



NORTH GREENBUSH NOTES

Jim Greenfield Town Historian 283-6384

Historic Relics Return Home

After a long absence, two pieces of North Greenbush history have returned home. Formerly part of the Defreest House (now the Administration Building at the R.P.I Tech. Park) an antique clock face and a collection of Delft tiles, which adorned a fireplace have traveled back to Rensselaer County. The individual Dutch tiles are especially interesting because they display scenes from the scriptures with the corresponding Bible citation. These two pieces possibly date back to the earliest years of the house.

The Defreest House which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, dates back to the 1700's. Philip Defreest was paying rent on this land by 1767. He and his brothers Martin and Jacob owned adjoining farms and their descendants populated the town leading to the naming of the hamlet Defreestville.

The Defreest family continued ownership of the homestead until the beginning of the 20th century when the Jordan family became the owners. Chet Jordan remembered the house needed

modernization: about 1920 the Jordan family laid a new floor in one room of the main section, installed electricity, hot water heat and a bathroom. The antique clock and the Delft tiles remained in place. In 1969 R.P.I purchased the farmland and the house.

Chet died in 1980. In 1993 his widow and only child Paul moved all the artifacts first to Pennsylvania and later to the Virgin Islands. However in 2017, several category five hurricanes substantially damaged their home so they decided to move back to the States.

At this point, Paul contacted me after having read the stories of his father's business in Defreestville (Jordan's Dairy). Paul expressed a desire to see the artifacts returned "home" to Rensselaer County and so they have. The clock face (the rest of the clock was damaged in the hurricanes) will reside in "Pat's Barn" the restored building next to the Defreest House and the Delft tiles have found a home at the Hart-Cluett Museum in Troy. Welcome home Defreest artifacts!