing the house sitting on Rt 32, partially blocking it, with the story of the family sleeping in the house that night, on Rt 32. Judy Rundell was present this evening to share in this story.

Next to the Rundell house is the Episcopal building, used for community and social events. Next to it is the Episcopal Church, with its own illustrious history. The stone for the church came from the Turon farm on Rt 26, as the story goes.

Next to the church but before the cemetery driveway sat a two story residence, now gone long enough that memories are hazy. Names of residents were suggested but needs more research now, even though it was not that long ago.

Across the street is the park complex, now composed of, north to south, the chapel (Boy Scout building), the Presbyterian Church (Prevost Hall), the Greenville Academy (the Greenville Library), and the iconic pond (still the pond). Each has a history long enough to fill a newsletter. Again, Flip was aware of each but not real personal stories to fill in many blanks.

Back across the road is the driveway to the cemetery. The thin lane of roadway disappears into a wealth of local history information of area residents who have their final resting place there. The cemetery is deserving of a program sometime.

The rescue squad building was once Felix Perkowski's residence and shop. He was well known as the watch repair place to go for many years. Memories of residents before him were difficult to muster.

Then comes one of Flip's epicenters – the former barber shop where Flip and his father plied their barbering trade for decades and from where Flip gained so much of his story base. His father Joe had cut hair on the site of today's post office before building the new barbershop. Included in this newsletter is a photo of Joe and Flip used in a local history calendar, along with the original caption. The building then became Mangold's Realty office and in recent years has changed business every couple years.

Before the barbershop was built, Wessel's Garage (Wessel's Blacksmith Shop) had sat on that site for a long time, showing in many an old photo of old Greenville. That barn-like structure was torn down in the 1950s, we believe, and made way for the current, much smaller building.

Then comes the driveway by the creek, leading back to the Stevens Store complex, today the fire house, and parking lots of Kelly's Pharmacy and the Tasting Lab. Tales of the stuff that used to flow down that stream are legendary, as



The Rundell House is halfway there—from the future school site to its current day site.

are the memories of flooding that seems to have been alleviated by the last bridge construction.

Of course, one of Flip's racier stories is of Bert Butler, one of Greenville's most noted story tellers, explaining why the stuff coming out of the fountain might not have been the purest quality, if you allow me to understate this time!



From 1998 calendar: ... the barbershop of Joe Flach (left) and son Philip (Flip). They have operated their barbershop, built in 1963, from the former Wessel's Garage. Joe started cutting hair in February 1948 in a shop attached to the Tydol-Veedol service station (currently the post office site) which was owned by his father-in-law Phil Schwebler. Joe had apprenticed under Bill Neidlinger who ran a barbershop in what is now Attorney Dale Doerner's office on Route 81 east. Flip, at age 16, apprenticed under his father and was licensed in 1968.

Finally, photos of the corner were presented. Before 1945, a scenic two story, clapboard, colonial house, with a picturesque white picket fence graced that corner, and has been shown several times on past calendars. Then Standard Oil had it torn down to make way for a gasoline and service station. After a few years' vacancy, Briggs and Wickes oversaw the major renovation into a corner restaurant. Today's incarnation is Tiny Diner.



Buildings left to right: corner house, printing shop, Wessel's Garage, and house by cemetery driveway (behind the trees)

And thus ended Flip's fourth program of his Extended Canvas of Greenville.

Flip, all of us thank you for gathering your memories of people and places, reminding us of so many good memories and at times pining for a way of life that did have its charm and advantages.

Flip is modest enough to know that many of you/us have stories that would fill in that blanks in his memory story. As Town Historian, I would encourage you to record some of these tales before they become lost in the haze of memory too far distant to remember.

August Program

Garth Bryant will present his program, The Iroquois in New York State, at the next Greenville Local History meeting on Monday, August 12, at 7:30.

Garth's premise: When the first European settlers came to upstate New York there was a powerful Indian Nation living here. They were the Iroquois, a confederation of five tribes. They had developed a system of representative government where each tribe had a vote in tribal decisions that was unlike anything else in the New World. We will explore how over the next 200 years the Iroquois interactions with the Europeans would lead them to their greatest heights of power but ultimately almost total destruction in New York State.

dt note: A map is included. For some of us, the last time we heard about Iroquois, if schooled in NYS, was seventh grade. For me, that meant my teacher was Helen Brown.

—Thank you, Stephanie and Christine, for the light refreshments. You continue to dazzle us with your ever changing cookie creations and types!

—Deb Teator noted the current artist exhibited in Community Room, as well as reminding people about Clematis membership.

