

Greenville Local History Group Newsletter

November 2017, Issue 265

Sylvia Hasenkopf—KKK & ephemera

An almost pleasant November day – cloudy start, sunny finish, 45 degrees – and evening greeted the almost thirty who came out for the last program of the year: Ken & Charlene Mabey, Bob Shaw, Arlene Brown, Lew & Sue Knott, Stephanie Ingalls, Edna Huffman, Bette Welter, Kathy Smith, Al Hulick, Marvin Smith, Rachel Ceasar, Richard Ceasar, Melinda Mullen, Sally Staunch, Mary Heisinger, Audrey Matott, Nick & Mary Lou Nahas, Richard McAneny, Harry Finnin, Sylvia Hasenkopf, Don Teator and another few that remained unrecorded. A special welcome to a few names above who attended for the first time in quite a while.

In a meeting I now call the Second Annual Sylvia Hasenkopf Presentation, attendees sat both spellbound and a tad disgusted at the evening's main topic: the Ku Klux Klan in Greene County. In arranging this program, even I was cautious about publicizing the event.

Sylvia started by eliciting our perceptions and stereotypes of the KKK. Reading our minds, she started by showing slides that demonstrated all of the negatives. She then gave a historical over-

view, the reasons for joining, and the connections to Greene County.

KKK membership falls into three stages. (You can find this and much more with an easy Google search.) The first stage is the several years after the Civil War, starting in Tennessee, quickly becoming violent and widespread, and eventually quelled under Federal laws of the early 1870s.

The second stage starts in the nineteen-teens after, perhaps not coincidentally, the showing of the now famous and still available movie *Birth of a Nation* in 1915. KKK mem-



Photo courtesy Sylvia Hasenkopf

bership rapidly grew for reasons given later. This period is known for the white hoods, burning of crossings, and executions of their targets, usually black people, although a similar trend from the first stage is not to be minimized. The Depression era saw the end of this stage.

The third, and current, stage starts after WWII, again reflecting the white supremacist, bigoted, nativist movement that marked the first two stages. Whether worse or not can be debated but the technology of better photography, TV, videos, etc., certainly have recorded and emblazoned these atrocities into our memories.

In a stunner for some, Sylvia suggested that membership in this organization, especially in the 1920s, was understandable. In an early 20th century Greene County (and nationwide), there was a core of basic values that people like us respected—patriotism, work ethic, support of your own people, the importance of church, and a few other key elements.

Before radio and television, much of the social networking stayed within a community, with local groups providing the glue. Church, newspapers, fraternal groups, etc., provided the main avenues of keeping in touch. If our pastor was to encourage us to join the local “Klavern” (women had their own group), many of us would have considered the invitation.

Membership mushroomed with one photographically recorded march in Washington, D.C., showing 50,000 marching people, clad in white robes. It was a magnificent show of strength. It should be noted that the second stage of the KKK of the 1920s was enlarged by the urban influence, one driven by “native” fears of the immigrants, millions of them and many of them not of the Protestant faith.

Membership turnover in the 1920s was high, with people tiring of costly fees, a negative belief system that became more obvious after time, corruption from within,

scandal, and a better use of their time. Although mass meetings were held and crosses burned in Greene County, and perhaps even in Greenville according to one source present this evening, it appears no one was hurt. However, the terror and pressure if you did not belong to the right crowd must have been oppressive. We would be safe if we were white, of mostly Anglo-Saxon stock, native born, and of a Protestant denomination.

Also important to this group was the participation of women. The closest parallel I could draw is our Auxiliaries, who today help the men in their duties. The photo showing women and children dressed in uniform at meetings can be disquieting.

Sylvia detailed enough that many of us had already concluded by the presentation’s half-way point that the attitudes we find abhorrent have reared their ugly heads in today’s political atmosphere. And I think many of us in the crowd this evening quietly acknowledged that we should not be so smug to think that current Greenville is immune to these attitudes.

Side topic: The KKK had their own terminology. A few are listed below, with their definitions. (A thank you to Sylvia for this list.)

- Klavern – Local Chapter
- Klaliff - Vice President of the Local Chapter
- Klokard – Lecturer
- Kludd - Chaplain
- Kligrapp – Secretary
- Klabee - Treasurer
- Kladd - “Conductor”, in charge of initiating new members
- Klarogo – Sergeant of Arms, an inner guard
- Klexter - Outer guard
- Night Hawk – Courier
- Klonvocation – ritual meeting
- Kloran – ritual book
- Klectoken – initiation fee
- and there was a bunch more.



A good example of ephemera: a post card, memorializing an event that was important in 1914 and could have been forgotten except for someone saving it for over a hundred years. Courtesy Sylvia Hasenkopf

After an hour of dark patches of our American history, Sylvia lightened the air and yielded to the second topic of the evening—ephemera. Ephemera are paper items (such as posters, broadsides, and tickets) that were originally meant to be discarded after use but have since become collectibles. What gets saved is influenced by the most whimsical of choices, and Sylvia's idea could lead to a program of Greenville ephemera I have collected over the years. One of my appreciated savers of material was Phyllis Beechert who would save a copy of the parade brochures and public ceremony programs. I need someone to do that.

A couple of photos in this newsletter show some of our ephemera.

Reminder: Peak calendar selling season is here. If you can help by encouraging others to buy a copy, thank you. I am hopeful we can break even. Calendars are available at Kelly's Pharmacy, Library, Tops, and GNH. Please thank the owners/managers of these establishments for their support. Without them, there is no calendar.

Calendars can be ordered by mail. Make a check to GLHG (Don Teator, 3979 Rt 67, Freehold, NY 12431). One for \$11, and then add \$9 for each additional calendar (\$20 for two, \$29 for three, etc.) If you want,

email me your order, I will send you the calendar(s) and trust you to send payment.

Another calendar reminder: Den Mower, from our July 2017 meeting, has produced five different calendars based on the photos of his Alaska trip. Let me know if you need more info. \$17 per calendar.

Announcement: Would you like to have a copy of all the GLHG calendar photos in a 10" x 10" hardcover album? I have made such a book, through Shutterfly. Photos only, no captions. Each page is a year of the calendar, with the front and back showing a collage of all the calendar covers.

I have four of these books to sell. They can be purchased for \$30 each, or two for \$50. Contact me if interested.

The obituary pages captured my attention more than usual this past month. The loss of four community members involved with GLHG or with community or with making history were noted:

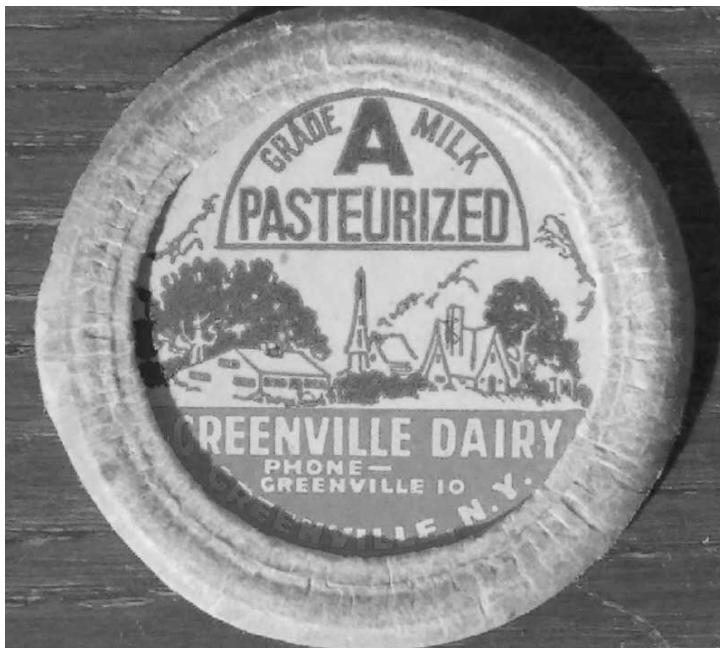
—Ted Nugent was always interested in local history, not in a research way, but just living it and re-telling his stories. As a Town Board member, Ted was vocally supportive of my activities as Historian.

—Helen Brown kept in touch through a newsletter subscription for years. Always interested in many topics, she knew her connections locally, supported many community groups, and especially helped the Library.

—Carol Bryant attended a number of our meetings and gave a generous donation to GLHG several years, a gift used to pay for calendars. Long known as a favorite elementary teacher, Carol was seen at the supermarket and leaves a legacy to be long remembered.

—Harriett Gumport attended a number of meetings, made sure I knew her connections to local history (first female president of GCS Board), and had her finger in many local activities.

To all of you, thank you for adding to depth and richness of local life.



More ephemera: the milk bottle cap from the Greenville Dairy. (Anyone knowing the years of operation of the Dairy, please contact Don Teator); cap courtesy of Bob Shaw.

The Civil War Round Table meets Wednesday, December 13. Ron Gabriele finishes his two-part presentation on Pearl Harbor. Even if you missed Part 1, you will enjoy any presentation from Ron. Meeting is at the Library, 7:30.

Winter, for me, is a good time to work on local history projects that might be shared in the near future. As you can guess, I am encouraging you to work on a project or two, especially the recording and writing of memories, stories, and facts.

Pick a topic, no matter the size. Looking over our past few years of newsletters you can see where we have been. Allow me to suggest:

**write up your own family history, dates, stories, related material

**write about a person in the community (even better, write on a regular basis, for yourself, our newsletter, or community newspaper)

**write up a community event that is just a memory, or write up a community event that is current but worth noting now while the information is there. Examples:

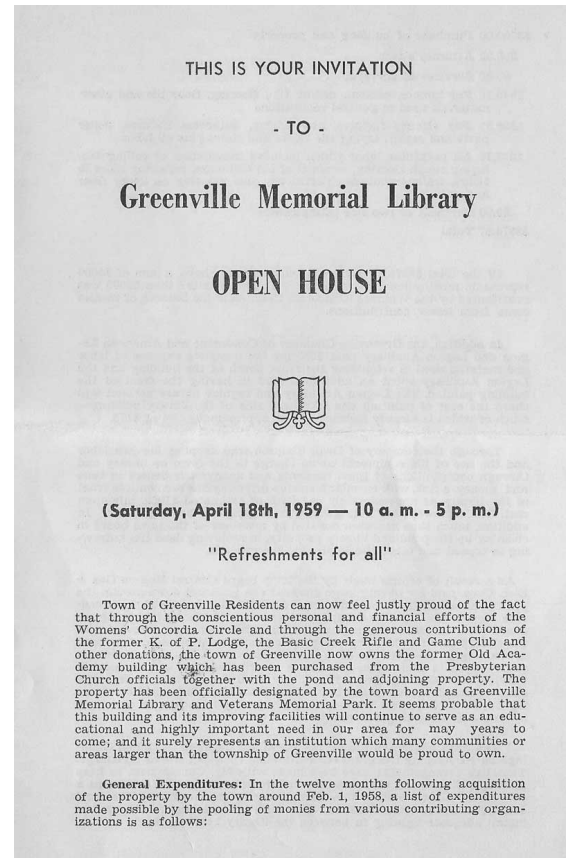
- Greene County Firemen Parades;
- the Hot Air Balloon fest;
- the snow drags at Balsam Shade;
- the Greenville Drive-In;
- GCS musicals; GCS graduation programs;
- a GCS class history;
- Memorial Day parades;
- Eagle Scouts in Greenville;
- winter storms;
- floods;
- an organization (Kiwanis, C of C, Rotary, IOOF, Knights of Pythias, etc.)
- a genealogy of a Greenville family
- a house history
- a street history (who lived where, during a certain time)
- last of the dirt roads
- technological changes

- the pond area, and dredgings
 - mom & pop stores
 - indexing obituaries – loose/in newspaper
 - indexing main stories in Greenville Locals on file
 - re-reading a year, or two, or decade of the Greenville Local and present an overview
 - make a photo album – you choose the topic
 - history of a school house
 - a waterway in the Town
 - politics of a selected era
 - budgets (of town, or school)
- and I could add another fifty quite easily but I will spare you for now.

A special thank you to Stephanie and Christine for providing the light refreshments at each and every meeting. Your creative homemade touches are always admired.

I will have an annual report out in late winter. Plan on April for our first meeting. Thank for sharing another worthy year of Greenville area history.

Take care,

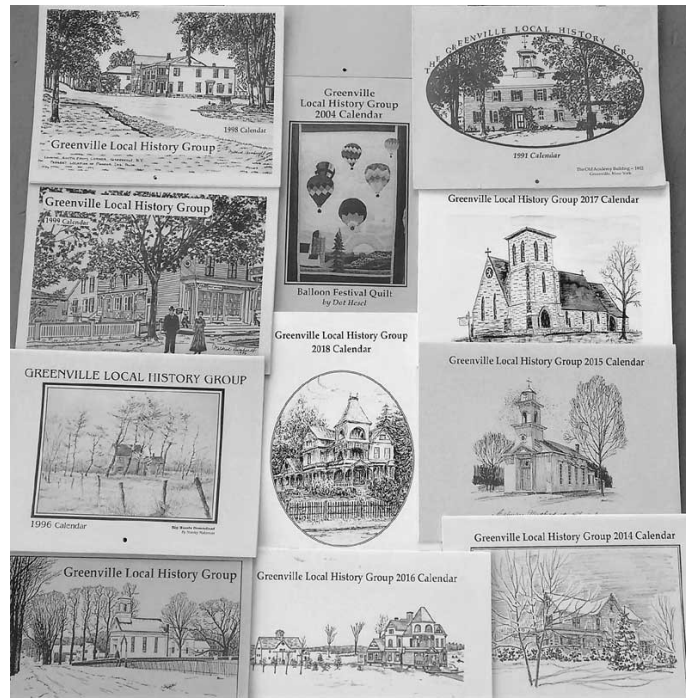


More ephemera



From the 2018 calendar

This detailed photo documents one of Greenville's widely remembered restaurants. Although the donor of this photo **identified it as Gus Baker's (Main Street, Greenville, site of current Kelly's Pharmacy)**, grandchildren Ken Baker and Barbara Van Auken caution it could be of the previous owner, Joe Ennis. All the calendars are open to May 1937, even the A. J. Cunningham calendar directly above the napkin holder on the center table. courtesy Doug Stanton



Shown here are two photos of the hard-cover calendar album I created. The top is the front cover, showing half of our calendar covers. Not shown is the back cover, depicting the other calendar covers.

The bottom photo shows the 2014 photos, including the cover. Each of the other pages, in order of year, show the cover and the photos of that calendar. The last three pages include scans of the inside back covers, as well as a commentary. I ordered four extra, for sale. Details are earlier in the newsletter.

