

# Greenville Local History Group Newsletter

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Share Session

About a dozen came out on a pleasant September evening to the share session. Present were Cris Ketcham, Alice Roe, Ron Golden, Connie Teator, Toot Vaughn, Betty Vaughn, Dorothy Howard, Jeanne Bear, Dot Blenis, Harriet Rasmussen, and Don Teator.

The attention-getter of the night was the 1996 calendar. Its cover sporting a reproduction of a Stanley Maltzman sketch, the 1996 calendar shows the Main Street A&P, the police force, a car stuck in mud, Freehold Store, Balsam Shade, a GFA baseball team, students of the Academy, a Norton Hill house, the Surprise school house, Vern Smith's saw mill, Stanley Ingalls and his new truck, and the Old Timers Christmas Party. The inside back cover recognizes Maltzman's career. It's hard to describe the calendar when looking at it does such a better job.

The calendar is available at Bryant's, the Pharmacy, the Library, and the Freehold Country Store for six dollars. Calendars can be bought directly at meetings for five dollars (or arrange a visit to Don's house). Instead of the usual 500 copies ordered and having almost 100 left over, I ordered 375. Thus, I suspect I will be out of calendars by November and calendars will be available only at the places mentioned above. Call me to save you whatever you need before I run out of calendars.

Harriet read a summary of the Taylor diary for 1892, which is reprinted later in this newsletter. A thank you goes to Harriet for his constant contributions.

Don hogged the rest of the evening with the following items:

- The latest Greene County Historical Journal was shown, with its feature on Surprise and Result. Ray Beecher wrote the Surprise article, with oral history from Gordon and Dorothy Blenis included. Anne Foster wrote the Result article,

based in large part to oral history from Lillian Weeks.

- Don showed a 1995 publication, *Bicentennial of County of Schoharie*, a 52 page booklet with a short write-up of each hamlet in the county, mixed with about 100 photos.

- Also shown was the monograph - *The Houghtalings: A Dutch-American Family*, written by Ray Beecher. This is part of a bicentennial project for Greene County (18800-2000), with a monograph written each year up to the bicentennial.

- Don brought in a recent insert of the local papers that noted the centennial of the village of Tannersville. This was a 12 page insert, chocked with advertising and several articles on village history.

- Don & Debra had gone to the Best house on Clauverwie Road in Middleburgh and viewed the Dr. Christopher S. Best Medical Exhibit. It's as if one were stepping back into the early 1900's with household items and goods representing many of the early decades left when the last resident died and willed it to the town. The brochure lists hours until September. Sounds like next year will be your best bet.

The last item of the night was a slide show created by Don featuring Greenville's history as revealed by its historical markers. A distant shot and a close-up of each was shown. For those of you wondering how many are there, the list below will help answer that.

- the formation of Greenville - south side of pond
- Academy - front of library
- Drake & oil - front of library
- Academy organization - front of library
- Prevost manor - 1½ mi west of Greenville
- early King farm - King Hill Road
- Talmage / Atwater families - front of Baumann residence, Rt. 32
- Spees, early settler - near corner of Irving Rd
- Knowles, early settler - Carelas' hill

- Lake, early settler - near Balsam Shade
- early school house - corner of Irving & Rt. 32
- Dr. Ely - CR 38, Newry
- Miller & tannery - CR 38, Newry
- Brandy Hill - by Pine Lake Manor
- Stevens family - in front of Orrin Stevens' on Rt. 26
- Hickok grist mill - ¾ mile up Basic Creek from Rt. 81

Another marker noting the site of a Knowles gristmill between Freehold and Greenville has been missing for years.

The usual chatting and looking over material followed before calling it a night.

Other notes:

1. The next program will be my summary of the Ingalls' diary - 1913-1919. The fourteen page summary will be mixed with some slides, and Harriet will help out with some reading in case I get winded. October 9th is the date.
2. Calendar mail orders are available for \$7.00 per calendar.

3. Last year about this time, we had committed to having a March pot luck dinner. If some one wants to take charge, let me know by the end of the year so I can put notice in the annual report. Otherwise, we'll start with a share session in April.

4. Glory, glory. I've found a transcriber of audio tapes! Tracy Boomhower is doing a couple of tapes; an Albany woman, Georgia Damino, who contacted me through Diane Eckert, has done or is doing the remaining ten tapes. Some of you know that I have not been able to bring myself to take time to transcribe tapes when so many other interesting things were out there to do. For a while, I was afraid they would be buried with me. A thank you goes to Diane for spotting my plea in a couple newsletters; I'll bring in the transcriptions for the November meeting.

Sincerely,



### The Taylor Diary - 1892

*Harriet Rasmussen - transcriber, storyteller*

It is now January of 1892 and like the others in this region, the Taylor family is in their yearly battle with the elements. Much time this month is spent drawing wood. R.E. Taylor has hired Burton Goodfellow for ½ month, specifically, for that reason. Rheumatism is taking its toll on the elder Taylor and he speaks often of his lameness and his need to stay out of the cold.

A sort of bonus comes with the hiring of Burton. R.E. Taylor has been trying for some time to sell Charles Taylor's house. His brother has now settled in Liberty, Oregon. Now, Burton Goodfellow buys the farm for \$1000 cash; and on April 2nd, R.E. pays James Stevens \$1.50 for recording the deed. It seems to be a relief not to have the responsibility of renting and repairing the house and tilling the land on an extra farm.

On Jan. 19th, Seward Goodfellow (Burton's son) comes to stay all night. R.E. hires him for 8 months at \$20 per month. He is to start April 1st and is to husk corn evenings in the fall. Each fall, after long days of apple picking and harvesting of rye and oats, the men are in the barn husking corn. I think of the earlier diaries and I have a mental picture of a young R.E. and his small son Howard husking the corn alone. In those earlier years, he notes how many ears they husk each night.

In January, Mary is still living at Dr. Smith's and attending the Academy. She finishes her studies and, on Feb. 29th of this leap year, she has her first teaching job at the school house built on the corner of their farm (now Doerfer). She is paid \$4.50 and presumably, lives at home, since that has always been the boarding place of the teachers before her. So now there are two teachers in the house; on May 7th, "The girls went to Greenville to attend the

Drill." (for teachers) Addie is still teaching at Centreville and it keeps one of the men and the horses busy seeing that both the youngest and oldest daughters are transported home week-ends. That load gets heavier when, on Oct 1st, Mary goes to "make a bargain with David Horton to teach 5 months at \$5.50 per week." He had come in September to hire her to teach at Woodstock. And who could resist the "1.00 in pay"?

At the end of January, R. Edwin Taylor goes to Cairo and visits the Poor House where he bargains to sell his pork for 5¢ per lb. and two hind quarters of the heifer for 6¢ per lb. Veal is 7¢. On Feb. 1st, he pays Goodrich 50¢ to butcher the poor critters and on Feb. 2nd, he and his neighbor, George Cunningham, deliver the goods.

The last day of January, George and Belle come down to visit. Apparently Percy, now 8 years old, stays for a visit with his grandparents and on Feb. 7th is sick enough to need Dr. Safford. By Feb. 15th, Louisa is also sick and they send for Belle to help. Louisa does not improve, in spite of frequent visits from the doctor. They call in widowed sister-in-law Polly Taylor so that Belle can go home to her other two children. By the middle of March, Louisa seems to be on her feet again, but by that time, R.E. is in and out of his bed suffering with his rheumatism. Seward Goodfellow comes on about ten days early to begin his hired man's duties.

I'm not sure where George and Belle have been living since they moved from the homestead. References to their visits always say, "George and Belle came down" but on March 28th, the entry reads, "George Allen has the team to move." And on March 29th, "Dwight went to move a load for George." This may be their move to Hensonville, where Ruth and Ethel Allen were born in 1897 and 1899. These two granddaughters would become the last of the Taylor family to occupy R.E. Taylor's farm home.

The plowing and planting begins in early April even though the weather is cold and windy. On April 11th, the entry reads, "Snow squalls today. Seward has planted potatoes in garden and back of barn." On April 12th, he puts in onions and peas. By April 18th, they are sowing oats. Beginning with April 25th, it freezes ice ½

inch thick three nights in a row.

On May 1st, the entry reads, "Seward and I went to Palenville to see the R.R. up the mountain and it is quite a site to view." This must be a reference to the Otis Elevated.

May 16th is the beginning of a dispute with his neighbor. He writes, "Seward and I went to build fence on line between me and Barlow and Joe came and forbid me." On June 18th, the entry reads, "A.C. Cowles came down to look over my line on flat and is going to see what the law is in regards to my rights." Alanson C. Cowles was a lawyer from Durham. We will have to watch in future diaries to see how this is resolved.

On May 23rd, the assessor comes around and lowers the assessment \$100. It is now \$3400 on which R.E. pays \$10.76 school tax. They do their yearly work on the road and things seem to be improving along that line. Apparently there is now a road machine because on May 24th, he pays Oscar Gibson 50¢ towards building a shelter for it. And he must feel generous enough in June to donate 50¢ to help Mrs. Grant "who has lost her cow."

After selling two of the Mowing Machines last year, R.E. feels it is time to own one himself. It arrives in June and he tries it out in July. By July 22nd, they have drawn in 22 loads of hay and R.E. declares the haying done. Then the reaping of oats begins and by Aug. 9th that too is done. The threshers will not arrive until fall. Also, in the fall the representative for the Mowing Machine Co. visits but R.E. does not take the agency for the next year. No reason is given. Perhaps he feels he has exhausted his prospects for sales.

Summer boarders once again seek country air and ambiance - and they are paying \$6.00 a week board. Their arrival precipitates the familiar trips to places like Shady Glen, Mount Pisgah, and the Mountain House. And summer means picnics and fairs for both family and boarders. Aug. 22nd, "Seward carried all the boarders to Cooksburg PicNic." And on Aug. 31st, "the boys went to Cairo Fair and carried the boarders and Addie." Sept. 15th, "The girls have taken Miss McGarry to Lambs Corners to Pic Nic."

All the coming and going of boarders necessitates repeated trips, by various family

members, to Cairo where they pick up their people from the train station. On Aug. 10th they must have needed two wagons because both R.E. and Seward go after "19 boarders and 2 children."

And on Aug. 11th he writes, "Paid Will Winans 75¢ for his wagon yesterday." And so we know how it was that he is able to transport so many people.

We learn about the biggest fair visit of the year when the Sept. 21st entry begins, "Mary carried Louisa and I to Cairo to go to Albany Fair. (Presumably by train) Purchased suit of clothes at Cohn and overcoat - \$19.50. Put up overnight at the Mansion House, Broadway, Albany." The following day, they pay the \$3.00 bill at the Mansion House and go to "look over the fair." They take the train back to Catskill but it is too late to catch the train from there to Cairo. They pay "2.00 to be carried to Cairo by horse and buggy, where they stay with friend Burr Vaughn overnight. In the morning, they pay Geo. Hedges another 75¢ for a ride as far as the iron bridge. I think this may mean the bridge by Barlows from which they could walk home. In any case, this trip to the fair seemed to have its added expenses.

R. Edwin is still involved with his political offices and duties. He is still Justice of the Peace trying numerous cases. On Aug. 21st, he is called to Cairo on Board of Health business and in the afternoon, he meets with the Board of Health at Durham about the smallpox case. Political affairs liven up in the fall and on Oct 1st, he is elected president of the Democratic Club. On Oct 8th, "Went to Cairo to Convention and

then to East Durham to Democratic Club meeting." On Oct. 10th, he meets Town Board to sign election notices at Oak Hill and make out report for Board of Supervisors. On Nov. 6, he rides up to Platt Mott's to "have a talk on politics." On Nov 8th, he spends the day at election.

In October, R.E. comments that Dwight is having trouble with his teeth and although he doesn't mention it, apparently he is having some problems too. On Oct. 20th, he and Dwight come to Greenville where Dr. George Smith pulls five teeth for him and two for Dwight. Not much is made of it because the following day, Dwight is carrying "30 Bush. Buckwheat to Deans Mill to be floured" and R.E. is picking up chestnuts.

By the middle of November, they have drawn in 46 loads of pumpkins. He sells a load on Nov. 19th for \$1.00.

On Dec. 20th, it appears that they are getting ready for the Christmas trade. He writes, "Miss McWilliams paid \$1.50 for a gander and we killed 7 geese. It took all day to do it." On Dec. 22nd, "Dwight carried the geese and butter to Catskill - Rec'd pay for geese \$8.06."

As the year draws to a close the weather is extremely cold and blustery. Between his attacks of asthma and his bouts of lameness, R.E. can not tolerate the bitter weather and he is not able to attend the funeral at Freehold of his friend George Clark. Louisa and Dwight represent the family. It is a time to steel oneself against the elements and, on the last day of 1892, Dwight and his father go to Catskill with produce and they pay \$10.00 for a stove for the sitting room. A look ahead into the 1893 diary tells me they will need it.