



NORTH GREENBUSH NOTES

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The Hidleys of North Greenbush

Many early settlers of North Greenbush were Dutch. However we did have several German families living among the Dutch. One of the most prominent German families was the Hidleys.

Our first Hidley was one Johannes Heidle, born in Baldmannsweiler, Germany in 1733. He came to this country in 1754 and first settled in "East Camp"-present day Germantown. By 1769 John and his family had moved to Greenbush. How do we know this? He and his wife Catharina Ziegler are listed as sponsors for a baptism at the Albany Dutch Reformed Church where Greenbush residents worshipped.

We are fortunate to have a glimpse of Hidley's life through the efforts of Friedrich Wollmershaeuser, a professional German researcher and the extensive work done on the family by Lansingburgh native, Warren Broderick. They uncovered and published letters written by Hidley back to his relatives in Germany.

In the first letter, written in 1785, Hidley brings the German relatives up to date with his news. He says he suffered a great deal in the two wars (probably the French and Indian and the Revolutionary Wars). He has 12 children (those Hidleys were prolific!). He seems to be doing ok. He says they are blessed with many horses, oxen, cattle, sheep and hogs. Two years later, Hidley signed a lease with the Van Rensselaers for 211 acres for a yearly rent of "28 shepples of winter wheat and four fat fowls". Things were going well for the American Hidleys.

However a letter written several years later to Germany paints a different picture. He says the harvest has been bad for the past two years because lice got into the seed grain and in many cases left nothing (to plant).

We have no further family letters, but we know the family survived and prospered. Snyders Lake might well have been named Hidley Lake because of all the Hidley families who lived nearby. George Hidley was one of our Supervisors and was also County Deputy Sheriff around the turn of the 20th century. Willard Hidley was School Commissioner in the 1930's and Nettie Hidley was Town Clerk in the 1940's.

Overlooking Hidley Road is the family cemetery. If ghosts could talk, I think the Hidleys would be proud of what their descendants have accomplished in America.