

# Greenville Local History Group Newsletter

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Stanley Maltzman - Artist Profile

The June program featured one of our area's best known artists - Stanley Maltzman of Freehold. Fittingly, as he spoke, a glowing sunset developed behind Stanley as he described the scenes of nature from which he gathers his ideas and strength.

After a couple notes (notice of the Leeds home tour, introductions), the meeting began. Stanley introduced his new book and illustrated his style, topics for sketches, and preferences with numerous references to his book (which was available this night, and is available at bookstores or from Stanley). The book (*Drawing Nature*, North Light Books, Cincinnati) is meant to, to steal a phrase or two from the jacket, learn to choose a subject wisely, plan the drawing's format and style to express your feelings, and to improvise to capture the mood of the moment. The book demonstrates different techniques and materials, as well as giving advice and instruction on sketching the elements of outdoor scenes.

The chapter titles suggest the range of the book: drawing tools & equipment, getting the most from your pencil, composing your picture, trees, clouds, snow, barns & grass & rocks & water, drawing nature in various mediums, and tips on storing and framing your drawings. The book is chocked full of instructions and useful hints in using pencil.

Stanley emphasized the importance of the paper used, especially after the beginning stage. In addition, the type of pencil is a key element. Finally, after accounting for all these parts, Stanley allowed us to see how his talent has shaped his life's work.

Of interest to local historians is our familiarity with Stanley's topics. His sketching of buildings, especially barns, has recorded buildings, a few of which no longer stand. And of course, Stanley's objects of nature are ones we all recognize, but are still fascinated by the detail and reality we see in his work.

Stanley noted that art was not one of the strengths as a child. In fact, one relative suggested that Stanley look for another line of work. Eventually, Stanley gained a number of accounts in commercial advertising but gradually decided he had had enough of that world and set out to do something he liked - drawing nature. He would stay, in his early days up here, at Pleasant View Lodge on weekends. Later he would set up a gallery near Freehold's four corners

and finally built a house about a half mile east of Freehold on a knoll that commands a classic view of the Catskill escarpment, from the Durham hills to Windham High Peak to Blackhead to North Point.

My own experience with Stanley was as a kid bicycling up the dusty dirt road, Big Woods Road, as this artist sat near the giant white oak in the Shaw front yard (today's Sinkway residence, the tree still stands), peering as unobtrusively as I could and invited by Stanley to take a closer look.

Stanley answered a range of questions for the last half hour. He gave credit to his wife Rachel for her help and tolerance (especially after quitting a well-paying job so that he could draw nature up in the country), fretted a little about a complaint about his dog, noted the artists' workshops at Greenville Arms, and re-affirmed the beauty he and all of us see in the nature that is Greenville and its environs.

Thank you, Stanley.

Sincerely,



Reminder:

- 1. Our next meeting is a share session on July 10th. If you've found something, or have been working on something, bring it.
- 2. Following this part is a copy of Harriet's account of 1890, as she sees it in the Taylor diaries. 1886 and 1888 have recently been included in past newsletters.

The Richard Taylor Diary - 1890  
Harriet Rasmussen, transcriber

The winter of 1890 proves to be a hard one for the older members of the family and once again, Howard's name appears in a big share of the entries.

On January 8, 1890, R. Edwin is sick in bed with what he calls a heavy cold. He has suffered from asthma and rheumatism for some years now. George Allen is still the hired man and he does the errands like paying the taxes at East Durham, delivering beef, butter and eggs, etc., to Catskill. Beef is now 5¢ a lb. and eggs 16¢ a dozen.

By January 17th, Louisa is also ill but she seems to make a better recovery. On January 22, a Mr. Hitchcock stops overnight with cure-all to sell. He goes on his way the next morning leaving some of his medicine in payment for the nights lodging. If R.E. tried it, it must not have helped because on January 24th his hoarseness and lameness are worse. He has been up a bit but seems to have a relapse. On February 1st, Dr. Safford calls and gives him medicine which causes him to write on the following day, "My medicine has operated and I can breathe better than for a long time and begin to expectorate freely - have lain abed all day."

The following day he is still abed and writes a letter to his oldest son Howard. Howard had left home to go West in April of 1879. He made his first trip home for sister Isabelle's marriage to George Allen in December of 1883. But he has been back in the West for over six years and this is the first reference to Howard in a very long time.

I think R.E. Taylor, in poor health at this time, and anxious about the arrival of spring and what that means to a farmer, has written Howard asking him to come home and help out. There appears to be another reason for this action because, on January 22nd, the entry reads, "George and Belle have gone over the mountain today." and on February 4th, "George and Belle came back - did not take the farm." George and Belle now have children aged six, four and nearly one year; and if one reads between the lines, they are looking for a place of their own. And since George is R.E.'s hired man, his loss on this farm would be sorely felt. Son Dwight has just turned 22 but this is too big a farm for him alone.

During the month of February, the entries contain the names of those who come to call on an old friend. Some days, R.E. sits up a little but he is very weak.

By the beginning of March, R.E. is out some and able to drive to East Durham. He writes, "George and Belle have gone up to clean their house." Like with so many other entries, you are left guessing and watching for clues. Apparently George and Belle have found a house but I have never been able to figure out where. Her father lets Belle have \$15.00 for crockery and chairs. On March 17th, George moves a load of household goods and on March 19th, he moved his family. A few days later, Dwight and Mary take a cow to Belle. This seems to be a tradition because, as the subsequent daughters moved to their own house, they too are given a cow.

Now, with the absence of George, Elmer Taylor, R.E.'s nephew, comes and works to help out. He is the same age as his cousin Dwight.

On March 26th, a letter come from Howard but there is no mention of what it says. This is very typical of Taylor's diary entries. You have to do your own detective work and often must wait until events unfold. In this case, we learn later that the letter must have said that Howard was coming because on April 1st, in a light fall of snow,

he arrives. And on the following day, they pick up his trunk at the R.R. Station at Cairo. And so, they settle down to the routine of plowing and preparing the ground for planting. On April 18th, they plant the first 3½ bushels of oats and on April 19th, it freezes ice. On May 19th, they start to plant the first corn.

Elmer Taylor seems only to be interim help until Howard arrives; because there is no more mention of him - not even a mention of his being paid. However, there is a sad post script which I have learned about the life of Elmer.

Sometime in 1896, the Ousterhouts's of East Durham send a message to R.E. Taylor to come and see about Elmer - who is apparently living with them. R.E. and Dwight go and find "Elmer fairly out of his mind." His uncle, makes arrangements and delivers him to an asylum. In one of our file scrapbooks I have discovered the following account:

1902 - Elmer Taylor, only son of Mrs. Wm. Taylor and brother of Mrs. Frank Sanford, died Tuesday in the State Hospital at Poukeepsie, where he has been an inmate to six years. He was 34 yrs old. His remains were brought here on Thursday where the funeral was held on Saturday in his boyhood home, Rev. Mackey of Freehold officiating. He left many friends, when it was necessary that he should enter the Hospital, and who mourn that the life which began with such bright prospects was thus stricken in the bloom of manhood.

The summer of 1890 brought the usual cutting of hay, buckwheat and rye. Nearly the whole month of October was spent in picking apples, putting them in barrels and drawing them to Cairo to be sent to New York City. And there were the usual loads of straw drawn to Cairo. In November, the men were often in the barn husking corn. While transcribing the fall entries every year since 1869, I have made mental images of the men and boys busy at this yearly task. When the fire monitor, on October 14, 1993, announced that the big barn on the Lawton Farm was afire, those images became suddenly and eerily real to me again.

On Christmas Day, 13 inches of snow fell and the last days of 1890 were spent breaking roads.

The January 5th entry for 1891 read: "Commenced to snow last even and continues yet. Howard took Mary to Greenville to the Academy to school this morning and left \$10.00 with her to pay tuition." He "engaged her board at Dr. Geo. Smith's at \$2.50 per week. The snow about 6 inches."

And so, a new year begins with the number of people in the house down to four - at least during the week. George and Belle and three children have moved. Addie is teaching in New Baltimore and 16 year old Mary is now away at school. But the numbers change on weekends when everyone come home. And they will change again in early February, when Howard gets restless and leaves for the West again.