

Greenville Local History Group Newsletter

September 1994

Share Session

The post-summer doldrums certainly was not in effect at the September 12th share session. Maybe the cooler, crisper air of the last couple weeks energized the nearly twenty people who once again turned out.

The obvious headline was the 1995 calendar. Available at Bryant's, the Pharmacy, the Library, the Freehold Country Store, and At The Crossroads, the calendar is also available to members at a dollar off the regular price at the meetings or by contacting Don.

Don had brought a copy of the Guilderland calendar, one that coupled an old picture with a current picture of the same setting. Discussion followed about using the same idea for one of our calendars.

Amongst this discussion, Ray Bennett was "cracking" riddles from an obviously worn little booklet and then challenged us to guess the source. It turned out to be a gift from a Crackerjack box.

Betty Vaughn brought a folder full of goodies. Among the items were:

- past Catskill Valley Historical Society annual reports
- a 1981 GCS newsletter featuring Scott Ellis
- the centennial history of the United Greenville & Norton Hill Methodist Church
- two GCS high school playbills
- a 1983 elementary playbill
- the 1982 Service of Thanksgiving for Richard Clark
- the In Memory flier for the A. J. Cunningham museum
- the 1985 Apron Presentation program for Ronald Fisher
- a 1982 Testimonial Dinner program for John Earl
- the 1963 Ordination program for Clement Hulick
- the 1959 Ordination program for Rev. Charles Rice
- a 1985 Presbyterian Church program

- a 1980's description of GCS's memorial prizes
- a 1963 bill from Oak Hill's Farmers' Fire Insurance Association
- two tickets to the 1970 All-Star GCS' junior & senior classes
- three newspaper clippings of local interest
- two pictures (the Masonic Vaughns, OES)

Notice was redrawn to Cris Ketcham's contribution of excerpts of Orrin Stevens' diary which was combined with some Stevens' family history notes compiled by Harriet Rasmussen. In addition, Cris showed the contents of a folder brought last month that contained several programs & fliers dealing with GCS' FFA program.

Harriet, of course, has forged on with the Taylor diary. Trying a different tack, Harriet summarized the year of 1886. She listed many of the places traveled to, the different jobs done, the family status of all the family members, the trip to Rhode Island, etc. Possibly the text of the summary could be typed for an upcoming newsletter. Harriet also detailed recent Taylor correspondence which was inquiring whether the Taylors of the diary were related. And just to make sure we don't think the diary doesn't consume all her time, Harriet brought her Cairo school memento album which contained tens of clippings, programs and pictures from her school days at Cairo.

Notice was again drawn to the Edna Zivelli's contribution of the Freehold Church Cook Book which was produced earlier this century.

To top off the evening Don showed the following items:

- brochures from Shepards, Balsam Shade and Pine Lake Manor
- the current Altamont Fair place mat
- the Little Old Church post card (given by Regina Peck)
- the 50th anniversary D-Day celebration in Greenville (given by Chris McDonald)

In addition, notice was given that Don had

taped several people in August, among whom were Toot & Betty Vaughn, Regina Peck, Burdette Griffin, and John Zivelli.

Don also showed the probable pictures for the 1996 calendar. Discussion followed about the propriety of including a picture showing a mid-1950's minstrel show at the school which showed the cast members with blackened faces. Concerns about sensitivity were raised. By meeting's end, general feeling was that the GLHG should not reproduce this picture but would wait to make a final decision in November, pending further input from readers of this newsletter. If you have an opinion, and won't be at the November meeting, relay your opinion to someone who will be there.

Don also "blamed" Harriet about not warning him enough about the addicting powers of diary transcription. Five years (1886-1890) of the Truman and Carrie (Spalding) Ingalls has been transcribed by Don who shared the general scope and process of the transcription. More details will be available in November.

Thus ended a very busy night.

Other notes:

* The next program, tentatively planned, is called "The Chroniclers of Greenville", featuring those people who write regular columns about Greenville. Agreeing to come are Chris McDonald, Kathie Williams, and (not likely due to recent illness, but agreeing if able) maybe Phil Ellis. What do they write about? How do they fill a section each week?

* The idea of a March get-together should be discussed, probably in November. We could have an informal dinner-meeting if enough people want to participate. The leading choices so far are: 1) a covered dish meal, probably held at the Norton Hill church hall, or 2) a dinner at a local restaurant. What's your opinion? Would you come? or do we start our regular season in April as planned?

* 1995 is the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II, and some are considering the idea of a WWII program. If we do it, what could be included in the program? Bring ideas to the November meeting.

* If you need calendars, either for yourself or if you're trying to sell them, give me a call.

* Ask Ray for more Crackerjack riddles for next meeting.

* The Rensselaerville Historical Society will present a program featuring Floyd Harwood who has documented the restoration as well as participating in the restoration of a grist mill. A pot luck dinner at 6 pm precedes the program at the Methodist UCC hall.

* I received in the mail these inquiries. If you know anything, feel free to write.

++ Wilma Libertucci, 13 Central Ave., Ravena, NY 12143

WL wants information on her grandfather Lawrence Jackson, who died about 1920-1922. He lived in Norton Hill and is buried in the Greenville Cemetery

++ Mrs. Pat Schiraldi, 36 Fox Run Road, Madison, CT 06443

PC wants information about her great-great-grandfather John Eaton, born about 1812 in Greenville/Coxsackie. He married Emmaline Parks. He served in the 80th NY Infantry. He moved in with his son Sylvanus of New Baltimore and died in 1876 and buried at Ches Lawn? in New Baltimore.

++ Dorothy A. Dumbleton, PO Box 436, Pavilion, NY 14525

DD wants information about Silas Bullock who was in Greenville in 1810 & 1830. His wife Mary (Polly) Drake moved to Genesee County in the 1830's.

* Finally, you will find a copy of Harriet's piece on entertainment in Greenville, at least the way Harriet experienced it.



→ 9.21
SORRY!
ALREADY!
PAST AS YOU
RECEIVE
THIS.

Entertainment Through the Years

Harriet Rasmussen

When I started to think about this topic, it became apparent to me that I recall more about work than I do about entertainment, but I will try.

My life in Greenville covers three different time periods or stages. One stage was when I was six. Our new baby sister had died in February and Mother wasn't well so my sister and I spent a summer at our Grandparents home on Ingalside Road. The second stage was in the 1940's when I came to work for my Aunt & Uncle at Balsam Shade. In 1954, when my husband was transferred to Greenville, I moved here for good.

While I was at my Grandma's and Grandpa's during the summer of 1931, we actually didn't go anywhere for pleasure. All our fun times were right there on the farm. You might say we made our own fun. I was a paper doll freak and could spend hours at that. The problem was I had only one small set. But Grandma would let us cut the Montgomery Ward catalog to make our own dolls. We played square dancing on the big barn floor. One of our favorite things to do was to sit in the four seated wing and sing songs. Aunt Ruth, who was seven years older than I, led us in song and she taught us all the popular songs from the Civil War and World War I. "Tenting Tonight" and "It's a Long, Long Way to Tipperary" rang out over the hill a lot those days.

On Sundays, other cousins came with their parents for a visit. We would line up on the hill on the front lawn and Aunt Ruth would stand at the bottom calling, "Red Rover, Red Rover, let (name) come over." Such running and squealing went on those days.

Sometimes, if Grandma wasn't too tired, we would put up the little sewing table and she would teach us card games like "Flinch" and "Old Maid." Grandpa would go to the cellar for a bowl of apples to enhance the pleasure of the evening. At that time, they were still using oil lamps so no one stayed up late.

My Grandpa never had a car. In fact, I

don't think he ever had a driver's license. But, I remember once Uncle Evans had a car with a rumble seat. We loved that but Grandma, after our first ride to Ingalside, wouldn't let us go again because she said he went too fast. Probably so!

I remember once there was a circus on the land where Mary's Restaurant is now and Uncle Max took me to it. All I seem to recall is the cub bear chained to a stake.

The next time I came to Greenville to live was in the summer of 1943. I had been ill and couldn't work. Everyone in my family was at work all day and I was home alone. I had just turned 18 and the days were lonely; I came to Balsam Shade for a week. I ended up staying all summer until it was time for college to start. Subsequently, I came back every summer to waitress and chambermaid through the summer of 1946.

In those days there was a lot of entertainment right on the premises. It was wartime and movies were a big thing. We had the latest movies three nights a week. Two nights a week we had dances with a local band and the dance floor was always full. It seemed to be a great release from the cares of war time.

One night a week we had a talent show and some of the guests showed real talent. A few times over the summer, we had bathing beauty contests at the pool. People wore whatever crazy costume they could concoct and there was a lot of both antics and laughter.

Sometimes when we felt we wanted to get away, we would walk to Vanderbilt Theatre where we would stand in line to get a seat. There was a patch of woods from (now) Bryant's to Jesse's Elm Shade. We would always run past that stretch. They didn't have any big lights like we have today and, on the way home, it was even darker - and we ran faster.

On a rare occasion we would go to the Cabin which was a milder, more peaceful place in those days. I say it was a rare occasion because some of us were college students and we were really tight with our money - putting everything in the bank for Fall tuition. And we had all the

free entertainment we really needed at the boarding house.

They used to schedule softball games, some mornings, between Shepard's guests and those Balsam Shade. A lot of the people, on either side, had no experience and wanted the four of us waitresses to play. They would offer, on that day, to make their own beds and clean their own rooms if we would come out and play. We had a waitress named Evy who could really send the ball across the plate and the rest of us could hit pretty well. That lasted for four or five weeks until Mrs. Shepard made a phone call to Aunt Vangie saying she didn't want us waitresses to play anymore. So our ball playing days were kaput.

On occasion we would go to East Durham square dancing but morning came early so that was only a "sometime" thing.

In 1954 I was back in Greenville as a permanent resident. Our activities as young parents centered around school, Cub Scouts, Little League, etc. There didn't seem to be time or a need for other entertainment. We always took in the county fairs. I remember going a few times to the Vanderbilt Theatre when the summer stock group was there. Faculty and student plays

and musical concerts were always good entertainment.

And there was the "age of the snowmobile." My husband won a snowmobile suit at a raffle so we just "had to get a machine." At night we would go out riding the fields and woods trails behind our house. Most times there were three or four other couples. Sometimes the whole group would eat at one house and then ride. The snowy woods at night were unbelievably beautiful.

In summer our entertainment centered pretty much around Crystal Lake in Rensselaerville. We all enjoyed camp life and it was a time which afforded us a lot of wonderful memories.

In later years I used to look forward to Saturday night auction. Earlier we used to attend the auctions at the Durham Auction Barn. It was a social time visiting with the same people every week. I made so many nice friends who are in touch with me now.

After a year of no outside entertainment, I am looking forward to getting back in the swing of it. Everyone needs entertainment to help us forget the cares of the day!