

Newsprint in the Attic: Clues to a Life

by Holly O'Connor

My great-grandma kept a small selection of newspapers in her attic for decades. I finally sat down to figure out what was so special about these ten or so issues she saved, and the answers were right on the front pages.

Great-grandma was born Ruth A. Glennon on December 6, 1877, on Long Island. Whatever her circumstances were, she had the good fortune to be adopted through the American Female Guardian Society, NYC, on January 21, 1880 by Abram and Lucinda (Tremper) Mann of Union Grove, NY. She began her new life as Etta Mann, certainly bringing new happiness to the mourning Manns, whose three daughters had died of milk sickness*.

The earliest newspaper saved by Etta was the Margaretville Messenger, dated Thursday, June 25, 1896, subscribed to by her father Abram Mann at \$1.00 per year, in advance.

**Milk sickness is a kind of poisoning, characterized by trembling, vomiting, and severe intestinal pain, that affects individuals who ingest milk, other dairy products, or meat from a cow that has fed on white snakeroot plant, an herb in the aster family, which contains the poison tremetol. Milk sickness was responsible for the deaths of thousands of settlers in the American Midwest in the early 19th century. Abram and Lucinda Tremper Mann lost daughters Frances, 4, Mary, 5, and Sarah, 17 between Dec. 22, 1877 and Jan. 4, 1878 to this malady. The family was reinterred from Union Grove Cemetery to Margaretville Cemetery when the Pepacton Reservoir was constructed.*

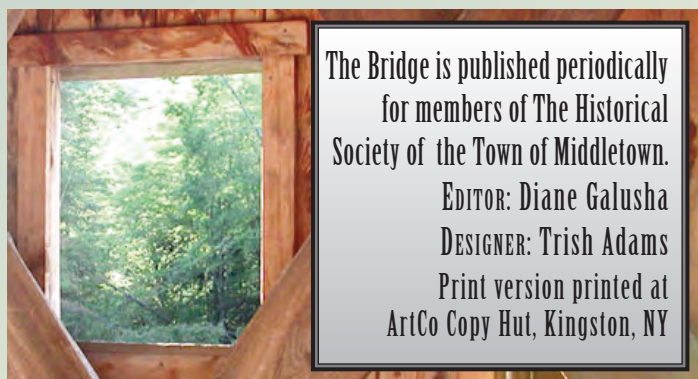


Etta Easman and daughter Glennon born Nov. 6, 1902.

Featured on the front page: “The Commencement of 1896; A Week in the History of the Margaretville Union School that its Patrons May Well be Proud of – Its First Graduating Class. Rarely if ever have we listened to so fine a class valedictory as that of Miss Etta Mann.” She graduated at the top of her teacher training class at the same school a year later, and taught at area schools for the next five years.

The Delaware Gazette reported on December 18, 1901, that Etta, age 22, resigned her position as the principal teacher of the Intermediate department of the Andes High School, I presume because it was customary for a woman to give up her employment when about to marry. A CMN from the attic, published on September 11, 1902, has an article about Etta’s husband, the very industrious Andrew J. Easman. A musician, liveryman, barber, and proprietor of the Riverside Hotel (current site of Margaretville Central School), Andrew developed his entrepreneurial brand “fur-

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nishing a wholesome object lesson for young men who squander their substance on cigarettes, soft drinks, and red neckties, and wonder why they don't get along." Shortly thereafter, they celebrated the birth of my grandma, Glennon Lucy Easman, on November 6, 1902.

Great tragedy for Etta was reported in the CMN and the Ellenville Journal on March 20, 1908. On March 12 Andrew died of pneumonia just before his 42nd birthday. While the undertaker was preparing the body for embalming in an upstairs bedroom of the Riverside Hotel, a large kerosene lamp fell to the floor and exploded in the downstairs barroom. The force blew the other lamps from their sockets, causing a second explosion, and guests had to run for their lives. Undertaker Hugh Gorsch barely had time to carry Andrew's body downstairs and out to a neighbor's house before the wooden building was consumed by fire. I can't help but wonder at how devastating this must have been for Etta, to lose her husband, the father of her little girl, followed by their hotel burning to the ground within hours. The love and support of the Easman family and friends can be found in the penny postcards she saved from that time, the 1908 equivalent of email and text messaging.

Etta had to gather herself and figure out how to provide for her child,

and I marvel at her resilience. My mom heard that a man in town suggested that they have an "arrangement," but Etta rejected the sort of "understanding" that he offered. Online, the CMN reports that three months after her tragic loss, Mrs. Easman was hired by Margaretville High School to teach in September 1908, a job she maintained through 1917. Her salary was reported as \$450 annually.

For several months in 1910, the CMN sponsored a contest, asking readers to vote for their favorite Delaware County teachers. The top five would take a trip to Washington, D.C., and a "probable audience" with President Taft, expenses paid by the CMN!

Etta was one of the five winners, arriving in the capitol on March 25, 1910. The CMN of April 8, 1910 reported "Mrs. Etta Easman remembered each pupil in the primary department of our High School by sending them a souvenir postcard." I have two picture postcards of the five teachers in Washington, D.C., but never knew the story behind them until I read it online in the Catskill Mountain News! The party consisted of A.D. Hollenbeck and his wife of Vega, Miss Orra Bellows of Roxbury, Miss Geraldine DeSilva of Arena, Miss Vivian Franks of Halcottville, and Etta.

The next CMN in the attic collection, March 29, 1912, outlines a Delaware



Andrew J. Easman, Etta Mann's first husband, died of pneumonia in 1908. He was proprietor of the Riverside Hotel in Margaretville, which burned the night he died.

County teacher's conference. It states: "Probably the subject of teaching reading, especially in the lower grades, has never been discussed in a more lucid and interesting manner...as by Mrs. Etta Easman."

Love and marriage came again for Etta. She married James J. Welch, Superintendent of the Delaware and Northern Railroad on August 12, 1916, and they built their home with Glennon on Swart Street. The July 6, 1951 CMN, from the attic, reported a surprise 77th birthday party for Jim at their home with 115 guests, and included the names of many friends who helped Etta with the surprise. Just as we do today, old photos were displayed, and "guests

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received many laughs from photographs of ‘friends in their old-style hats.’” “Punch was served from a cut glass punch bowl, a gift from the Delaware and Eastern railroad men on the occasion of the wedding of Mr. and Mrs. Welch 35 years ago.” (Now I know the origin of our punch bowl!)

The articles saved by Etta and Glennon, and available online, from such a personal, hometown newspaper as the CMN, do so much to flesh out the stories of how they lived: who visited for weekends, and why; their participation in the civic groups and clubs; that Abram Mann was a devoted and lifelong voter; the family, flowers, and fabrics of Glennon’s wedding at the Swart Street house; the names of old friends I remember hearing, recorded as the young people of Margaretville; and other news items of the area that might have made them wonder what the world is coming to, or smile, or raise their eyebrows.

Now I must ask you, dear reader, what treasures are in your attic, and why? Have you checked online for the newspaper where your grandparents grew up? And what will you save for someone to read in 100 years and feel as if they know you? I look forward to reading about it!

Holly O’Connor has happy memories of many, many visits to Grandma Glennon’s in Margaretville. She enjoys gathering family history and is the one who has everyone line up for a photo at get-togethers. She lives in Carmel, Putnam County



Winners of the ‘most popular teacher’ contest of 1910, shown on their prize trip to Washington, DC, were L to R: Miss Vivian Franks of Halcottville, Miss Etta Easman of Margaretville, Miss Geraldine DeSilva of Arena, Mrs. Hollenbeck, wife of winner AD Hollenbeck, Vega; and Miss Ora Bellows of Roxbury.



J.J. Welch and Etta Mann Easman, the couple on the left, out for a drive with unidentified friends. J.J. and Etta married in 1916.

The first golf course in Middletown was constructed as the Pakatakan Country Club in Arkville in 1923. Designed by golf architect William Tucker, Jr., it was a nine-hole, 3,000-yard course that grew to 18 holes on both sides of Route 28. Owned by the Pakatakan Association, the Country Club included a clubhouse equipped with showers, a smoking room and a coffee shop, and the Pakatakan Inn, the focal point of the Pakatakan Artists Colony.

In 1928, the Country Club was managed by Margaret and Edmund Newton. Its Board of Directors included several prominent area business men: Homer Samuels, Clarke Sanford, J. J. Welch, Stanley Bussy, Robert Craft,

George Speenburgh and Earl Jenkins.

The Club eventually went bankrupt and was sold at auction in 1931 to Edwin Burhorn, who owned a home in the colony. He died in 1937. Much of the golf course was subsequently developed as a mobile home park and commercial properties.

The golf course at Kass Inn on Route 30 between Margaretville and Halcottsville opened in the spring of 1949. It was a 9-hole course built by Frank Wilson of Roxbury on 60 acres opposite the railroad crossing.

Lou Pedulla, who had managed the former Pakatakan Country Club in Arkville, was the operations manager and proprietor of the golf shop. George Hendricks and Bill Tweedy and their families worked and lived there for several decades.

The Inn was started in 1919 when Max Kass bought a six-room farmhouse and 387 acres from Leander McEwen. In 1921, Max married Sadie Ginder and over the years they expanded the inn to accommodate 150 guests in 75 rooms, adding the 300-acre Hess farm across the road.

In addition to golfers, Kass Inn was popular with skiers coming to area slopes, and with anglers who could fish the East Branch without leaving the premises.

Kass Inn was sold in the early 1990s to a Japanese firm and renamed Hanah Country Inn. The golf course was expanded to a challenging 18 holes and became known as The Terminator.

Margaretville Baseball Team in Victory Year of 1924

Present-day "timers" find it difficult to realize how important baseball was to the "old-timers" of 1924 when Margaretville played 29 games at home and away, won 24 of them.

When the team played, rooters

were the prominent business and professional men of the village. They were skilled in kibitzing. The games were well attended. There is no doubt part of the spectators came for the ruckus and an occasional fist fight as well

as to witness the skill of the players.

All the "old-timers" have given up baseball. Several have left the earthly scene. But a majority are living and are not too old to witness the great American game.



Seated, left to right: Walter (Pete) Rickard, right field; Ruthven (Robby) Robertson, pitcher and third base; Russell (Pete) Winnie, short-stop; Howard (Cy) Etts, captain and centerfield; Dr. C. C. Faulkner, manager; William (Billy) Griffin, catcher; Joe Scanlon, Oneonta, pitcher. Standing, left to right, Curtis (Curt) Burnhans, left field; Don Stewart, umpire; Cecil Polley, second base, and Floyd Moore, first base. Other members of the team not in the picture were: Wilbur Bouton, pitcher and third base; Otis Whitney, pitcher; Edward White, catcher and

left field; Winton Ruff, left field; James Walsh, left field. The team played 29 games in 1924, winning 24 and losing 5. Teams played were South Kortright, Walton, Hobart, Roxbury, Tunis Lake, Andes, Oneonta Red Sox, Downsville, Kingston All Stars, Roscoe, Middleburgh, Kingston Chevrolets, Kingston Studebakers, Saugerties, Delhi. Andes and Downsville evidently were traditional rivals of Margaretville. On the back of the photograph, written after the scores noting defeats of these two teams, were the words "joy" and "more joy."

Reprinted from Feb. 17, 1961 Catskill Mountain News

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“Mr. Kass does not expect to operate the golf course for profit. . . It is built for an added attraction at the Inn, which enjoys an excellent reputation throughout the mountains and this part of the state. On big days at the Inn, it is not uncommon to serve 500 dinners. The Inn will probably average 1,000 to 1,500 meals weekly.”

Catskill Mountain News,
May 7, 1948

“The Pakatakan Golf Course had an unexpected pleasure when Amelita Galli-Curci and Estelle Liebling, world famous singers, motored over from the Galli-Curci home at Highmount to play. In the party were Homer Samuels, (Galli-Curci’s husband), Frederick Sperling, and Herbert Gunnison. Both Mrs. Liebling and Galli-Curci played a really good game of golf. Indeed, the men of the party had a hard battle to come out victorious at the end of 16 holes of play.”

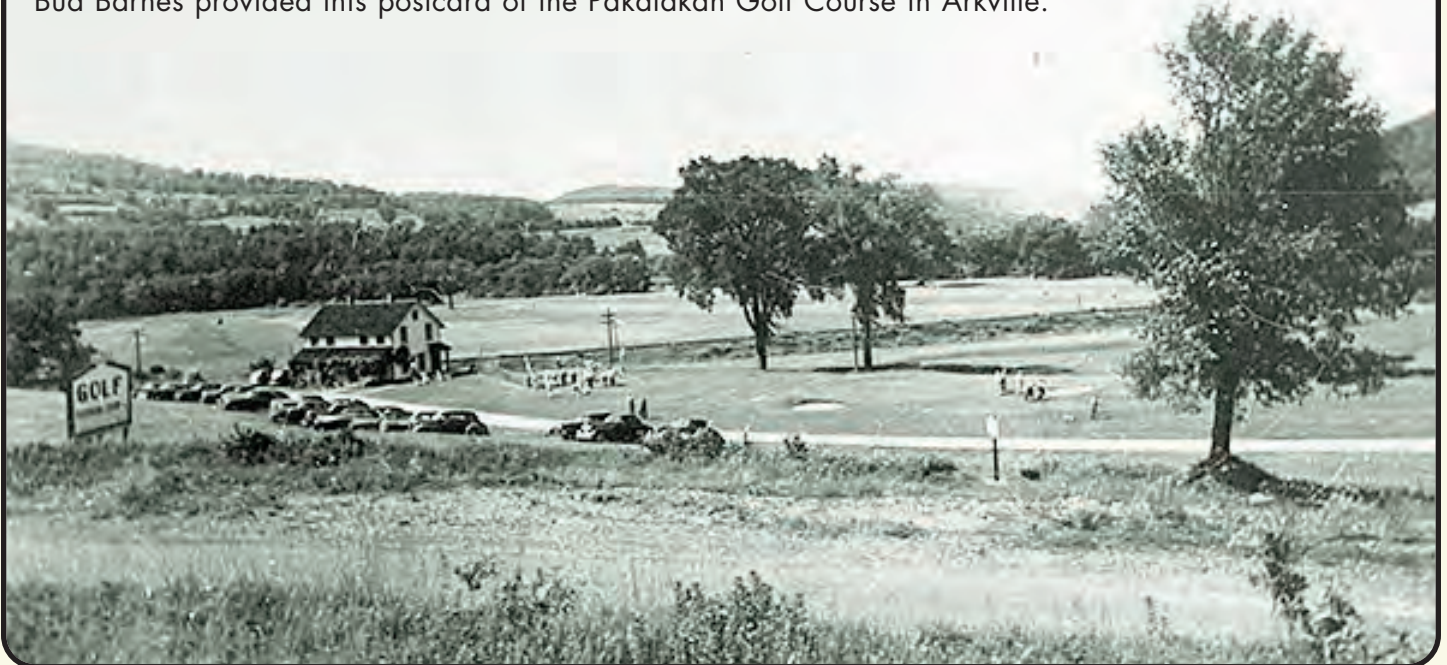
Catskill Mountain News, Sept. 9, 1927



The 10th hole at Kass Inn, where Max and Sadie Kass waited to take your order for a cold brew and a plate of chicken chow mein (75¢).

Bob Wyer collection, DCHA

Bud Barnes provided this postcard of the Pakatakan Golf Course in Arkville.



So promised the proprietors of Rip VanWinkle Sanitary Laundry Co. which offered to 'call for your clothes, wash it, wring it out and deliver it to you ready to be starched and ironed.' All for 50 cents. The advertisement in the Nov. 1, 1912 Catskill Mountain News doesn't say just how many pieces they'd do for that amount, but their "Rough Dry" service would wash, starch, dry and deliver "starch clothes, including dresses", ready to be ironed, for 35 cents a dozen! Bed and table linens were washed and ironed for 30 cents a dozen. Shirts: 10 cents. Collars and cuffs 2 cents each.

This Arkville business was apparently launched by Otto Seeger and George Hoffman of New York City, who made the Arkville News in May of 1912 when they "arrived in town Saturday evening with two new laundry wagons for delivering and calling for their work." The man and boy in this photo, supplied by Roger Davis, are not identified.

It's not clear how long the laundry operated on the site of the house most recently occupied by the late John and Flo Nolan on Dry Brook Road. But an advertisement June 17, 1938 for the Catskill Steam Laundry, Arkville identifies it as "formerly Rip VanWinkle Laundry." It largely operated during the summer and did laundry for hotels and boarding houses, and also did washing for families and individuals, including "bachelor work."

Max Nussbaum who owned the Fleischmanns Steam Laundry, turned that business over to his son Jack in 1936. Jack subsequently managed the Arkville laundry with his wife Blanche. The business employed 30 people and operated three delivery trucks when it burned under suspicious circumstances in 1948. (A wave of fires that year had put the community on edge. One in August 1948, leveled the Sunshine Laundry in Fleischmanns result-

ing in the death of proprietor Bea Finch, 80, who with her husband jumped from the second floor to escape the flames. Bea died four days later.)

The development of home-sized washers and dryers, and of coin-operated self-serve laundromats, largely put an end to the commercial laundry operations in our area.



Rip Van Winkle Sanitary Laundry Co. urged customers to "drop a postal and we'll be at your service." Photo courtesy Roger Davis

We have no idea what the inside of the Rip Van Winkle Laundry looked like. Here's a web image of an unidentified laundry that may have come close. Note the child in the walker. Heavy cast iron irons would have been used to press table and bed linens. Now *that's* drudgery!

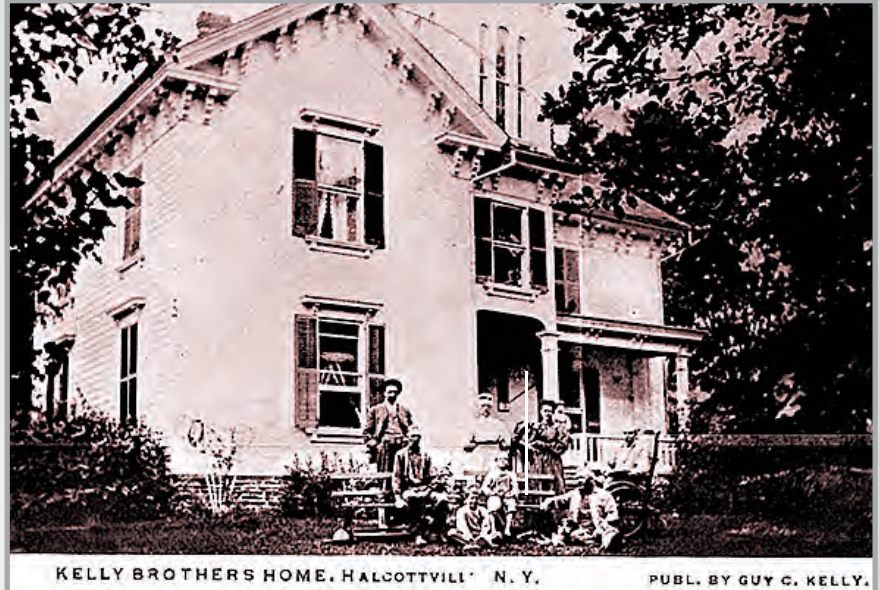


The Kelly Brothers, whose domain once included most of the land and several businesses in and around Halcottsville, will return to their old haunt July 7 to tell their story at the 6th Living History Cemetery Tour at Halcottsville Cemetery.

Three modern day Kelly brothers – Tim, Rich and Terry – will portray their ancestors – great-grandfather George (on ground at right in this photo), and his brothers Nelson (standing left) and David (seated in wheelchair at left). HSM is thrilled to welcome them back to their ancestral home to share the history of this influential family. Rich lives in Latham, NY; Terry in Greenwich, NY and Tim in Essex Junction, VT. They are sons of George Kelly, who was a son of Nelson, who was a son of George and Nettie Beardsley Kelly.

Other tour characters include Jennie McKenzie Hewitt Doland, teacher, seamstress and prolific diarist, to be portrayed by Agnes Laub; Andrew Moldovan, Russian immigrant farmer, played by Erwin Karl; Ed and Aurelia Griffin, general store and post office proprietors, portrayed by Dave Turan and Amy Taylor; entrepreneur George W. Hubbell, played by Burr Hubbell; hotel keeper Sherman Bussy, who will be played by John Bernhardt, and Sherman's young grandson Winfield Bussy, played by Kieran Canavan-Lima.

Reservations for the tour, directed by Frank Canavan and Joyce St. George, will open June 1. Tour times can be reserved by calling Jane Miller at 845-586-4736.



George Kelly's 87th birthday in August 2016, with (from left) Elaine Kelly (widow of son John), surviving sons Terry, Tim and Rich, and, seated, their sister, Sharon Hewitt.

CCC Camp S-133 (below), was established in 1935 just south of Margaretville. Some 200 young men of Co. 1230 developed ski trails, reforested abandoned farmland, and helped build Beaverkill State Campground. It operated for three years then was moved to Masonville.



Diane Galusha, author of *Another Day, Another Dollar, The Civilian Conservation Corps in the Catskills*, will give an illustrated talk on the CCC on Saturday, June 9 at 10 a.m. Weather permitting, the free program will be followed by a short hike through a CCC forest. This is a Headwaters History Days presentation. See the rest of the exciting HHD schedule here: headwatershistorydays.info.

SAVED!

Meet Zetus and Nettie Smith Searles. They had a farm on "Pink Street" (Denver Road) before moving to 'the village' in 1886 and operating a store at the crossroads in Kelly Corners where Zetus was also postmaster for many years. Their daughter Lina married Grant Kelly and operated a prominent boarding house just down the road.

The Searles' portraits, embedded in a plastic standup frame, were acquired at McIntosh Auction recently. The only identification was a piece of masking tape on the back reading: "Lina's parents. Mr and Mrs Searle." A bit of research turned up the rest.

It is an excellent example of why HSM needs a proper archives to preserve, research and share treasures like these which can so easily be lost or discarded. And we are nearly ready to share our plans for a new facility to do just that!

Our Future Archives

We intend to add a wing on our Cemetery Road hall to accommodate a sizeable storage area for our grow-



ing collection (currently held at the Middletown Town Hall). The addition will also include a reading/meeting room, an office, two accessible rest rooms and a lobby area. Renovations to the hall proper are also planned.

Watch for the launch of our capital campaign this summer, and, please, *Help Save Our Stories!*

THE ENDURANCE RUN IS BACK!

The 2nd Annual Catskill Conquest Pilot Rally, an observance of a 1903 endurance run of 34 early automobiles from Weehawken, NJ to Pittsburgh, PA, will traverse the central Catskills again September 22.

Drivers and vintage cars of any age are sought to follow part of the historic 1903 route from Mt. Tremper on the Esopus Creek to Unadilla on the Susquehanna River along a 75-mile course with six host/check-points, festivals and attractions. The start will be at the Maurice D. Hinchey Catskill Interpretive Center in Mt Tremper, and will follow the Catskill Mountains Scenic Byway along

the historic Ulster and Delaware Turnpike and then finish along the Catskill and Susquehanna Turnpike. Cars will stop at the Margaretville Cauliflower Festival, where they created quite a stir in 2017! To participate (\$50/car), send check to Historic Automobile Endurance Runs, LLC, 3024 State Route 28, Shokan, NY 12481.

This was a White Steamer ready to roll at Pine Hill during the 1903 Endurance Run through the Catskills. Courtesy of the Detroit Public Library.

THE 49¢ POST

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