



NORTH GREENBUSH NOTES

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Pottery in Greenbush

Recently a friend gave me a stoneware bottle from the 1800's with the name "Defreest Lemon Pop" written on it. Since the Defreest families were early settlers here, I thought I'd try to discover if there used to be any potteries in what is now North Greenbush.

My primary resource was a book "Pottery Works on the Capital District" by Warren Broderick. The first thing I learned was that there was an abundance of clay and firewood in this area—the ingredients needed for this profession.

In a 1767 map of the areas west and east of Albany locates families who were early settlers. One such notation is for a Philip Kerner alias "Pottbacker" –which may be Dutch for Potter. He lived on the northwest corner of Broadway and Tracy Streets in what was then the village of Bath which is now part of the City of Rensselaer.

Philip's younger brother John is listed in a circa 1790 land survey as also being a Pottbacker. However he lived off Best Road in what is now East Greenbush.

There were several early potters in Troy. I've read an advertisement placed in the Northern Budget on February 11, 1801, advertising Troy's first pottery, opened by New Jersey potter Branch Green. He is looking for two or three Journeymen Potters, "that can come well recommended as workmen at the Stone-Ware manufacturer. Likewise, two Lads, about 15 or 16 years of age, as Apprentices to the above business."

The business was located in South Troy, but the exact site is not known. There is another early structure still standing at on the corner of Fourth and Ferry streets in Troy which was operated by Josiah Chapman in the early 1800's. These are but two of many potteries in Troy, but so far I have struck out located a Defreest Pottery in North Greenbush.

I did finally locate the Defreest label—in Lansingburgh. The business was begun by Ezra Defreest (1816-1900) who was succeeded by his son, Daniel W. and in turn his son Ezra. Evidentially there Defreest bottles are quite common-but alas not from North Greenbush.

However, I'm glad to have this bottle and hope that someone out there knows of a pottery business that was located in my town. If so, please call me 283-6384.