



NORTH GREENBUSH NOTES

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Sharpe's Grove

Traveling north on Bloomingrove Drive in Defreestville, you might notice a sign by the road advertising "Sharpe Apartments" for rental units in the big house and addition back from the road. However, until the late 1940's this location was better known as Sharpe's Grove, a very popular picnic destination in the Capital District.

Before we talk about the picnics, let me share some history of the Sharpe family in North Greenbush.

Juria Sharp came to what was to be the Defreestville area around 1736. Four of his sons settled in the town. They were Martinus, George (the English version of Juria), Peter and Nicholas. It was Nicholas who farmed the Sharpe's Grove area. His property probably stretched from the intersection of Snyders Lake Road/Bloomingrove Drive to the field across from the Cumberland Farms. The Sharpe descendants continued to farm the land until the early 1900's when great-great-great grandson Buddington Sharpe converted the property into a dairy farm and decided to make use of the land "up the hill" from his house into what was to become known as Sharpe's Grove.

Bud Sharpe was involved in local politics. He was Rensselaer County Sheriff and North Greenbush Supervisor. It was only natural that his picnic area was the site for many political gatherings throughout the years.

However many civic and church and school groups held summer outings here. Joan Madden recalls living just north of the turnoff to Sharpe's Grove and telling visitors "it's just a quarter of a mile down the road-turn left".

Those visitors include members of Germania Hall in Troy, Elks Club members from Watervliet, Bloomingrove Reformed Church picnickers, and kids from the Wynantskill School who were loaded into Jack Schillinger's truck (which he used to haul pigs to market). They all came to Sharpe's Grove.

What they saw there were three buildings: one big open sided pavilion with long wooden tables and benches where the people would eat. Another pavilion was for dancing and another where drinks were served. At one time during the 1930's and 40's, Harry Wurger from Wynantskill and his sons put on clam bakes.

By the 1940's, things began to change. Bud Sharpe had died in 1938 and the war years left people with less time to picnic. In 1948 John Teliska bought 60 or 70 acres from the widow Jennie Sharpe and in 1952/53 he started building homes. The pavilions and outhouses on what is now Clearview Terrace were torn down; Sharpe Avenue became Teliska Avenue and Sharpe's Grove became a memory. Is it true that when the land was excavated for houses, many clam shells from the earlier clam bakes were found?

Now we have to go elsewhere for picnics, but not long ago "the place to go" was right up the road at Sharpe's Grove.

Please share any memories of Sharpe's Grove. Also, does anyone know about Albia Grove? My number is 283-6384.