



Sutton's Blacksmith  
Freehold

# Greenville Local History Group Newsletter

May 1998, Issue 97

Artist of the Year

Another rainy night awaited the dozen or so who came out for the May program. (Ten of the first eleven days of May would see some precipitation, but who's counting.) Braving the wet weather were Rosemary Lambert, Harriet Rasmussen, Toot & Betty Vaughn, Kathie Williams, Dot Blenis, Alice Roe, David & Judy Rundell, Ron Golden, Phyllis Beechert, and Don Teator. (My apologies for leaving off Ray Bennett from last month's list.)

The program was our annual artist feature. This year featured Phyllis Lienthal, a photographer and, as we found out, a long-time visitor.

Phyllis started with biographical information. She was born in New Jersey where her interest for photography started when she was eleven years old when she was developing her own pictures. She graduated from high school in 1945, a year she also remembered as the last year of the trolley in her area. She went to work in Hackensack for a drugstore and candy store.

She next worked at a Maywood newspaper, working in the 4x5 negative format. She married in 1956, divorced in 1972,

and "retired" in 1978. Part of this retirement meant moving to Greenville.

As Phyllis points out, this was not the first time she had ever been in Greenville. She had come as a young girl during summer vacations to the Bob and Elsie Berkhofer farm, the current-day site of Ed Volmar's farm/residence on Hillcrest Road. She especially remembers going to the Vanderbilt movie house in Greenville, as well the Corner Restaurant, Stevens Hardware Store, and Gus Baker's.

She would move to Spring Valley Road to the Butler farm, which she bought from Ken Lawyer. The farm had had a fire so she converted the garage into her residence. In 1980, her mother moved to Greenville with Phyllis, the same year her father died.

She started the next stage of her career and opened a photography studio from her home. To supplement the studio work, Phyllis started doing weddings, sometimes doing 25-30 a year for a time in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Low cost processing at the supermarkets and malls put a crimp in her studio business and she is now working on fine art photography. (Two photographs she brought to the meeting –

"Love Letters" and "Flowering Faces" – are recent examples of this endeavor.) Phyllis noted even she takes her rolls of negatives to be developed elsewhere, even though she prints her own pictures at her studio.

The other major part of the meeting was Phyllis' demonstration of three of her favorite cameras. The first was a replica of one she had worked with for years, a view camera with 4x5 negatives, glass plates and flash bulbs. Next was a medium format, and finally she showed a recently bought Minolta 8000SI that uses the popular 35 millimeter film.

Phyllis has put on numerous camera shows, with the current one person show, starting from May 23, for the Greene County Council of the Arts. Phyllis is also noted for being one of the starters, along with Bob Heisinger and Amelia Anderson, of the Greene County Camera Club that is in its third year and is centered in Greenville.

A thank you goes to Phyllis for sharing her time with the Local History Group and for becoming part of the fabric of the local history of our corner of the world.

In the early part of the meeting, the voting was done for the recognition of three community members who are deceased. The three chosen for the 1999 calendar are **Dr. Bott, John I. VerPlanck, and Al Bryant**. I'm going to need some help with details with the 100-200 word write-ups. Call me or bring some information to the next meeting. Which leads right into the reminder that the June meeting will be a share session on June 8th.

*Don,*

Several genealogy requests have come in.

Diane Ptak, 12 Tice Rd, Albany, NY 12203; phone 456-3370 is looking for information on a Thomas family who appears to have settled in the Greenville/Greenfield/Rennselaerville area. Recompense Thomas was born in CT and he later moved to the local area. Are there any records or cemetery stone? His son, Thomas Thomas (nice parents!) was also born in CT and may have died in Rennselaerville. His daughter Phebe appears to have been born in the local area, married in the late eighteen-teens or early eighteen-twenties and eventually moved to western NYS.

Jean Carlson, 7943 Ramsgate Ave., LA, CA 90045-4335 is looking for any information on the Hawk family. The mention is a birth record in the Presbyterian Church of a Hannah Hawk, daughter of Isaac & Eleanor. This Ms. Carlson is also working on the Hawxhurst family.

Mrs. Patricia Schiraldi, 36 Fox Run Rd, Madison, CT 06443 is working on the Eaton family. John Eaton was born in Greenville in 1814 and would eventually move to Cox-sackie and New Baltimore. She wants to know who the parents of John are.

Joyce Drew, Box 195, East Durham, 12423 is seeking information on a Merwin L. Smith who was a dentist, and was wondering if the Smith in Greenville, mentioned in Gedney's piece, could be this person.

Finally, Les Carey, PO Box 81, Heritage Place, Massena, NY 13662 is working on the Barker family. Les is seeking information of birth, death or burial of a Wellington Barker, appearing to be born about 1856 and dying between 1910 and 1920. Wellington's father was Augustus and Julie E. Barker. Les is aware of the 1855 and 1860 census information.