

Greenville Local History Group Newsletter

August 2020, Issue 287

1980s, Newry, Lake, scrapbook

Good early September, Local Historians,

The new normal: Pandemic Newsletter #2: Instead of sharing the monthly program, the new format is a sharing of various topics that I hope you will find of interest. If you have an idea, paragraph, photo, etc., to share, please contact me.

This month:

- Audrey Matott: the 1980s according to the Greenville Locals
- Garth Bryant: Who was Edward Lake?
- Flip Flach: Newry
- Ken Mabey: Mabie Scrapbook
- Calendar, recognition

(dt: The August program would have meant an entertaining program about the face of Greenville as presented by the Greenville Locals. I asked Audrey if she would give a sense of how she felt about the 1980s (her birth decade!) with a little explication. The program is scheduled for next year.)

Greenville of the 1980s – Audrey Matott

I have four images for you from the 1980s Greenville presentation. They do have captions themselves but I chose them because I think they best represent 1980s Greenville. Here are my thoughts:

The 1980s for Greenville was a transitional time for the town. In overview of the research I have done through The Greenville Locals of the 1980s, the decade was as much the end of an era as it was the beginning of a new one.

Throughout the 1970s, there was a tremendous push for commercial businesses to develop in the area, which they did. I think that along with this push, there was a natural drive for modernization of the town.



Some local businesses did try to modernize, such as Mary's Restaurant and GNH. Meanwhile, others succumbed to the changes such as the Greenville Theater/Playhouse and Jesse's Elm Shade. At the same time, many other businesses came and went, some lasting for a season while others lasted a few years. The town seemed to welcome larger, modern businesses that set up shop such as Ames Department Store.

Old Church is Reduced to Rubble



Following our story in last week's edition are, before and shortly after scenes of the former Rte. 26 Episcopal Church, which after being moved to the center of Greenville became a theatre and playhouse. It apparently took a long period of time to construct a building of this size in 1825-27, but with modern equipment, our local contractor John Kubernach, with the help of his machines, was able to reduce the entire building to a pile of kindling wood in just a few hours.

Another sign of progress has caught up with some of the history of Greenville. It is amazing how in just a few days after the clearing of the site, and as we approach Rte. 32 along Rte. 81, we know that something is missing, but it takes a few minutes to realize just what it is.

The site will soon be the location of another in the chain of modern Cumberland Farms stores, featuring convenient foods and self service gasoline pumps.

By: Bill Reinecke Jr.

I feel it is important to note that throughout these changes, the character of the town seemed to remain steadfast. Greenville maintained the character of a small, peaceful, rural town with an appreciation for landscape and community. Local events and organizations continued to thrive for the very sake of community involvement and celebration.

I think the community support and effort by the GCS Band to build the gazebo in Veterans Memorial Park at the end of the decade is a testament to the town's character and thus, it remains an iconic part of the village landscape that we all treasure; not only for what it is but for what it represents.

In the photos you will see the demolition of Jesse's Elm Shade and the Greenville Theater/Playhouse. You will also see the newly constructed Greenville Post Office and the completing touches being added to the gazebo in Veterans Memorial Park.

New P O Gets New Flag



The Greenville Post Office opened at its new location, in a new building, last Saturday, August 10th. It is located on Route 81, nearly across from Mary's Restaurant and adjacent to the A.J. Cunningham Funeral Homes, Inc. building. A new flag for the Post Office was donated by the American Legion Auxiliary Post 291 at brief ceremonies on the 10th.

Shown above, from left to right, are Josephine Gilberto, American Chairman for Unit and Greene County; Frank Tiberi, Town Supervisor; Louise Mufale, Postmaster; Sandy Zarcone, President; Betty Vaughn, Past District Chairman; Rita Norton, 1st Vice President and Barbara Licata, Secretary.

Project Nears Completion



Volunteer work crews from the Greenville High School Band Parents Group were at work again on the gazebo in "Veterans Park" in the center of Greenville. Crews worked last Thursday and Saturday and made significant progress on the roof of the structure and on the finish work necessary to bring the project to completion. Remaining work includes completion of a landing at the bottom step, some lattice work finishing, and the installation of a plaque listing all who worked on and contributed to the project.

The Greenville High School Band, which travelled to Paris early in the summer to represent New York State at the French Biennennial, undertook the Gazebo Project as a way of thanking the community for its support of the band. Contributions for the Gazebo were sought in the form of a "Buy a Board for the Gazebo" campaign. Contributions partially covered the cost of materials; all the construction labor has been donated. When complete, the gazebo will be a lasting and very useful "thank you" to the greater Greenville community.

Contributions are still needed to bring the project to a successful conclusion. A contribution of \$5 will "buy a board" and add the contributor's name to the plaque. Contributions should be made payable to the G.C.S. band and forwarded by mail to the Greenville High School Band, Greenville, New York 12083.

Photo by CSH

Audrey's PowerPoint of photos for next year's program is available at:

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1-0paJG79BEKG0b7a1blLZiTCVogbOHzh3IsYZFQc80/edit>

The Lake Family in Greenville

Garth Bryant

Dear fellow Historians

Don Teator has asked me to share with you a little heads up about a research project I have been working on. Don and I have been communicating back and forth as this project evolves. Although it is far from complete, it has reached a point where Don believes the rest of the group may have an interest. Therefore, here is a summary of what I have been doing and a little bit of what I have found out. I think the simplest way to start this is to include the introductory page of my project in its entirety. This sums up what I am attempting to do.



In the summer of 2018, I attended a Greenville Historical meeting about the earliest settlers of the Town of Greenville. The lively discussion about what the maps showed and what we were looking at struck a chord with me. Some of the lands my family had owned were associated with three men who are reported to be the original settlers of Greenville, Benjamin Spees, Edward Lake, and Eleazer Knowles. Greenwood Apartments was the site of Benjamin Spees original cabin. Our supermarket, shopping center and housing development were also mostly on Spees land. We had purchased the land we owned on Ingalside Road from the Howe and

Green families who had purchased them from the Lakes. One of the early maps used in the GLHG program clearly showed Israel Lake as the owner of our Ingalside Road property. I knew for a fact that some of the Lakes were buried in the small cemetery at the north end of Ingalside Road. The 1867 map of Greenville clearly shows the Lake home site as the foundation at the end of my current driveway on Ingalside Road. In contrast with this, the Lake historical marker was placed on Rt. 32 just south of the Albany County line. This seemed wrong to me. I thought I had a rough idea of the early settling of the Town. General Augustine Prevost and his son, Major Augustine Prevost, were granted this land by the King of England for their service in the French and Indian War. They moved here, built their home Hush Hush (today, the Prevost Manor, between Ingalside Rd and Maple Ave; dt note), and sold off parts of their land to other settlers. Our home was located on land once owned by the Lakes. Suddenly it was important to me to know about the history of this property. The Lakes were one of the first settlers. We are only the second owner since the Lakes. How hard can this possibly be?

More than two years later I can honestly say that almost all of my preconceived no-



Upper right: under Cherry Grove is Wm Lake, upper
Ingalside Rd; in yellow section is Maple Ave

tions about the founding of Greenville have been proven incorrect. Spees, Lake, and Knowles were not the first settlers of Greenville. The Lake family historic marker is right where it should be. My belief that we were only the third family to own our property was way off. This property had been owned, at least in part, by eight different families. The settlers who I thought came and purchased their land from Prevost arrived here more than a decade before Prevost did. These early settlers, many of them Revolutionary War veterans, would end up losing their farms after the war to Prevost, a British Officer who had fought against them. The story of how this came about is almost too unlikely to be-

lieve. It involves betrayal, infidelity, crooked politicians and a leading role by one of the most controversial characters in American History, Arron Burr.

All of this was a huge surprise to me. I had absolutely no clue that Greenville had such a controversial beginning. Other important Americans like Washington and Hamilton get mentioned in a small way in the story. I started thinking how is it possible that I was raised here and I didn't know any of this? So now this has become a bit of an obsession. I will continue this research as far as it takes me. When I am finished, I hope to share it with all who are interested. I can't



Calendar Preparation & Recognition

The 2021 Greenville Local History Group Calendar is at the printer.

A normal year would see an October program to unveil the calendar, with sales to commence then and continue until early January. Strangely, or not, I think the same schedule will work, except for the cancelled program.

And we often schedule discounts for meeting attendees. Let me ponder an alternative.

It is time to announce the identity of our recognition – Sue & Bill Von Atzingen!

I am always so impressed to learn how fortunate the Greenville area is to have people like Sue and Bill, and the other thirty people we have recognized over the years. And I remind myself that, even without GLHG recognition, there are dozens of other people in our community with talent and service.

Other notes:

***A thank you to this month's contributors: Audrey Matott, Garth Bryant, Flip Flach, Ken Mabey. If you have something local history-esque, contact me.

*** In the next newsletter, I plan on listing all the names (names only) of the 200 email recipients. Prompting this is three occasions of being the go-between to connecting long ago friends or between people of common interests. I hope another connection or three might happen. If you wish not to be listed, email me.

***What a gem our Town Park is. Deb and I spent a morning traversing the park, admiring the newly spruced up trails, the range of ecosystems, the knowledge of how it began, and notice that it gives others about the worth of open land and community service so close to the village center. To all of you who helped initiate and who maintain and oversee this gem, thank you.

Newry – Flip Flach

Newry – a busy little burg of the 1800's located about three miles to the northeast of Greenville: reputed to have had a commercial tannery, general store, shoe-maker shop, Mason Lodge, Doctors home/office, a 1-room school-house, as well as numerous surrounding family farms.

By the time of my introduction / information to memories of the area, through family experiences and stories from Grandparents, Dad, Uncles, only the Doctor's house and school-house remained; and the tannery location is known but the other properties/sites were gone and unknown.

To my knowledge, the oldest remaining structure, now repurposed and standing strong is the home/office of Dr. John Ely, traced back to having been built in the 1790's. To the west, on a one-acre parcel donated from that Ely property, stands the one-room schoolhouse, now a residence.

The Tannery property was eventually purchased by the Gould family of NYC and a beautiful, large Federal style "summer" home was built (is a residence today). That 130+ acre property later became a major working dairy farm, owned and operated for my childhood / early adult life by Wallace Peck. After his passing, many owners/land divisions occurred.

My home, centrally located at the intersection of the "Newry Roads", was built in 1850 by Nathan Swarthout, a prominent builder of the day from the South Westerlo area. He also built 3 more Newry area "carbon-copy" houses and barns in that time-span implementing the "National Style" design (formerly referred to as Greek Revival), which was popular in the mid-1800's. Numerous family dairy farms of various sizes operated for the next hundred years, all sadly gone today.



between the O and U of title is Newry Lane and Newry Rd joining CR 38.

Due to the convenient location, my place, the original Emery Palmer farm, which my family has owned since 1948, became the milk-shipping transport center for the rest of the area farms by the Normanskill Creamery of Albany. Over a dozen farms (my Grandfather's Maplehurst farm to the east as one of them) transported their personally labelled 40 -quart milk cans twice weekly to be stored in the cooling stone ice house at Palmers to be picked up by truck and taken in for processing. Individual at-farm pickup eventually came to pass when roads and trucks became better suited. Then with the change to bulk-tank type storage and trucking in the 60's/70's, canned milk ceased.

To pass through Newry now, one would never envision a bustling community was once located here. How time and progress alter the face of our surroundings and the lifestyle of residents.

dt: directions to Newry. From Greenville Four Corners, proceed north on SR 32 for 1.5 miles [at Shepard's blinking light], turn right, or east, for about a mile (intersection of the CR 38 and the Newry Roads). You are there.

(dt: A Scrapbook Puzzle Solved: A recent call resulted in retrieving a scrapbook that easily could have been thrown away. At first glance, this 9" x 6" x 4" tome appeared to be an assortment of pastings on random pages of some book deemed suitable for covering up. In the hands of the right person, it came alive. Thus, Ken's article below.)

News-clippings Book **Given by Loretta and George Langdon** Ken Mabey

A folk way that appears to have been popular during the 19th and early 20th centuries was to paste, or glue in a notebook, newspaper articles about a variety of things of interest to the person performing the task. This particular book is done in a thick book from the Commissioner of Agriculture. Occasionally the "author" skips a few pages that he may have wanted to save.

The news articles do not often give the name of the paper they were taken from. The "Local" does appear on many. It is helpful that this person does occasionally write the year of the clipping in the margins, or on the article. Most of the articles are of births, marriages, and deaths that we might refer to as vital statistics. Many are relatives, neighbors or friends of the maker of the book. The names of people who would be recognizable to most people whose families have lived in Albany, Greene and Schoharie counties over two or more centuries.

There are stories of interest, about various individuals who went to the top of Mt. Pisgah in Durham for the "glorious views." Murders, most notably one in Coxsackie, and one in Leeds. A reminder that "the good old days" may not be quite as different as today. There are also romantic stories with happy endings, and some of unrequited love. It was a different time, the language and

style of the prose, and poetry being much more subjective and judgmental in tone than we might see in today's news. There were stories of Civil War veterans, some local, also occasional clips from our "Brooklyn" correspondent". Local papers also dealt with national news, and politics, and there is some of that, also.

Who was the maker of this book? The clues are found in two items that were left loose, enclosed in the pages of the book. One was from the Surrogate Court of Greene County, New York regarding the last will and testa-



ment of Anna I Hayes, dated 30 December 1902. The executors of the will were Oscar A. Mabie, and Orville Mabie, brothers of the deceased. A list of her heirs and others to be notified of the reading of the will are noted.

The other clue is a card from the post office, proof of a registered letter sent to American Temperance Life Insurance Company on 6 May, 1902. This was a short time after Oscar Mabie's sister Annie I. Mabie, aka Anna I Hayes, had died. I think there is little doubt that this book of clippings was none other than Oscar. Also, the many items from Greenville, Norton Hill, Freehold, and South Westerlo, and family names that appear also lend support.