



Greenville Local History Group Newsletter

August 1997, Issue #91

Share Session

About ten "summery" souls came out for our August share session, a session with several pieces to it.

Harriet continues her summarizing of the Taylor diary, this time for 1862. The 1861 summary is attached to this report.

Ray brought in his "rabbit hunt" picture, one that's been used as a calendar picture previously. Ray identified the people, which invited more stories, which is the usual way at our meetings.

Dot Blenis had brought in pictures and post cards last month, and these pictures were duplicated and reshowed this month. Some were pictures of Medusa, some of Greenville area.

Gail Banker responded to the request for information about old boarding houses and wrote about the Bear Farm on the western edge of Norton Hill, detailing floor layout and general operation, as well as including a photocopy of the farm's brochure.

Harriet had written some more details about some of the boarding houses mentioned in last month's news letter.

Leona Flack was doing some "spring" cleaning and gave several interesting pieces for the files. These include an Episcopal Church booklet, the grand opening brochure for Higher Ground Christian Center, Vernon Haskins Fireside Recollections, and, the highlight of the collection, a booklet brochure for the Far Hills Nursing Home in Greenville Center.

Ray Beecher sent a few advertisements and schedules from the Day Line that listed boarding places in the Greenville area, only a few of which anybody attending the meeting could recall.

Don showed a box of books and leaflets given to him by Tim and Judy Adams who have

been cleaning out his mother's (Edna Ingalls Adams Zivelli) boxes and book shelves.

Kathie Williams is still bringing material from Phil Ellis' storage places, and brought a box of clippings and typed material. This will be brought to the next share session after a sorting of material.

Harriet had propped five recipe card containers on the table and finally she revealed what was in them. The contents held her 3x5 cards, with notes from her cemetery visits, listing names and dates and inscriptions, etc., which sounds like a good idea to the rest of us, but we still chuckled at Harriet's impeccable note-taking.

Mildred Reinhardt not only made a welcome re-appearance, but also brought a sketch she had drawn (but was not used) for the 1977 Methodist calendar. Don't be surprised if it becomes one of calendar covers a few years hence.

The next meeting is September 8th. I had hoped to have a program but have not been successful. So, if we can do another share session, I'll hustle to get something in place for October.

The calendar should be ready by the next meeting. The prices are the same - \$6 at the businesses. If bought at the meeting or from a member, you save a dollar.

A thank you goes to Gail, Harriet, Ray and Leona for their material that adds to the boarding house "chapter". I will try to add this information and reprint what I have for another newsletter, probably in November, more likely over the winter. If anyone has any information they want to add or change, please make some notes and turn it in.

R.E Taylor's Diary - 1861

January is a month for jobs like threshing in the barn and cutting wood. On a rainy and snowy January 16th, even though he is suffering from a bad cold, R.E. shells 4½ bushels of corn. Last fall, he talked about skinning the logs he cut and now, on January 18, he writes, "Went to Hudson with 1½ cords of bark - \$9.75. Came up on East side of river to Coxsackie and staid overnight." This overnight will cost him a tavern bill of \$1.00 for his team and himself but it also enables him to make the most of his resources. Bark seems to be going for a pretty good price. It nearly makes up for the \$10.14 Town Tax he paid ten days earlier.

The Taylors have now been on this farm for two years and I admit I was a little disappointed when, on January 2, R.E. writes, "Elisha Lounsbury came here to look at my farm." I wondered if it might mean he wants to sell. The thought is confirmed when, on January 8, the entry reads, "Alex Lounsbury and his father came here to look at my farm and I gave them two weeks to accept it at \$3000." The Lounsburys must have declined as the subject is not mentioned again this year. I need not have been concerned.

It is interesting to note that when it comes to butchering, R.E. always has someone come in to do the actual killing; and then he does his own cutting and packing of the meat. Perhaps he does not have the stomach to kill the pigs and, this year, he pays Montgomery Mackey \$.32 cash and a half bushel of potatoes, worth \$.18, to do the job. But he would go to Norton Hill, on January 10, to get a sausage cutter to cut the sausage himself.

By February 5, he writes, "J. Russell brought his wife here and we went below Freehold and then to East Durham. He to trade horses and I to look for mason work." And so, it appears that he is trying to get things lined up for a time when the weather is favorable for such work. But it is far from that now. On February 7, the three Taylor sons are busy drawing wood to Wright Street for their mother when it begins to "snow and blow a gale." The following day proves to be the coldest in a number of years and R.E. writes, "Did my chores and sit by the fire." But, by the next day, he is drawing wood again to his brothers. And in a few days he is cutting timber "for his building" although I don't have a clue what he plans to build. But there is definitely a plan because timber goes to the mill and, on the last day of February, he records, "Elihu Ingalls hewed timber for my building and M. Mackey helped me score."

The drawing of lumber from the mill continues in March until he has a total of 3,200 feet. From time to time, Elihu Ingalls works on the frame but there is knee-deep snow on March 21 and that calls for another "sit by the fire" day. Snow would continue to be bothersome until April 19th.

When April 15 rolls around he pens two important happenings. "I went over to J. Hunts and paid my interest & \$175.00 on the principal. Wm Richards came on to commence his season's work at \$12.00." This refers to the payment on his mortgage and tells us that William Richards will return this year as hired man. On April 18, Taylor sends him over the mountain for shingles and he is not back the next day. On April 20, the entry reads, "Wm Richards has just returned from home been gone 3 days. War is declared between the North and South." From this brief comment one gets the feeling that these two events rank not too differently in Taylor's view. But these two things do perhaps belong together here because ultimately, Wm. Richards will be drafted into the

Civil War. Perhaps Taylor is not as unconcerned about this war as we think. On August 24, he writes, "Took Louisa home and went to peace meeting at Cooksburgh. J. Millard Murphy speaks."

On July 26, the piece falls into the puzzle at last. After numerous references to nails, framing and purchasing of shingles over these many months, he writes, "E. Ingalls commenced shingling my wagon house." So now we know what the mysterious building is. And he is resourceful and wastes not. On August 16, he uses the leftover shingles on the privy roof.

Healthwise, the Taylors have had a pretty good year except for R.E. himself. He begins the year with a bad cold. On May 17, he writes, "Steer hit me in the eye and laid me up." That seemed to be pretty temporary but on June 22 he is sick and has a lame back. For a couple of weeks, he is really down and is unable to go out to do masonry work, as usual, until July 10th. And by then the haying has begun. In August and September of this year, he does some masonry work and lathing on the mountain again. One job is at the Methodist Church in Hunter. While he is working there, he meets a group of people who have come from Medusa to go up on High Peak. And, on September 25, he notes that "many people are passing on their way to the Cairo Fair." On October 22, "A large procession of people passed here today to Sunday School Celebration." So there seems to be activity on the mountain.

He works there from August 26 to October 17, coming home occasionally on weekends. During one such weekend he tells of two Dutch women and a boy sleeping in his barn. While it seems to me more friendly to have invited them in for a meal they must have had their reason. In any case, he takes them something to eat at the barn.

When Taylor is ready to come down home for good, he takes the \$70 pay and goes looking for young stock. On October 18, he starts for home driving his steers down the mountain himself.

And now, it is time to take up his teaching again. On October 22, he notes, "Engaged to teach school at Lampman school house for 3 months at \$16.00 per month to teach 5 days in a week." Lovitt Head is trustee there. Apparently, the school house needs to be repaired before school begins because Taylor works for six days repairing and roughcoating. On Dec 11, "Went to the Lampman school house and worked 1/3 day putting on blackboards - charged .50 cts." He starts teaching on December 16 with 16 scholars but the number would grow. By the end of the year, there are 24 sitting in the newly refurbished school house listening to their 32 year old teacher present their lessons.

Snow comes again on November 16, and R.E. and William are in the woods cutting 30 hemlock logs and two basswood. But the first real snow cover comes on November 24th. The cycle of sowing and harvesting comes around again. Forty loads of hay have been put in the barn, compared to last year's thirty-one. With the cold weather comes the yearly threshing of the rye. It also presents a need for a warm coat. R.E. pays \$4.25 for cloth and goes after Louisa's older sister Julia to make a coat for him. She is with Louisa and Richard for five days but if he paid her he did not record the expense.

On December 25, R.E. Takes Louisa home to Bani and Cynthia Utter and her brothers and sisters. One has the choice of reading between the lines here to picture a

Christmas gathering even though this diarist does not give any hint of a holiday. In later years, he will sometimes give a little hint in his shopping notations if you look carefully. But for 1861, nothing.

This year has been unique in a couple of respects in that he does not record a single death, funeral or marriage. He does mention on November 4, "Our freshet made great destruction of property and two lives lost." But he does not tell us who these people are.

When, on July 16, he "Called to see Weedon Hunt and found him failing very fast" it sounded ominous. A week later he wrote, "Sat up with W. Hunt tonight." I immediately anticipated that within the next few entries he would announce a funeral. But through July and early August he visits and checks on Weedon and his wife Mary who, I think, may have been on the next farm. In any case, Weedon must have recovered because the December 26 entry reads, "We went down to Weedon Hunt's tonight.", apparently on a social visit. I visited Locust Cemetery in an attempt to learn what year Weedon died but his stone has fallen face down so it could not tell me anything. Beside it, Mary's stone has stood upright since 1915.

There is not a whole lot said about the horses this year. On January 29, he writes, "Doll is lame. Washed her with beef brine and vinegar." Must have been some kind of home remedy. On May 5, Doll had a colt. Fan is mentioned as a means of transportation from time to time but there are no new names in the equine set. In the rest of the animal kingdom, two calves are born and he sells his bull, referred to as Major, to Lyman Stannard for \$23.00. After much shoring up of the foundation, he writes, on May 13, "Got my pig pen finished and got pigs in it for the first time." In July, the sow had ten pigs. Pigs do not seem to me to be much of a money maker, unless they are large, because on August 14, he notes, "Sold 5 pigs for \$1.00 each." But pork in this year brings 7 cents per pound and the butchering seems profitable.

Social life was pretty quiet. There were 35 or 40 different visitors coming to call, but R.E. only attended Lodge and Singing School three times each. Occasionally, on a trip to the mill at Medusa he brings his young nieces, Arvelia and Celinda Lord, home with him for a few days visit.

This year it seems that he does not report as much on Louisa's activities except when he takes her home or visiting. I suspect her activities are those of motherhood since Howard is 13 months old.

Separate note from front page:

The picture is that of the parsonage, today the house of Ella Powell. The tower structure has been torn down but the base is still visible.