



Modern History - The Razing of Mary's

# Greenville Local History Group Newsletter

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Share Session

The last meeting of 1997 saw our biggest turnout of the year (Harriet Rasmussen, Ron Golden, Ray Bennett, Kathie Williams, Rosemary Lambert, Margaret Bogardus, Gerald Boomhower, Phyllis Beechert, Toot & Betty Vaughn, Jeanne Bear, Dot Blenis, Chris McDonald, Joe Mangold, Barbara Baron, Cris Ketcham, Alice Roe, and Don Teator.)

We held another of our share sessions.

Harriet read a summary/highlight piece from the Ransom Ingalls as written by Leona Rundell a "few" years ago. Most of the details came from the 1860s part of the diary. (The GLHG is so used to hearing about things that long ago that we don't even flinch much anymore.)

Don showed a box full of "things" that have come from a few different directions.

Kathie Williams brought in a small box of more pictures from Phil Ellis' collections, almost all of which came from the past five years so we recognized almost all of the people in them.

We spent the rest of the time identifying more pictures, gabbing and trading stories.

Notes:

This might be a good time to remind everyone to start some winter project.

The annual letter should be out in early February.

Since this meeting, Lillian Weeks died. Many of you knew Lillian much better than I ever did but I recall her friendliness, and a willingness to be helpful. My memories are sitting around her kitchen table a half dozen times, with Deb, copying old pictures of the King Hill area and of the King families, as well as Lillian telling, with great pride, of the family stories. Thanks for the help, Lillian. And we send our sympathy to her family.

I have an unusual genealogy request. If you can help, write to Jane Grauer, 50 Scudder Rd, Newtown CT 06470. She is looking for information about a murder in Freehold sometime between 1930 and 1932. Elizabeth (Bessie) Rodiger nee Schmidt was allegedly drowned by her husband at her home. A trial may have taken place and if it did, the husband probably was acquitted. The woman killed was Mrs. Grauer's mother's aunt. (As far as I have been told the story, I believe the incident happened at the Beechert house – the one that just burned – on Red Mill Road. Other than that, I know nothing else.)

Finally, following this write-up is a re-typing of a report that Stanley and Eleanor Ingalls created. Who the audience was is unknown, but it remains a good start of Greenville area history.

## History of the Town of Greenville Mr. & Mrs. Stanley Ingalls - 1960

When Henry Hudson came up the great river of the mountains which bears his name, the land now occupied by Greene Co. was inhabited by a sub-tribe of the great Algonquin Nation, the Lenni Lenapes, or Delawares, as they were afterward called.

Hudson called them a "loving people" and their continuing war with the Mohawks and the Iroquois tribe from central New York helped in keeping peace with the early Dutch and English settlers.

Freehold was once the site of an Indian village. The flats  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile to the south afforded an excellent place for an encampment and a lake to the west was an added attraction. The burial place for their dead was located on a point of land overlooking the lake. The burial place of the Indians was desecrated when the settlers used it for a cemetery and all traces of their graves have been destroyed.

All but a few of the Indians were scattered by an invasion of the Mohawks in 1616 and remaining stragglers disappeared with the first tide of white settlers. Traces of their occupancy, stone axes, flint and other implements have been picked up in the fields in the vicinity.

Few settlers went far back from the Hudson River and it was not until 1750, 150 years almost after Hudson's voyage, that Godfrey Brandow became the first person to live in the Town of Greenville. He came from near Sauger-ties and located on 800 acres of land, which became part of the Seabridge farm in Freehold, now the Evergreen Croft. He was well supplied with agricultural implements imported from Holland and in ten years time he had a well stocked farm, clearing the land from a forest of oak, hickory and maple.

With him came his wife, the former Catherine Overbaugh, and two sons and two daughters. Their nearest neighbors were his wife's relatives living in Sandy Plains. A daughter, born to them in 1751 was the first white child born in the town. Their oldest daughter, Maria, married Stephen Lampman, the second settler, this being the first marriage in the town. He came from Coeymans by ox team the winter

of 1759-1760 (200 years ago) and settle on 200 acres of land building a house which became a shelter for many travelers on the only road from Greenville to Coxsackie. Later it became a place for night school and religious meetings. This community became known as Brandy Hill for the manufacture of cider and elderberry brandy made there.

The third settler was Jacob Bogardus, coming from Coxsackie in 1772 and taking up land from the Coeymans Patent. Due to hostile Indians, the Revolutionary War in which he was a Minuteman, and uncertainty of land title, it was not until 1783 that he brought his family; his wife and two girls and two boys, and settled on the land sold by the Bogardus family well into the 20th Century.

Most of the town is part of the Prevost Patent granted by the King of England in 1764 to Major Augustine Prevost for his services in the English army during the French and Indian wars. He came to the town of Greenville in 1794, having previously resided in Catskill. The house now standing was built at this time, followed by tenant houses, a grist and saw mill, a bark mill and a Real Estate office where he disposed of portions of his land at reasonable prices -- three dollars to six dollars per acre. He was a public spirited man, building roads and becoming interested in the religious and education needs of his neighbors, allowing their children to attend the school organized for his family.

Major Prevost was personally acquainted with many of the great men of his day. A one time partner of Alexander Hamilton, Aaron Burr was, at one time, his legal adviser, presumably at the time Burr was an itinerant lawyer out of Albany. Aaron Burr's wife was Theodosia Prevost and may well have been of the same family.

Major Prevost donated the ground for the Presbyterian church and the Greenville Free Academy with the stipulation that it could be used for no other purpose. His daughter Mary Ann organized the first Sunday School in the town, held in a barn and with wooden blocks used for seats.

In the memory of many still living, there was a two story unpainted frame house by the

lane going into the estate which was occupied by the slaves. In 1810, there were 17 slaves in the Town of Greenville, 10 of them belonging to Major Prevost. The markers for their graves have long been obliterated in the outlying fields. A room in the cellar of the big house proved a place of confinement for punishment.

Major Prevost and his family are buried in the Prevost cemetery. In recent years two maiden ladies, daughters of Theodore Prevost, his grandson, have been buried there.

In the summer of 1781, Benjamin Spees, Edward Lake and Eleazer Knowles left their home in Connecticut on horseback, crossed the river at Hudson and made their perilous way through the forest to where Greenville now stands. Locating their lands, they returned to Connecticut and the following winter came with their families and a few others to build their homes.

Eleazer Knowles built his cabin on the east brow of Budd's Hill where he had purchased 600 acres of land.

Benjamin Spees purchased an equal acreage to the north and moved into a log cabin built by a Tory squatter. This cabin was said to have been used to secrete stolen goods. His descendants became the distaff side of the present Cunningham family and his namesake Benjamin Spees lived here during his boyhood.

Edward Lake bought land farther north, all purchases being from the Prevost Patent.

Soon their neighbors were Abel Wakely, Abram Post, Japhet Collins, Edward Wooster, David Hickok, Aaron Hall and others. In the eastern end of the town we find Reuben Rundle, Henry Webber, Simeon Losee, Obediah King, Denis Blenis. In the vicinity of Norton Hill lived the Nortons, Leets and Slawsons. In 1793, Jacob Ingalls had settled, coming from Massachusetts to the Town of Westerlo, made a clearing and built a log cabin, 1½ miles north of Norton Hill. There he lived until 1841, and was buried in Prevost Cemetery. The farm has been occupied by an Ingalls until the death of Henry Ingalls about two years ago.

The Town of Greenfield was organized in 1803, changed to Freehold in 1808 and to Greenville in 1809. The first highway in the town led south from the Brandow farm, that is from

Freehold. This was extended north to the Lampman and Bogardus homes and soon after the one road from Greenville to Coxsackie, called the Turnpike, was built.

Among the enactments passed at a Town Meeting in 1804 it was voted that all hogs one year old and upward, to run at large, must be yoked with a yoke 20 inches long and those under one year, 12 inches long. A fine of 50 cents was charged for disobeying the order. Each owner nicked the ear of his swine in a different place or manner to designate ownership. In 1813, 14 school districts were organized.

The three large creeks in the town afforded water power for many mills at one time; a woolen mill near Freehold and a Fulling Mill near the Scripture bridge plus four grist mills and 3 saw mills all on the Basic Creek. The grist mill in Freehold controlled the buckwheat flour trade while one two miles north specialized in rye flour.

The Losee mill, built in 1792 on the Losee creek was the oldest. Harry Long maintains a saw mill there now. The old mill had an upright saw with flutter wheel. The creek on which this mill stands empties in the west branch of the Potic Creek.

About 1820 a saw mill was built on the Jan De Bakker Creek near Greenville Center by Henry and Peter Bogardus. Thomas Place built a mill on the same Creek where now is Place's corners. The outline of the dam may be seen to this day.

What we know as the Red Mills was built by Lewis Sherrill in 1847 and the building now standing is the only evidence of there ever being a grist mill in the Town of Greenville.

Before 1805 a tannery was built in Freehold and soon another one in Newry. This one branched out into shoe making and harness making. The scarcity of hemlock bark compelled these tanneries to close as well as the one in Greenville village which stood on the site of the insurance building. The open field in the back provided space for the vats used in the processing of the hides.

Staves for barrels and wooden shingles found ready market in Coxsackie and Catskill.

Where the Carelas place now stands, John L. Raymond established an enterprising

business. He was a blacksmith by trade but branched out to make nails, becoming known as Uncle Nailie Raymond. Later he manufactured farming tools. The nails were of wrought iron and could probably still be found in some of the old buildings of the town. Many of our older inhabitants recall the Evaporating (apple drying) business carried on by Gardner & Hunt in Norton Hill. The building was in the rear of the homes of the Bauers and Mrs. Joy.

Aaron Butler came to Greene County with his father in 1799 and in 1824 opened a tin shop and store in East Greenville, on the Haight farm of the present time. Soon afterward he built a cider mill and commenced the manufacture of cider brandy. This became a neighborhood project and the name Brandy Hill clings to this locality.

A collection of trays, canisters and bread boxes made by Mr. Butler and painted and decorated by his daughters is owned by Mr. James Stevens.

The name of Stevens has long been associated with the Town of Greenville. Reuben Stevens came from Connecticut about 1793. Land was offered him on Katskill Creek for \$2.50 per acres but he bought a partially improved farm at the Hemlocks (Greenville Center). Presumably the many branches of the Stevens family came from this man who was blessed with 10 children.

As early as 1802 a post route was established between Coxsackie and Westerlo. This route passed through Greenville where a

post was located and soon another was established at Newry. The mail was carried on horseback by a man named Brown, familiarly known as Brownie, he being described as a jolly old man and somewhat eccentric. He became the bearer of news and the teller of jokes and anecdotes. Starting with a delivery once a week and soon semi-weekly, mail was left sometimes under flat stones in place of mail boxes.

Stewart Austin was the first stage driver, about 1815. In 1860, it was a daily route and there were offices in Greenville, Freehold, Norton Hill and Gayhead. James Evans, who lived across from the Chas. Rice Place, Ingalside Road, was stage driver for many years. His daughter, still living, married Burdette Griffin son of Bloomer Griffin, who lived in West Greenville four corners in a very large house. This house was formerly an inn catering to travelers and known as the "Marble Pillar". The building was demolished about 15 years ago. Many of us remember Joe Alverson who succeeded Jim Evans as stage driver. His experiences in carrying the mail would be a history in itself of the beginning years of the 20th Century.

Population:

1875	-2031
1890	-1951
1920	-1362
1925	-1394
1950	-1613
1960	-1859