

Greenville Local History Group Newsletter

June 1998, Issue 98

Share Session

The long twilight of summer greeted the June meeting. About a dozen came out for this share session (a welcome to Orrin Stevens).

The meeting started with talking about genealogy, and maybe trying to have the Greenville Press print an occasional file. Don will talk with the Press; he seemed optimistic that the paper would welcome such a column. Although Harriet was the main focus of this topic, everyone reading this newsletter should know that many perspectives of area families abound and all of us can pitch in, even if it is just that one piece of genealogy you're interested in. So, pick out a family, or part of the family, tie pieces of genealogy and local history and memory together. If you need help putting it together, bring it to a local history meeting or give Don a call.

Harriet was ready for another year's summary (1866) from the Taylor diary which will be printed in a later newsletter. For this issue, Harriet's summary of 1864 is included.

Don had a few tidbits to share. The 1998 GCS Yearbook was shown and Don reminded all that the yearbook is an important piece of local history. The continuity from year to year makes the yearbook one of the best steady looks at a part of our community. Also shown was the Greene County Historical Society's House Tour itinerary. Next, the 1998 Windham Bicentennial Calendar of local history photos and information was passed around.

Finally, we let Joe Mangold open the large brown manila folder that promised goodies. In it were a collection of saved papers, including teaching certificates and examination results of his aunt Agnes Tunison, an invitation to the 1919

Commencement Exercise of the Greenville Free Academy, an Official Souvenir of the Dedication of St. Mary's Church in East Durham in 1896, a 1907 topographic map of the Catskill Mountains, a picture of the Greenville High School 8th grade class in 1922, Freehold school souvenir booklets for 1905-06 and 1910-11, war ration books, and a half-dozen other documents. Thank you, Joe. (The text of the 1910-1911 booklet is copied on the last page.)

Somewhere in between, Don mentioned the need to gather information about Dr. Bott, John I. Ver-Planck, and Al Bryant, and the group identified sources – if needed.

The next meeting (July 13) will be a re-playing of a video bought from PBS – A Midwife's Tale. The

ninety minute tape is the story of how modern day Laurel Ulrich found a diary written by Martha Ballard of Maine during the years after the American Revolution. As many of you know from the Ingalls and Taylor diaries, sometimes a bit of detective work goes into figuring what the comments mean, who the person was, what was life like, etc. The video is Ulrich's detective and research work in putting all the pieces together and to try to sketch this woman's life as she becomes a midwife, traveling around the community, all after the age of fifty. Some re-enactment occurs in period garb and background, as well as video of the diary and Ulrich's research methods. I think many of you will find this fascinating. (We'll take an intermission at 50-55 minutes, and I'll bring popcorn and juice for the movie fans.)

Next Meeting

July 13

A Midwife's Tale

R.E. Taylor Diary – 1864

Harriet Rasmussen

R.E. Taylor closed his school in the Lampman School district on March 6 last year after the usual three month term. But he did not begin a new term in December, as in previous years. In fact, in this year of 1864, Taylor does not teach at all.

Perhaps he does not feel there is enough time for him to take on a teaching job this year because he has still not finished settling the estate of Sylvester Lord. It seemed to me that he was very involved with that last year but he is even more occupied with all the details this year. On January 4, he writes, "Went to see Spalding & sent order of Surrogate back to him to be modified." You may recall that on last December 3, R.E. was in Albany visiting the Surrogate. It would be just the precursor of a number of trips to the same Surrogate before this year is over.

On the day following his visit to lawyer Alonzo Spalding, the entry reads, "Went to Potter Hollow to get Treadwell to sell the property at Medusa." Mail from Albany must have been more timely than we imagine because on January 26, he writes, "Rec'd my papers I sent to Albany for alteration, to sell property."

The next day R.E. tells us he is sick but he goes to Medusa and adjourns the sale. We wonder if he has found a buyer for the property and who it might be. Something is transpiring because his entry for January 28 reads, "Fine day. Started for Albany – put out horse at Larabee's – paid .25 cts for dinner & .55 cts ticket by R.R. to Albany – went and saw Mr. Sampson to have the Surrogate papers arranged. In Eve I went to Assembly rooms & heard a speaker from one of the members. Put up at Folands – 8½ cts for posts – payed .45 cts for ties to R.R."

And on January 29, "Pleasant day – paid .90 cts for staying at Folands – had my papers for the sale arranged & paid .55 cts ticket to Coxsackie & .50 cts for horse to hay & .30 cts for dinner & started for home – paid .18 cts for gates & arrived home safe."

Our question finds answers on February 10 when he gives us this detailed account. "Cold. Sold the real estate of S. Lord today.

Rec'd for mill property \$887.50 & Wm Tanner paid \$87.50 on it – not quite 10% by mistake. – Tan yard \$10.00 – rec'd cash down of J.T. Milton. Etheridge lot \$150.00 to Alex Campbell. Homestead at \$1800 to Willet Mackey & rec'd \$90 of Wm Tanner & \$90 of Alex Mackey – making the 10 per cent – paid \$14.72 cts for town tax – also V. Treadwell \$3.00 for selling." This entry makes an interesting piece of Medusa history since it documents just how and at what costs the miller's property was divided.

The properties are sold but there are still various accounts to be settled and articles to be sold. Taylor doesn't pay if there is any kind of misunderstanding but on March 14, he simply states. "Wm. R. Tanner claims the bellows." And on March 28, "Sold Blacksmith's tools & other articles at Medusa today & Sales am't to over \$80.00."

By August 1, things are winding down and R.E. writes, "Engaged a tomb stone for S. Lord at Coxsackie for \$25.00." And on November 8, "Wm came up and helped me set Sylvester Lord's tomb stone." I have visited the grave site in Medusa Cemetery and it is hard to imagine that the lovely large stone set there was bought for \$25.00. We have not been told what plans have been made for sister Sarah now that her home has been sold. It appears she stayed put for the winter. But on April 4, even though it is "dreadful bad going" as a result of the one foot snow fall on March 31, R.E. "Went to Medusa & took a load of goods for Sarah to East Durham." And two days later he "Finished moving Sarah." I wish I knew where she is making her new home. Some of Taylor's comments make me wonder if she has moved in with her mother Phebe. I will be watching for clues in later diaries which may solve this puzzle.

Seven days after moving the Lord family it is time for another trip to Albany. It snows all day Sunday and on Monday he pens this entry, "Snows yet. Charles came up & we started for Albany - put up at Larabee's Coxsackie overnight & went to in the evening – paid supper, bed & breakfast .75 cts - .60 cts for boat both ways." The next day we find out just what this trip is for. he writes, "Went to Albany & deposited \$1152.54 cts with vouchers to the am't

\$2847.50 being the am't of sales of Real Estate of S. Lord. Staid at Larabee all night & was sick." He has deposited Sarah's money into an account from which he will draw money from time to time, for her family to live on.

It has been a busy winter for this diarist in other aspects too. Countless hours are spent in the woods cutting & drawing firewood. Some 85 cords of wood are sold to fifteen people like Leander Ingalls, Reuben Gedney and Alfred Tripp. And on February 29 R.E. records, "A. More helped me cut R.R. ties and posts today." We don't know where these railroad ties are going or how much he sells them for but he March 3 entry tells about the price of the posts. It read, "Philo Pratt sent for 25 posts & I received \$1.50 for them – 6 cts per."

The cycle of plowing, planting, mowing and harvesting is basically the same as in previous years. William Richards is still working as his trusted hired man but this year they do not have Peter Egnor's help. We recall that last year he had been drafted and after about two months in service, he died of disease. Now the war impacts the Taylors again. On September 21, we read, "Rec'd news of the draft & Wm Richards was drafted."

It appears that R.E. Taylor may be trying to help his hired man to avoid this military service. On September 29, he writes, "Wm Richards came & wanted me to carry him to Albany and I did so. Arrived at Albany & put out at Foland's Hotel after seeing a No. of recruiting officers." But if that is his intent it has failed because on September 30, he makes this entry, "Rain this morning & Enlisted Wm Richards & rec'd his bounty money \$100 & also \$15.00 &

paid out for our expenses for him \$5.27. Wm Richards mustered in United States Army."

In the next few weeks Taylor does some special errands for his friend. He has a bond & mortgage executed in Wm. Richards name and on November 8 he records, "Went to Election & put in Wm Richards vote for him." There may have been a form of absentee ballot even in those days. On November 21, R.E. sends the new soldier a paper and a letter and one wonders what he writes about.

The masonry and lathing and plastering goes on from February 8 to December 1 at the homes of sixteen people like Smith Lamb, Nehemiah Ramsdell, Truman Ingalls and J.F. Winston. It is a very busy time. Perhaps that is one reason the number of visitors is considerably smaller this year than last. But the number of funerals would be the same – eight for each of the last two years. R.E. acts as bearer at two of these. There are no marriages recorded at all this year. Perhaps that is left to women diarists.

There is very little mention of the children except for buying Howard a pair of boots, and the times they go with Louisa to visit grandparents. Howard is 4. And just one week after Addie's second birthday we are surprised by this account – "Snowy all day. Wm finished threshing rye. Lousia had another girl at 4:55 P.M. & paid Dr. Cone \$5.00." And so, daughter Isabelle is born although. As with the other children, we will not learn her name for some time. This daughter would become the mother of Ethel Allen Lawton who saved her grandfather Taylor's diaries which are revealing so much about the people and the way of life in this area during the years form 1858 to 1902.



School District No. 2
 Freehold, Town of Greenville, N. Y.

Presented By
H. PHILIP RAMSEY,
 Teacher

Sept. 12, 1910—April 27, 1911

School Officers

| | |
|-----------------|-----------|
| Olin D. Beers | Trustee |
| Frank Woodard | Clerk |
| Willard I. Hunt | Collector |

Pupils

| | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| Osman L. Phinney | Howard W. Scutt |
| Lester H. Story | Harry Crow |
| George Winn | Melvin E. Hood |
| Clifford P. Randall | Frederick Burdick |
| Herbert O. Cameron | Searles L. Seabridge |
| Nolan W. Simmons | Hubert M. Palmer |
| Herman E. Story | George W. Becker |
| Elsworth A. Hood | Chester Phinney |
| Hazel O. Eighmey | Edwin Randall |
| Clara B. Woodworth | Alliene G. Beers |
| Marion E. Antus | Mildred Tunison |
| Hazel M. Butler | Mabel L. Story |
| Uretta Winn | Ethel M. Winters |
| Myrtle B. Hood | Helen A. Cameron |
| Edith M. Winters | Mabel A. Hallock |
| Pearl Winn | Mary D. Phinney |
| | Agnes J. Tunison |
| | Grace R. Scutt |
| | Marion I. Beers |
| | Rose E. Palmer |
| | Jessie M. Hallock |

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