

# Greenville Local History Group Newsletter

July 2015, Issue 244

Main Street, Greenville: Memories & Stories

In stark contrast to June's stormy weather, a classic July day of mostly-sunny mid-80s greeted the evening's guests. Attending: Stephanie Ingalls, Bob & Marie Shaw, Phyllis Beechert, Christine Mickelsen, Bev Myers, Lois Rockefeller, Donna Willard, Elsie Turon, Carolyn Savery, Jack Ver Planck, Orrin & Shirley Stevens, Judy Rundell, Bill Quackenbush, Rachel Ceasar, Richard Ceasar, Maureen Graff, Hank & Arlene Muller, Sally Staunch, Arlene DiBello, Jack & Barbara VanAuken, Mary Heisinger, Phil & Barbara Flach, Kathy Smith, Lew & Sue Knott, Marilyn Snow, Barbara Sanborn, Barbara Lamb, Paula Malone, David & Pat Elsbree, Bette Welter, Ron Golden, Paul & Katja Rehm, Curt Cunningham, and Don Teator. I have missed some (the sign-in is mostly for my memory); if I missed you and it matters, let me know and I will note your attendance in the next newsletter.

I used a good suggestion made a couple years by a few of you— Main Street, Greenville. Initially, the idea is an imposing one—its expanse is way too big for one meeting and perhaps could stretch for a whole year! I opted for a two-parter, and July was Part One—stories and memories to share with an audience.

I am thanking the handful of you I particularly invited to the meeting. I had hoped that if each shared at least one story, it would get the rest of us going. So, thank you, **Bill Q, Flip F, Curt C, and Orrin S** for being the foundation of the meeting. And there were many others who pitched in, as I had hoped. I am sure, I could have taken any one of you and done a whole evening of your memories (sounds like a good idea to me)!

A handout for the evening included a map of Main Street, Greenville in 1856 and 1867, with familiar names like McCabe, Stevens, Knowles, Fish, Wakely, Lake, Sanford and a bunch more. However, it is the curiosities that make one wonder what Main Street was like back then – Iron Foundries, a saloon, a dentist, blacksmith shop, tin shop, shoe store, for a few. (If anyone wants a copy of the maps, let me know, and I will email them to you.)

But, we stayed with what we know or have heard, and that was plenty entertaining, and educational, for the evening.

About fifteen photos of Main Street were passing around during the evening to remind everyone what various eras looked like in Greenville, hoping to jog some memories.

**Flip** started with his connection with Bill Neidlinger, the town's barber who cut hair in one of the stores that would be placed near today's Kelly's Pharmacy. Flip's dad learned to cut hair from Bill in 1947, and then worked on the Schwebler site (Flip's grandfather, where post office is today) for 16 years. Flip's dad made a deal to not compete in business until Bill N decided to quit. And Bill N decided, and so Flip's dad started on his own in 1963 and continued to 2002. And Flip had his story how he started.

In between there were stories of Gus Baker's, the restaurant where Kelly's is today; of Bill Gedney who worked for Otis Elevator and of Ted Delavergne who started electric lighting in Greenville; eels; and more.

**Bill Quackenbush** (welcome, Bill, to GLHG meetings) told a story or two about the Pharmacy his father ran. The first story was the reserving of newspapers, with customers having their own number and Bill still remembering

some of the numbers (some in the audience were part of that and could still remember their number!); busy newspaper days on Sunday; past pharmacists Ales, Avery, Bartholemew; and how his parents found themselves in Greenville (lucky us!).

**Curt** narrated his multi-faceted story of working in the funeral home despite his earlier efforts not to. Topics that followed included the gas station where Cumberland Farm now is; Phil Butler; using oil cans for frost protections for tomatoes (did not work); the movie theater, and double shows, and sneaking in; Crow Griffin; Hugo's riding academy.

And a good dozen of you pitched in, with topics of walking to Main Street for an ice cream; the IGA store and penny bubblegum; trucks backing into tight spaces between buildings; the Cabin; the fence dispute at Mary's Restaurant; Lou Spinelli; Hynes liquor store; Simpson's Garage; the stealing of pool cue balls; a weekend trip to get a lawn mower resulting in getting a goat; Bert Butler; Flach's Bakery and the 26 boarding houses they served; dredging the pond; Lee Cunningham clearing the pond for skating in winter; the fishing derby on the pond; the corner gas station and owners; canoeing on the pond; Crow carrying enough cash to be memorable; the ducks on the pond; the corner restaurant; the effect of Bryant's Plaza on Main Street; the Cairo Bank office; Halloween; the thrift shop; and we ended with sewage on the pond (you had to be there to enjoy this one, and I ain't retelling any more of it).

The meeting ended about 9 o'clock when the refreshment table beckoned and more stories were told.

It is interesting that all the photos were of buildings but, in most of the stories, the buildings were incidental to the people we recalled so fondly or vividly.

Main Street, Greenville: Part Two will show more photos, will invite more stories, and those of you who came out for Part One can use your recall of this evening's stories for the upcoming presentation.

#### **Other Notes:**

**QuackQuackGreenville** is underway. Forty-six painted ducks grace the Greenville area, with the Four Corners acting as a bullseye. You can find more at [\[ville.com\]\(http://quackquackgreenville.com\) and also on Facebook at QuackQuack-Greenville. An auction in October will raise funds for the Greenville Beautification Project and for the Greenville Educational Foundation.](http://quackquackgreen-</a></p></div><div data-bbox=)

The **August 10 meeting** will be Main Street, Greenville: Part Two. I will show about a hundred slides of photos that the Historian's files have accumulated over the years, quite a few rarely seen. And we will probably continue to tell more stories in addition to rehashing some of the ones heard at our July meeting.

Our **September meeting** will feature local historian/genealogist **Sylvia Hasenkopf** who will detail the genealogy of the different Stevens's families in the Greenville area. Anyone who wants a look of some of Sylvia's research and efforts on the Greene County level should go to: <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nygreen2> or Tracing Your Roots in Greene County Facebook page. More details next month.

And the **Greene County Historical Society, on September 10**, will feature a program on the boarding house era, with Mary Lou Nahas (Durham) and I as the guests. More details next month.

I received word from Mary that the next is **Civil War Round Table** is August 19 (third Wednesday, a change from the usual), with Jim Connell, author of *A Lone Battle Stance*, talking on a to-be-determined topic.

**A thank you goes to Stephanie and Christine** for their donation of refreshments. Many partake, and the contribution is most appreciated.

One of the interesting local history side stories of the year is the discovery of a beam in the Griffin barn ("Balsam Shade") that had the name of Trum Ingalls painted on it. Genn Hagan researched some leads and wrote an interesting article for the Daily Mail. The DM title is: GNH Lumber Discovers Link to 130 Years of Industry Roots. The DM article is included in this newsletter.

Take care,

## Submitted by Genn Hagan

For Columbia-Greene Media

**GREENVILLE** — GNH Lumber has been owned and operated by the Ingalls family since 1937. However, we recently stumbled upon a tangible piece of our history that enabled us to view a fuller picture of our roots.

In the fall of 2014, a beam signed by Truman Ingalls, father of GNH founder Stanley Ingalls, was discovered as part of a barn was razed on the Balsam Shade property. This naturally raised questions within our Ingalls clan:

Why had Truman signed the beam? Did he supply the lumber? Did he erect the barn?

Reviewing the transcribed diaries of Truman and Carrie Ingalls with local historian, Don Teator, provided us with a fascinating glimpse into uncharted family history.

Truman Ingalls was a farmer by trade, yet a diary excerpt from his wife Carrie, dated 1885, makes clear her husband's interest in logging: "Wood plays a major element. Trum and the men cut down wood, draw out logs, get slat lumber, etc., usually buzz saw the wood, split wood, stack wood, take logs to the mill, mark the logs, draw lumber from the mill, etc."

As the diary continues, we discovered details of large lumber contracts: "In November 1913, Trum enters into contract with a Mr. Fiery for 180,000 feet of lumber on land just above Medusa, and December 1914 signs for 50,000 more on Cheese Hill just above Preston Hollow." Typically, this means

that the men will cut down the trees, skid them out of the woods (often during winter), trim them out, cut into lengths, saw them into boards, and then deliver to Mott of Jefferson, or Hoy of Catskill, or Lenahan of Athens, or into Cossackie, as well as a local business."

As we delve deeper into the history we find excerpts in the 1920s that describe the direction the family business was heading: "The details of lumbering and milling are becoming dominant in the Ingalls family, a clear specialization of labor and equipment, for which this Ingalls family is regionally known, receiving customers from Columbia County to Schoeneyus, Saranac to Saugerties, while most of their business is done through Catskill, Athens, Cossackie,

Jefferson Heights and New Baltimore."

These writings show that the Ingalls lumber business goes further back than we previously believed. Truman, as the patriarch of the Ingalls family, created the entrepreneurial spirit that continues to thrive in his offspring.

Truman's son, Stanley L. Ingalls opened the Greenville Norton Hill Lumber yard as a way to provide another avenue to his father's already established business. Stanley's two sons, Randall "Buddy" and Walter expanded their retail location when they bought an existing lumber yard in Windham from Welsh & Gray in 1965.

His great-grandson, Stanley R. Ingalls continued this growth by purchasing Pioneer Lumber in



Contributed photo

**In 2014, a beam signed by Truman Ingalls, father of GNH founder Stanley Ingalls, was discovered as part of this barn, raised on the Balsam Shade property.**

Cossackie in 2008, thus securing the title of "largest lumber dealer in Greene County." Stanley expanded even further by diversifying the existing business to include the Latham's stand-alone design showcase in 2013.

With four GNH locations currently in operation, Stanley continues the legacy of his father, grandfather and great grandfather.

With the discovery of a one well-placed signature, history proves that the Ingalls Family has been deeply seated in the lumber and building materials industry for well over one hundred and thirty years.

As the Ingalls legacy continues forward with the fourth generation at the helm, we look back at the



Contributed photo

**The beam signed by Truman Ingalls accompanied by, from left, Ed McQuillen, Ed Griffin, Former owner of Balsam Shade, Walter Ingalls, Stan Ingalls, Genn Hagan, John Ingalls, Don Teator, Greenville Town Historian.**

newly expanded history with pride.

Currently, Stanley R. Ingalls is the President and CEO of the organization, with his nephew Ed McQuillen, daughter Genevieve Hagan and son John Ingalls carrying on the family legacy and striving to mirror Truman's entrepreneurial spirit.

Truman's signature inscribed on that old barn timber is a testimony to GNH's legacy and the Ingalls family's industriousness. It will reside proudly in the flagship store in Greenville.

Signifying so many new ideas, this beam especially attests to the spirit of one man who created a proud legacy which his family continues to honor.



Here are two (of the 100+) photos to be shown at the August meeting. Above, the Corner Restaurant fully occupies the southeast of the four corners. To the right is today's Lafferty building. Below, a 1935 wintry scene shows a cleared pond waiting for skating and hockey. The pond was probably cleared by Lee Cunningham. Notice the Academy building with annex still attached.

