

January 17, 1990

This report summarizes the Greenville Local History Group's growth since June. I had considered a chronological report but you can just as easily reread the newsletters; instead, I'll try a topical approach.

Alternative points of view are certainly welcome.

The most important event of our eight months is the creation of the GLHG. The idea was voiced even at the first meeting but not till the third was constructive movement made. At our fourth meeting (September), we discussed pros and cons of organizing and chartering, as well as considering alternatives. Our October meeting was the birthing of our official organization - an informal, no dues, non-chartered group interested in encouraging research, preserving history, encouraging knowledge, and promoting recognition of important sites. I sense we deliberately omitted politics, that being left up to individual consciences.

While we don't have a set program schedule, we do have a good idea what we want to do. Generally, every other month will be a sharing month, where anybody who has research or knowledge to share can do so. The other months will emphasize a topic announced at least a month ahead. Thus far our intended programs have been the taping of Joe Mangold and the slide show of the churches in the area. Other programs wait to be shared; feel free to suggest topics that would benefit our knowledge.

Until events conspire against it, we will emphasize our desire to make our own efforts the center of our focus. The round table symbolizes the participatory nature of our group.

The number of "members" has steadily grown, first ten, then fifteen, and at present, nearly fifty. Some groups pride themselves on numbers; I believe we'd like to think we have a high percentage of membership actually contributing. The average attendance the last few months has been in the upper teens; for now that number has been ideal although we will gladly accommodate more. We will have to make changes at a critical number; we'll face those decisions when we get to that number.

The nature of our projects have been personal and individual with one exception. Early on, attention was brought to the need of the Presbyterian Church Steeple Restoration fundraising. Although no concerted effort was made, we as a group support that goal.

As of now, no project in common presents itself. If desired, we could strive for a group goal; however, I suspect until a goal enough of us care about sits before us, we'd rather continue as we have.

A wide array of individual projects have been accomplished or are in progress. Types of projects and people who have contributed are mentioned below:

-taping oral history - June Clark, Bunny Gundersen, Don Teator

-giving material to be placed on file - Chris McDonald, Joe Mangold, Dave Dively, Bonnie Persico, Ruth Bigelow, June

Clark, Phyllis Beechert, Edna Adams, Cris Ketcham, Harriet Rasmussen

-loaning pictures to be copied - Bunny Gundersen, Harriet Rasmussen, Betty & Toot Vaughn, June Clark, Marianne Doorly, Gerald Boomhower, Dave Dively, Gerald Ingalls, Doris Hempstead, Nick DiBrino

-genealogy - Harriet Rasmussen, Doris Hempstead

-house histories - June Clark, Phyllis Beechert, Barbara Valicenti, Kathie Williams

-loaning material to be copied - Lillian Weeks, Doris Hempstead, Cris Ketcham, June Clark

-cemetery inscriptions - Harriet Rasmussen

Omission of your name or your project is not intentional; kindly jog my memory the next time you see me.

Several projects, in addition to the ones listed above, are begging for a benefactor. Some of these include:

-school history, pictures: current buildings and the buildings before centralization

-business histories, descriptions, and details

-topical research projects - weather, politics, local economy, how the community was shaped, special events, leisure pursuits, barns, trends in costs, current happenings (the last 30 years), etc.

In addition, many of you have helped by attending meetings, encouraging others to contribute to the group's efforts, publicizing our goals and achievements, letting us know of current local events and developments, making mental notes of good ideas, and listening.

Where do we go from here? in the coming year? in the 90's?

Our first half-year was a promising one. Our enthusiasm, good intentions, and participation allowed us to complete projects that fit our goals. Many of us are finding out we need to take personal action; if we don't, there's nobody else. Also, our groups's ability to accommodate a variety of viewpoints in a friendly way, as well as our willingness to take responsibility, is always needed to adapt to the questions and problems that may arise.

One area we have not addressed is what action we might take to foster preservation of historic sites. We may need to first help out the town government about the definition of such.

An early concern, and a possible long range goal, is having a place of our own - a historic site, a functional building, etc. To be honest, given what I judge to be our mood, I don't see this happening soon. But should a generous bequest be presented, some hard decisions would have to be made.

In closing, a short-sighted long range goal (an oxymoron?) would be to continue the progress made so far, accept growth as it comes, adapt to the changes that lie ahead of us, and act as a resource for those people making decisions about Greenville.