

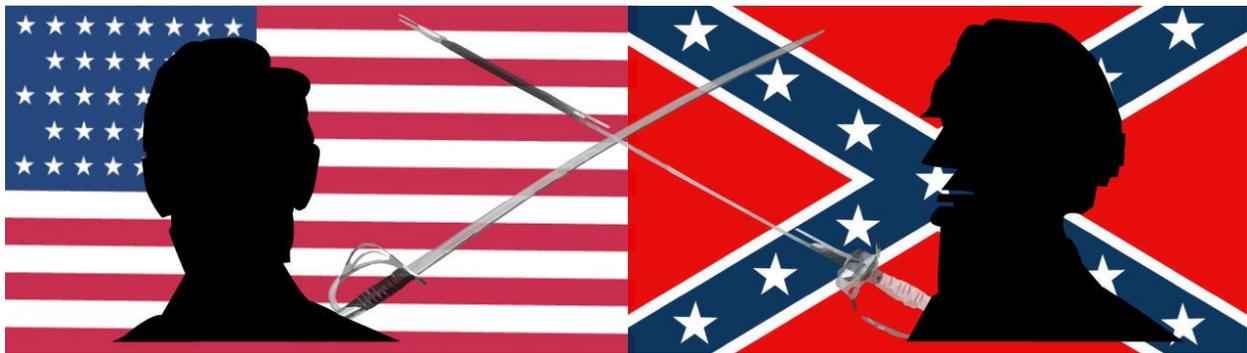
Greenburgh at The Great American Crossroads: Greenburgh's Civil War Story

By: Riley Wentzler & Felicia Barber

When the United States of America was founded in 1776, it was an agrarian confederation of essentially thirteen distinct sovereign nations that were the thirteen colonies of: Virginia, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maryland, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Delaware, North Carolina, South Carolina, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania and Georgia. The unicameral federal government which presided over this loose confederation of states was so weak that it had no executive branch at all and could not even coin money. The army was poorly trained and ill-equipped and the navy was not much better. Even the best army in the world at that time, which was the British Army, could only arm its infantry with swords and flint-lock muskets. Mass communication did not exist, so it took weeks and sometimes months for messages to be delivered using mounted couriers.

Now let's fast forward to 2018. The United States of America is now an industrial nation, the once weak federal government now has influence over almost every area in American Life, America's Military which no longer uses muskets and swords, but instead uses machine guns, tanks, airplanes and drones, is now the best in the world. Communication is almost instantaneous.

How did we get here from there? What was our major turning point? Historians have debated the answer to this question for decades. Some say The Great Depression, others say World War II, and others say The Civil War. While there is some merit to the first two answers, one must remember that it was shortly before the Civil War that the interchangeable parts which led to our machine guns and tanks were invented, it was also during this time that the telegraph which first sped up the speed of our communication was invented. Lastly it was on the blood-soaked battlefields of the Civil War that the federal government asserted its ultimate sovereignty over the states. Now that we know the Civil War was arguably our great turning point, we should now examine what Greenburgh looked like at this great crossroads in our country's history.



An Overview of Greenburgh during The Civil War:

Populations of Greenburgh's villages were much smaller during The Civil War years (1861-1865) and people thought much differently than they do today. Even

though the State of New York abolished slavery within its borders in 1827, racial equality was not celebrated and promoted in Greenburgh during the war like it is today. In fact during the war and for many years after, many in Greenburgh actively fought against racial equality. The Village of Irvington provides an interesting illustrative example.

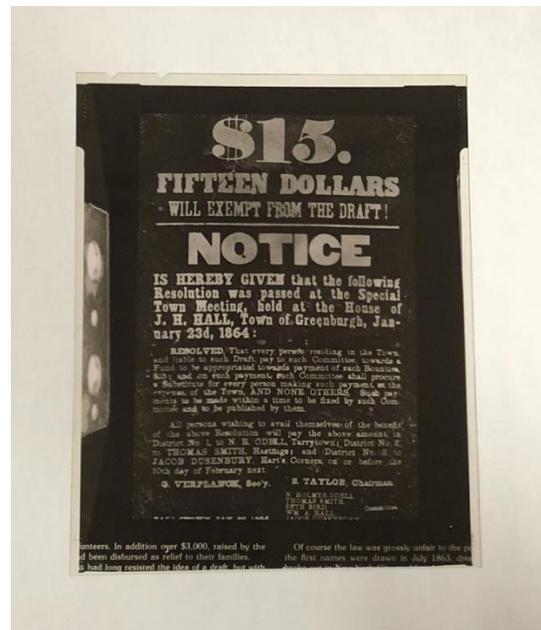
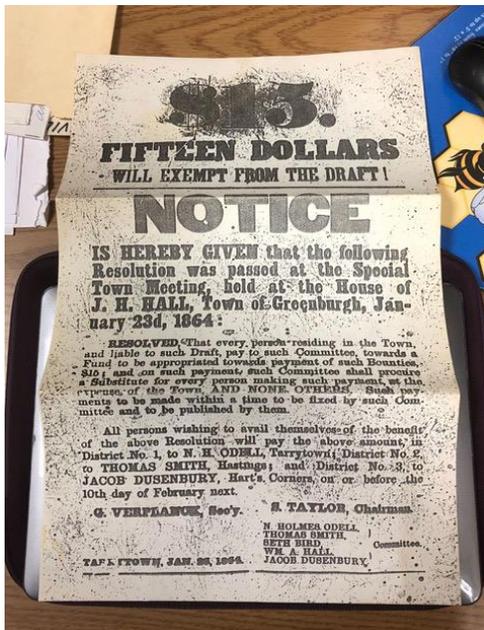
Greenburgh's Village of Irvington (1860-1865):

Irvington today has a population of 6420 people (<https://suburbanstats.org/population/new-york/how-many-people-live-in-irvington-village>), but in 1860, it only had 599 residents (Greenburgh Town Archives). Given that the Village of Irvington is well above the Mason- Dixon Line, and Greenburgh proudly celebrates its African American Community today, one might assume that Irvington's inhabitants would be in full support of the Union Cause of ending the Southern Rebellion and emancipating all African-American slaves.

However this would be a mistaken assumption, because when President Abraham Lincoln initiated a draft on July 11 1863, violence broke out. The waves of violence eventually became a full-scale riot. One of the first buildings that these White rioters destroyed was an African American orphanage. After burning the orphanage, this mob joined with a similar-sized mob from the Village of Tarrytown and proceeded to kill as many African Americans as they could.

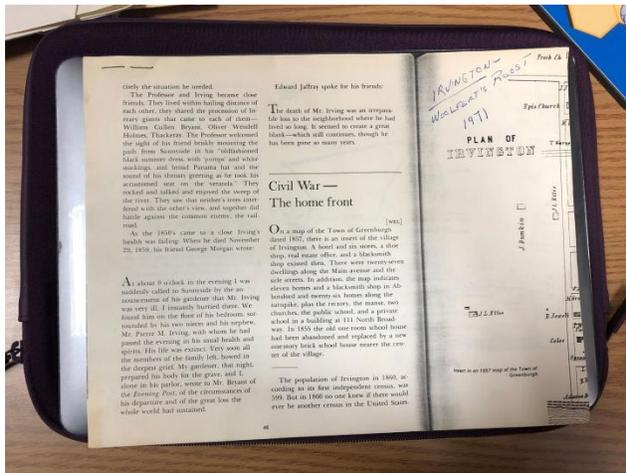


The police tried to restore order but were overwhelmed by the sheer size of the mob. They had to take cover in a schoolhouse and wait for Union General George Mead and his troops to arrive. When these troops arrived the mob fled. While the draft was not cancelled, it is worth noting that the year after this riot, 1864, The Town of Greenburgh passed a resolution that allowed residents to pay \$15 to the town to be exempt from the draft.

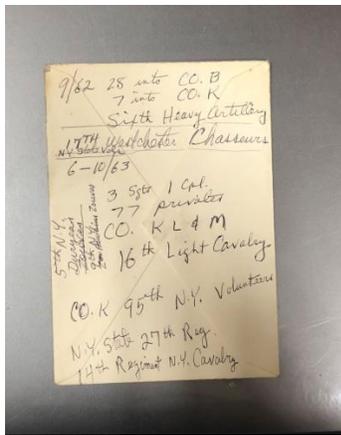


While this solved the problem of angry citizens trying to sabotage the war effort in order to protest the draft, it did not make citizens more open to the idea of racial

equality. Resistance to racial equality in Greenburgh continued throughout the war and did not end with the conclusion of the war in 1865 (Greenburgh Town Archives). For many years Greenburgh had an active chapter of the Ku Klux Klan (Esannason, 2017p. 6). It was because of the efforts of The Ku Klux Klan and others in the fight against racial equality in Greenburgh that schools in Greenburgh remained segregated until the 1940's (Esannason, 2017p. 49).



Riots like the one in July of 1863 were very common in Irvington from 1863-1865. However, not all of Irvington's citizens were unsympathetic to the Union Cause, the most conspicuous patriot from Irvington during the Civil War years was James Hamilton. On December 29th 1860, he organized four hundred militia men and an equal number of artillery pieces to defend Fort Sumter in South Carolina which had become the first state to secede from the union on December 20th of that year. For unknown reasons, President Lincoln declined Hamilton's assistance, and so the men and artillery never reached the fort (Greenburgh Town Archives). In addition to Mr. Hamilton's conspicuous act of patriotism, Greenburgh also did its part by giving the Union Army three regiments: The 17th New York Volunteer Infantry nicknamed "Westchester Chasseurs," The 95th New York Volunteers, and The 47th New York Volunteer Infantry.



Greenburgh's Proud Union Men:

The "Westchester Chasseurs" served: in the First Battle of Bull Run, in George McClellan's Peninsular Campaign against General Stonewall Jackson and at The Battle of Chancellorsville (Gilbert, 1984 p. 1-30). The 95th New York Volunteers served: in The Battle Of Gettysburg (Beaudot& Herdegen, 2015 p. Appendix II). The 47th New York Volunteer Infantry served with distinction in The Battle of Cold Harbor (Dyer, 1908 p. 150).



Previous Slices of History include:

Greenburgh's Hall of Heroes: Ferncliff Cemetery Where Memories Live Forever (10/12/18)- <http://www.greenburghny.com/Cit-e-Access/news/index.cfm?NID=47403&TID=10&jump2=0>

A Final Resting Place for “Man’s Best Friend”: The Peaceable Kingdom(9/29/18) - <http://www.greenburghny.com/Cit-e-Access/news/index.cfm?NID=47331&TID=10&jump2=0>

Greenburgh and The Arts (9/22/18)- <http://www.greenburghny.com/Cit-e-Access/news/index.cfm?NID=47278&TID=10&jump2=0>

Greenburgh’s BROTHERLY LOVE, RELIEF AND TRUTH: A History of The Freemasons in Greenburgh (9/12/18)-<http://www.greenburghny.com/Cit-e-Access/news/archnews.cfm?NID=47212&TID=10&jump2=0>

Interview with the Authors :

<https://wcbs880.radio.com/articles/news/stories-main-street-couple-cerebral-palsy-brings-many-talents-town-greenburgh>

About the Authors

We are both interns at Greenburgh Town Hall and we are engaged to be married and are currently looking for permanent employment.

Riley Wentzler:

I was born and raised in a small rural town in central Pennsylvania. In high school, I took every honors course available including four years of Spanish. I received A's in all of them. I graduated third in my class of 146 students. This brought me to Edinboro University of Pennsylvania. Once there, I continued my trend of academic excellence. I graduated summa cum laude in Political Science with a minor in Spanish and a Master's in Communication Studies, with a G.P.A of 3.94. It was also there that I met my lovely fiancée, Felicia Barber. My Master's in Communication has promoted public speaking, teamwork, and customer service. My Political Science degree has developed my research skills using computer-based tools and provided me with experience using the Microsoft Office products. My minor in Spanish has facilitated my bilingual capabilities. During my internship at Greenburgh, I created the petition for the State Roads project using website tools. My diverse education and areas of interest have provided me with a wide range of skills. I look forward to finding a career opportunity in business or government. If you want to learn more about Greenburgh's Role in the Civil War or to help me find employment, you can contact me at: rjwentzler413@gmail.com

Felicia Barber:

I was born in New York City and raised in Hartsdale, New York. I graduated from Ardsley High School. I recently earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Graphic Design at Edinboro University of Pennsylvania. It was here that I met my fiancé, Riley Wentzler. As a result of my academic excellence, I won a scholarship every year. I learned and applied many graphic design skills to projects during my summer internships and at school. I am proficient in using Adobe graphic design applications including Photoshop, Illustrator and InDesign. For my Identity/branding course at Edinboro, I created logos to appear on the tee-shirts of Physical Education majors. For a veteran's upcoming event, I used a typeface to focus the reader to the soldier in the poster. For the State Roads Legislative Campaign project, I created the embedded graphic-photo that accompanied the petition I am looking for a job to utilize my skills as a Graphic Designer in an agency, print shop, company or government. If you want learn more about my artwork, or help me find employment, you can contact me at: feliciadbarber@gmail.com

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