

Greenville Local History Group Newsletter

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Thurston and Betty Vaughn

About a dozen of us came out on a pleasant evening (Excuse the sidetrack, but pleasant is relative. Even if this spring has been downright cool, 50° in May sure beats 38° in April, even if it should be 50° in April and 65° in May!).

In attendance were Harriet Rasmussen, Jeanne Bear, Alice Roe, Chris McDonald, Rosemary Lambert, Ron Golden, Len & Claribel Gardiner, Phyllis Beechert, Kathy Williams, Toot & Betty Vaughn, and Don Teator.

The program for the night was Toot and Betty Vaughn and their lifetime experiences, especially as it relates to Greenville.

There was too much said to write now, and sometime I'll transcribe the tape for content and share it in a newsletter.

For now, generally, Toot told how the Vaughns settled in the Greenville area (Red Mill Road area) and eventually on North Street in Greenville. Betty started in Grapeville and eventually spent most of her growing up years in South Westerlo. The two met and would raise their family in South Westerlo.

Toot recounted who lived where on North Street, which meant sidetracking stories, and on we went.

This account is kept somewhat short since, if I got going, I could fill four pages. I'll do that later in the year.

Keep in touch, and keep working on some project,



Other notes:

1. The next meeting, June 9, is a share session. I'll bring back the goodies box that Kathy Williams saved from Phil Ellis' "collection". There are plenty of school pictures that need identifying, and I'll bring the other school pictures I have, most of which need identification. So, come on out (especially Toot and Len, for the older pictures), and be ready to identify people.
2. It is with sadness we heard of Marge Bennett's death, and we all extend our sympathy to Ray.
3. Following is Harriet's account of the Taylor diary, 1859.

More Greene County Gleanings....

Friday, Feb. 7, 1997

Abraham Lott simply blew it. Had this New York merchant-banker cooperated more fully with the extra-legal Revolutionary liberals gradually assuming control of the colony as it moved toward statehood, the township of Greenville would probably carry the name of "Lottsana" today. That was the geographical label Lott tried to affix to the Prevost Patent.

Readers should recall that Augustine Prevost Jr., his father, as well as his uncles were Swiss professional soldiers hiring out to the English Crown. They were part of the reason for the downfall of French Canada. Subsequent to that armed conflict known as the French and Indian War, together with other officers and enlisted men, the group was awarded thousands upon thousands undeveloped acreage in an effort to enhance the settlement of North America. The Prevost Patents in the township of Greenville came in 1764. Of the millions of acres secured by the Prevosts only the Greenville Patents survived the Revolutionary War. When Leonard Bronk was preparing the Coxsackie Assessment Roll for the Unimproved Lands in the township of Coxsackie then stretching westward to the Schoharies, he indicated the owner was Abraham Lott. Considering the fact that the Prevosts actively fought against the Americans, it would have seen that Lott's claim was a valid one, he being "in the know" at that time in New York.

Appointed the official treasurer of New York Colony in the year 1767, Abraham Lott cultivated political connections with the then conservative royal government and its supporters. At the time of his appointment the revenue collected to run the colony came from four sources, money collected on the local level but sooner or later reaching Abraham Lott at the top. It has been estimated that such governmental costs in the year 1773 came to 17,567 pounds or which 5,000 came from the interest on funds loaned out, 6,000 from import and export duties, and 6,567 from fines, fees, licenses, etc.

Like others of this period in history, Abraham Lott also had other "irons in the fire," one being the vicitualing of British ships at anchor in New York's harbor. Even with open conflict occurring after Ticonderoga, Lexington and Concord, Lott was reluctant to give up such profitable contracts, continuing to provide bread, meat, flour, salt, butter and rum to such ships as "Asia," "Nautilus," and "King's Fisher." Lott's trading was carefully watched by the Revolutionary Provincial Congress who continued to demand of Lott lists of such supplies furnished the potential enemy together with related financial records. Finally, in exasperation, they ordered merchant-banker Abraham Lott to "cease and desist" from such commercial activity.

As the armed conflict with Britain widened, even before the Declaration of Independence, the need for money to purchase military supplies and to pay the military enlistees grew. This needed revenue at first came from loans by the more affluent of the colony, they receiving promissory notes in exchange; Abraham Lott was tapped for 200 pounds on May 31, 1775. The Provincial Congress also called upon treasurer Lott to meet other needs such as 700 pounds to assist Colonel Ten Broeck and Richard Swart. Next Abraham Lott was faced with an Ulster County request from Egbert Dumond for an order on the colonial treasury to finance the purchase of flour to be shipped to Albany.

Provincial finances continued to deteriorate, so much so that the Revolutionary government continued to harass its treasurer for assistance, Lott being either unwilling or unable to meet those financial demands. No one, other than Lott, had any idea of the balance in the colony's treasury. Finally on Feb.

21, 1776, the New York Provincial Congress appointed a special committee of four for the purpose of examining Lott's records and reporting back as to the amount of the funds under his control. Apparently this committee was equally unsuccessful and finally on March 9, 1776 he was given 30 days to report and at the same time the Provincial Congress made certain no more public revenues would pass through his hands.

Ignoring the latest deadline with such excuses as the condition of his gout and "a wounded wrist," Abraham Lott on Sept. 17, 1776 was ordered by the state's Constitutional Convention to appear within five days with his account books, papers and money, all of

which were to be turned over to a new treasurer, Peter Van Brugh Livingston. Failure to comply would bring about the forcible seizure of his person and records. Lott again failed to obey the latest directive and continued to collect his salary until removed from office on Sept. 17, 1777.

Finally, on April 24, 1777, this treasurer in name only put in an appearance and admitted owing the state 24,870 pounds, of which only 3,000 was on hand, the remainder having been invested "in the Danish Islands" in the Caribbean. As late as May 12, 1784, the state was still trying to collect this deficit in accounts from either Abraham Lott, its late treasurer, or from his bondsman.

One may only speculate on Abraham Lott's actions. Was he stalling in order to have better standing if the Revolutionary forces were defeated? Was his bookkeeping of poor quality? Had he speculated with public funds unwisely? Were his personal funds co-mingled with public ones?

With such a dismal record of compliance with the Provincial Congress, the Provincial Convention, and finally the newly established state government, it was no wonder Abraham Lott's dubious claim to the Prevost Patent was brushed aside by the politicians.

First incorporated as the town of Freehold in 1790 when set off from Coxsackie, the area became known as Greenfield in 1803. When it was later discovered a Greenfield already existed in the state, for a short time in the year 1808 the name was changed back to Freehold. Later in the same year it was legally changed to Greenville. Obviously, no one even suggested the possibility of "Lottsana."

(Submitted by Raymond Beecher)

The front page of the 1859 diary carries a note: "March 29, 1859. Rec'd public money due Dist. #1 of Greenville. Am't \$74.69. Am't of wages for 4 months \$84.00." It is from this clue that we have been able to ascertain where he has been teaching.

School begins again on January 3 and, on January 10, the weather is so severe that R.E. freezes his ear coming home from his Lodge meeting at Oak Hill. It is 23° below on that day — the coldest in 17 years. Still, 40-50 scholars brave the cold and show up for classes.

By this time, Richard and Louisa Taylor have been married for a year and one month but are each living in the homes of their respective parents. This is the year they will set up housekeeping on their own. Although there has been no mention of it until now, apparently R.E. has been looking for a place that he and his bride can call their own home. Three events are recorded on January 12th. He taught 53 students that day and attended Singing School that evening. But the third event would impact the rest of his life. He writes, "Made C. Furry an offer for his farm." This farm was on Sunset Road in Norton Hill and was owned by Charles Henry Furry who ran a general store in Norton Hill. (The farm's location is noted on an 1856 map but no buildings are now standing.)

On January 19, R.E. reveals that this farm is to cost him \$2,575, and papers are drawn up to seal the bargain. Payment is to be made on April 1 and one wonders how he will be able to come up with that sum. But, on January 24, he tells us that Mr. Hunt is to let him have \$2,270.59 at a percent. The Hunts are mentioned often in the diaries of the next few years and I have concluded they were on the neighboring farm.

As much as Taylor would probably like to focus on this big step in his life, there are other pressing distractions. At this same time, he is sued by the Church Committee of the Methodist Church in Greenville. The problem had arisen in 1858, but without resolution. Japhet Collins, Hamilton McCabe, Stephen Griffin, H. Wood and R. Grave decide to bring a lawsuit. This impending suit necessitates visits to lawyer Mattice and the subpoenas of witnesses for the next several months. Finally, on May 24, the suit begins at E. Lampman's Hotel in Greenville. It runs until 11 p.m. for three straight nights. On May 27, he writes, "closed

lawsuit and beat them so bad they could not keep in sight." It being such a thorn in his side that he would be accused of laying an inferior foundation, R.E. Taylor had made notes in the back of his diary outlining his arguments. He particularly confronts Hamilton McCabe with questions like, "Have you or anyone else poked holes in the walls in various places about the House? Did you furnish the kind of sand requested or not? Did you forbid the sexton from opening the church for me to examine the walls with others?"

Ultimately, the church had to pay Taylor his \$143.79 plus court costs and he felt vindicated. (But these controversial walls would all come tumbling down on the afternoon of February 2, 1873 when the church which had been moved from the west corner of Ingalside Road and set on a new foundation, burned to the ground.)

Meanwhile, on January 29, R.E. Taylor carries the first load of furniture from Durham to set up housekeeping on Sunset Road. This trip requires paying 6 cents at the toll gate. On February 7, he brings another load and a stove which cost him \$18.79. The following day he moves "With bag and baggage." (In this diary are itemized lists of Louisa's dowry and R.E.'s belongings which he brings to the marriage.) Succeeding days are spent in settling and, on February 13, he notes, "Our first at keeping house." Soon, other young couples are coming for an evening's visit. And on February 19, Louisa's Mother and Father come to stay overnight. And so the young couple is beginning to entertain in their own home.

Now for the remainder of this year the entries document how R.E. acquired the things needed to make his a working farm. In February, he buys 20 dwarf pear trees of E. Allerton. In March, it is stone boats, and clover seed, roots of gooseberry and raspberries, grapes, timothy seed, oats, six bushels of corn and three bushels of potatoes. In April, we can picture this 30 year old landowner grafting his own apple and pear trees, and trimming his currant bushes. He has often done grafting for others — principally for the Wrights of Wright Street.

A farm is hardly a farm without livestock. And in April, R.E. sets about building his stock. On April 7, he "bought a cow of Mr. Stone for \$40." which would be ever after referred to as Stone cow. On the same day, he "bought sow and nine pigs of R. Prosser for \$12.00." He notes the death of one of these pigs on September 15th. On April 8, he

"bought 6 fowls from Asher Norton and brought Louisa's calves and 6 fowl home." In May, he purchases another cow from J. Jennings for \$37 and lets "Elihu Ingalls turn his cow into my pasture."

There is a need to borrow the oxen of Louisa's brother Almeron to draw manure on the garden on the last day of April. But by the end of May, Taylor is able to buy his own team for \$125 and there is a bee to plow the corn ground. G.A. Stone, D. Ingalls, G. Goff, and brother William are those who gather for that bee. It's the way farmers congregated to help out neighbors when there was a job to be done which would take one man many days to accomplish. R.E. takes his turn helping at a barn raising in August for A. Whitford and a husking bee at J. Lobdell's in November.

Though R.E. Taylor is busy getting his farm up and running, when spring comes, he still has his masonry jobs to be done. The school term finishes on March 22 and he will not begin a new term at Norton Hill until November 21 when the harvest is finished. This year will see him building chimneys for Madison Stevens and G. Clark, laying up a cellar wall for Ransom Traver, and lathing and plastering at M. Stevens, H. Norton, A. Fish and Mrs. Gardner. He even takes time in September to do a job at Abner Woodruff's in East Kill, Town of Jewett. He takes a whole week to build an oven and lathe the house. While there, he stays overnight at Aunt Jemima's in Hensonville.

And now as a landowner he has new responsibilities. He was assessed .76 cents school tax, \$8.10 town tax and four days of work on the road. He also insured his buildings and furniture for .67 cents.

In April, one entry notes that Philip Hisert, son of blacksmith B.F. Hisert, has come to stay with R.E. and Louisa. Although there is no mention of pay, it appears that he was the first hired man to work for Taylor. The October 29 entry read, "Philip Hisert staid his time out and has gone home — gave him \$1.00 for present." An attempt by another hired fellow, Anthony Bradwell, was less successful. He was hired at \$11.00 per month but after breaking his second plow share at the end of two weeks, R.E. paid him \$4.20 and sent him off.

By July 11, it is mowing time and over the next two weeks his brothers and hired man help

him put 15½ loads of hay in the barn. His hay finished, he spends the next week helping A. More with his haying. The buckwheat and rye are finished in September and by October 19 he begins husking corn in the barn. It is finished on November 19th.

All these jobs will take much longer in subsequent years as the farm grows and yields bigger crops.

The November 3 entry — "Made hen roost, banked house, fixed cow stables" — lets us know that winter is coming. And only nine days later, the first snow falls. We can only hope that banking the house helped because on December 28 and 29, it is 12° and 13° below zero.

There have been four funerals this year and when Hannah Lobdell dies, R.E. writes, "was called to assist laying Hannah Lobdell out."

On a lighter note, Richard Taylor goes to Singing School fifteen times in 1859. He enjoys this recreation and only skips a couple of sessions when he has had a cold and is too hoarse to sing. These Singing Schools were prevalent in the pre-Civil War era and were known as a grand place for courting and socializing. Apparently, these schools endured because in later years, R.E. sometimes mentions it when his grown children attend the evening singing sessions. However, there is never any sign of Louisa attending. (Perhaps she didn't have a voice for singing.)

This diary does not introduce too many family members whom we have not already met. There is mention of Julia who is Louisa's older sister. Also, Celinda Lord enters here. She is a child of Taylor's sister Sarah.

This year we become aware of G.B. Head who must have been a special friend because he remains someone whose visits, over the years, are to be detailed with a sense of pleasure.

In early times, the horses are often spoken of as a member of the family would be. In this year, we meet Nellie, the first of the Taylor horses. On Christmas Day, Taylor hitches her to Elihu Ingalls' cutter and drives Louisa to visit her family in Oak Hill.

The year ends with a surprise party at the builder, David Griffin's. R.E. notes that he spent .13 cents for "nick-nacks." This may have been a party to herald the arrival of 1860.