

## Green Lane House Memoirs      by Blair Arendt

Now in my later years I have a greater appreciation of my beginning home on Green Lane. I am fortunate the Blackwells made the Green House my home too. The Land Along the Shabakunks by Robert Reeder Green is a wonderful historical account of the area and informed me of the historical era.

According to my research, at age 46, my great grandfather A. J. Blackwell and his wife Emma bought the 125 acre Green farm in 1915. For the next 14 years he and his son, A.J. Blackwell Jr., my granddad built the farm stocked with horses, cows, chickens, orchard and garden. In 1922, the land where Bliss Hall, Packer and parts of Green and Kendall Hall now rest was sold to C.V. Hill. In 1940 the Blackwells sold 80 acres to the college.

At a very early age the view overlooking the green front meadow from our front porch to Green Lane was colossal. As a toddler, I was escorted on the front porch. Overlooking the broad meadow the vastness, agoraphobia overwhelmed me. I was so upset from the fear that I bawled. My first ten childhood years at the Green House farm were in fact very memorable. This was my world in the 1950 s.

Boys are known to adventure and explore and fortunately there was abundant space on the farm to recreate. My brother Terry, neighborhood playmates and I played baseball games almost every day on the front meadow and getting dirty. There, the pear tree was an easy climb. It was just freedom to sit on a limb and enjoy its fruit. Dick and son Dick, plowed, planted and harvested corn with their huge tractor. They leased the west side property north to Packer Hall now the student parking and field. My brother and I ran through the field as a short cut from Lanning School Elementary. When we got home, it reminded us that the corn leaves were serrated and had left red marks on our arms and faces. The corn field also was a great place to hide n' seek and then digging worms for a fishing outing.

The exploration for adventure seemed endless. The windmill mount near the barn was our 'King of the Hill' contest. It was our Normandy so to say. Pushing, pulling and tumbling one another were all to reach the top. The forest provided saplings to build tee – pees and forts while the corn crib house next to the barn called us in to play and hide. The hay barn was home to the barn swallows and bats. The fragrance of the piled high hay was home. As for the chicken house, it was fun running off the roof and landing into a huge pile of fluffy chicken dung. Although the aroma of the dung was strong, my brother and I couldn't help but to do it again and again.

In 1929 when A.J. Blackwell passed, my grandparents, Jewell and Florence downsized the farm mostly with chickens, a cow and a garden. As little guys, Terry and I helped Grand Dad with farm chores. It was five in the morning when woken up to feed the chicken. School started at nine o'clock. The chicken house ceiling is low with the light bulbs hanging about. With a deep inhale, we found ourselves in the chicken house. After the feeding the chickens, the hunt for eggs began. Reaching carefully and slowly under the hen searching for an egg or eggs without getting pecked was the challenge. The basket was heavy and filled with warm eggs. Near the spring house, Grand Dad incubated eggs and raised the young chickens until they were old enough to live in the chicken house. The family helped transporting the brooders to the back hen house which seemed a hike. Carrying the chicken upside down by its legs, I could only handle one in each hand. My Grand Dad was carrying three upside down chickens in each hand! Some of those brooders were so angry that they will reach up and peck the hand carrying them.

The farm gave us what we needed: milk from our cow Kushy, eggs from the chickens, the chickens for dinner, vegetables from the garden, fruit from the orchard, firewood for the stove and water from the spring. This was a working farm. I deeply thank my Grandparents and Great Grandparents for the investments and charm of the Green House farm.

## **Sarah Blackwell Melson 2015**

My account of the Green farm house includes skating on the lakes every chance her sister Malvina and her had. In fact one of the Green descendants taught them how to skate. My father, A.J Blackwell made a swing and a hammock to enjoy. Croquet was enjoyed on the front lawn every summer. As little girls, they played school in a room atop one of the buildings. Also they played 'store' in the pantry.

Until the tractor invention, the horse powered the plow to till the patch behind the barn and orchard. In the apple orchard the sisters would engage in apple fights, swing on its branches and perform 'skin the cat'. Every Monday was wash day, Tuesdays ironing and Thursdays were cleaning the house.

I was married in the Green House living room with her sister Malvina as matron of honor. Florence, my mother entertained outside dinner parties for many people. The food was wonderful. "As you can tell, we spent a lot of time outside. I still like it out there."

## **Green Lane House Memoirs by Terry Arendt 2015**

My brother Blair did an excellent job portraying our first ten childhood years residing in the William Green Farmhouse. It was an amazing experience as a youngster to be raised in a Revolutionary era farmhouse. As a youngster I was awed that we were living in an old revolutionary farmhouse which was built years and years ago. It was an awesome childhood experience. I wouldn't even to this day, trade that experience for anything. It has always been my thoughts that many other kids weren't so fortunate as Blair and I were. We really enjoyed the life of growing up on the farm.

Aside from all of our childhood experiences growing up on the farm, the plaque that was mounted on the west side of the house intrigued me. It was very historic, and special to me. It meant our country's

history. A memory that I could only envision of General George Washington that I've always believed, visited during the Revolutionary War. Awesome, very awesome thoughts of this very special house. According to the plaque, it was placed on the west side of the farmhouse in 1929 by the pupils of Lanning School. Incidentally Lanning Elementary School is where my mother, aunt, Blair and I attended and attach very fond memories.

According to my count, the old house had 19 rooms. We lived there with my mother, Malvina Anderson, and her parents (my grandparents), A. J. Blackwell and his wife, Florence. As Blair and I got a little older, we were allowed to pick a room upstairs to call our own room, or even pick a different room! Although the house is not really that large, like today's mansions but there always seemed to be plenty of room for everybody.

I have seen for years about the restoration efforts being made to preserve this old house. It could only be my hope that the restoration process proceeds to coincide with the history of our United States of America. The William Green Farm House, obviously, played a very important role in the Revolutionary War. I am honored to touch an important part of the United States early history.

### **Childhood Memories of my Life on the Green Lane Farm by Malvina Blackwell Anderson 2015**

Life was well organized. Mondays was do the wash day; Tuesdays was ironing; Wednesdays was mending; Thursday was cleaning the house; Fridays was baking; Saturdays was grocery shopping; and Sundays was church and Sunday school. Our Father, Jewell Blackwell worked the farm which was about 125 acres with horses, cows, pigs, chickens, until after the Great Depression. Then farming became mechanized and he took a grounds keeping job at State Teachers' College which moved out of Trenton, bought land from my parents and became a four year school. Daddy rented the farm land to Gentleman farmers. One I remember raised acres of tomatoes which he harvested and took loads to Campbell's Soup in Camden, N.J.

In the spring and summers my younger sister Sarah and I did a lot of things. We roamed the 125 acres, dammed up the back creek and caught tadpoles, jumped the bogs down to Shabakunk Creek. All this was 1/2 to 1 mile from the house. One Sunday we hid in the bushes and watched a black group baptizing several congregational members in the mud hole where the boys from over in the lots swam. On one occasion in the winter we went down to the Shabakunk Creek. Sarah and I fell through the ice and were rescued by the men who worked in the boiler house which heated the entire school. They dried our snow suits in the big furnaces and sent us home.

Saturdays our father had an egg route. Sarah and I went with him. We ran up to the house doors, took the orders and delivered the items. The items included dressed chickens, eggs, milk and vegetables in season.

One summer I raised a young calf to be shown in the N.J. State Fair. I had the calf on a rope leash out for a walk around the yard. Something scared the calf and he took off running for the barnyard dragging me behind him. He jumped the fence into the barnyard before he stopped. One side of me was all brush burned from the experience. My mother, Florence Blackwell treated my brush burns with her favorite medicine.

Four H Club was the only club at that time for young children. I belonged to the Forestry Club. One year I collected bird nests, and wrote a blurb about the bird along with a picture and arranged them in a large cardboard box that my father made. I displayed it at the NJ State Fair. Another year I collected bark and leaves from trees and arranged them in a large cardboard box. That too was shown at the State Fair.

I was eight years old (1935) when the central heating system was put in our 14 room house. Before that I remember chamber pots under the beds, black pop belly stoves which heated the rooms and kerosene lamps which were lighted after dark. We had a bathroom with a tub to take a bath instead of bird baths at the kitchen sink, and a flushing toilet instead of pots and a laboratory for brushing teeth, instead of the kitchen sink. It was a big change and a welcome one.

In the Fall a pig or a cow was butchered. The family gathered around the dining room table which was covered with newspapers and oilcloth and all cut up the pig or cow. The hams were hung in the smoke house to cure and the rest of the meat was put on ice and eaten at a later date.

Evenings after supper my parents, my grandfather and my grandmother gathered in the living room around the radio to listen to the news narrated by Gabriel Heater followed by Amos and Andy. Sarah and I were put to bed at 8 pm.

Our mother arranged music lessons for us. We both had piano lessons. Sarah also took clarinet lessons and I took cello lessons for five years. Before school I practiced an hour and after school for an hour. Every Friday at grammar school I took my cello and played in the school orchestra. We lived a mile from the school. Several summers I attended music school at collage where I played in the orchestra and string quartet. I also played solos at the Grange Meetings at school, and our summer reunions. Our mother saw to it that we practiced piano and our instruments every day.

In the summer our father made 1/2 gallon jugs of root beer and sunk them in the front yard spring to keep cool. Evenings we sat on the front porch and he served us a glass of root beer. It was wonderful! Sometimes he made ice cream. Sarah and I took turns churning until the ice cream came.

Sarah and I always said we could function on the farm and in the city. The kids in the city did not know how to function on the farm when they visited.