

**THIS PLACE CALLED TENAFLY**  
**BY**  
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**ON BECOMING SUBURBAN**

**Prelude to 1859: “A Pretty Village in the Northern Valley”**

If newspapers are the first draft of history, then the handwritten record of that history -- in the form of journals and diaries -- is as close to the past as one can possibly get without having actually lived it. There are such keyholes into the past of our places at our public libraries; and it is important that we take the time to look since “[w]hen a society or civilization perishes, one condition can always be found. They forgot where they came from” (Sandburg). The point is that we live “through our connections with habitats and the lives of others.”<sup>1</sup>

The ones that occupy me most lately as a (would-be) local historian are ones into the past of this place called Tenafly -- a borough situated in the Northern Valley of New Jersey covering the land north of Englewood and Englewood Cliffs, extending to Cresskill and Alpine on the north, and Bergenfield on the west. By Special Act of 1897, Tenafly’s corporate limits were officially moved “eastward to the Hudson river,” with effect from February 1, 1898.<sup>2</sup> This land originally was part of a large 2,120 acre tract first granted to Colonel Jacobus Van Cortland on April 27, 1688, during the time of British proprietorship.<sup>3</sup> Fifty years later he divided his holdings, conveying them in three parcels to his daughters,

with “the most southerly third” (roughly constituting today’s Tenafly) going to Mrs. Margaret DePeyster (wife of Abraham) on April 10, 1738.<sup>4</sup>

Over time this “southerly third” holding passed into other hands, growing into “a pretty village in the northern valley” countryside,<sup>5</sup> not far from nearby woods, with “physical advantages and landscape beauty . . . unequaled by those of any other locality in the Northern Valley.”<sup>6</sup> In the first half of the 1800s at these coordinates, “[t]he cattle roamed through the farmer’s broad field, and the silence of nature, through many a quiet afternoon, was broken only by the tinkling of the bell attached to the leader of the herd, and by the lowing of kine, saluting and answering each other from adjacent farms.”<sup>7</sup> Early on these farmers trucked their bounty by rowboats from nearby Huyler’s Landing to New Amsterdam -- today, Manhattan.<sup>8</sup>

A century and a half later, on January 23, 1894, the village of Tenafly became something else, its people voting themselves a borough form of government under the General Borough Law of 1879<sup>9</sup> -- in doing so declaring themselves “independent of all alliances with the farming districts and smaller villages of Palisades Township,”<sup>10</sup> the greater community to which it had been attached since 1872. This event marked the official end of a period of considerable transformation in Tenafly’s way of life, one that had set citizens of different arrival dates against one another for some years in the run-up to incorporation. Put in different words, the forces of industrialization had won out, and

quickly went to work not just on the landscape, but on the people's relationship to the land. It all began with the arrival of the railroad (and with it land developers and speculators) in the second half of the 1800s, which brought fundamental change to life throughout the Northern Valley.

Since "the history of the nation is only the history of its villages writ large" (Wilson), and in an effort to help us all know who we are,<sup>11</sup> this series of articles will explore and record Tenaflly's part of the American narrative in the years immediately prior to incorporation as a borough. It will draw from a number of sources to set the scene, using, among other things, the remembrances of "old-time" residents as well as the new breed of commuters that began arriving in the late 1860s -- like those contained in the memoirs of Tenaflly's Dr. John J. Haring (called *Floating Chips*) and the journal left to the future by the Everett family of Tenaflly from 1876 to 1890. These writings provide captivating glimpses into our town's past, shedding light on the intersection of the old ways and means of life in these parts with the new, helping to tell the story of how Tenaflly went from farmland to suburb.

Despite its proximity to "the great metropolis," Tenaflly in the late 1850s "was still yet strictly rural, its population being engaged almost exclusively in agricultural pursuits."<sup>12</sup> Before there was heard the "faint echo in the far distance of locomotives"<sup>13</sup> bringing people to this particular part of the Northern Valley for "business and pleasure,"<sup>14</sup>

Tenaflly's "undulating sections" were part of a vast wilderness -- "the paradise of the old-time tillers of the soil."<sup>15</sup> They were "contented, fairly prosperous farmers, living frugally yet comfortably,"<sup>16</sup> and in the years prior to incorporation as a borough in 1894, Tenaflly's prosperous farm families counted themselves part of Palisades Township (and, before that, Hackensack Township) -- a place that had earned a reputation as "a pretty village in the northern valley" with a post office and railroad station.<sup>17</sup>

The men and women who worked this land were folks of "sturdy character and practical common sense"<sup>18</sup> whose household needs counted against a budget of "about two hundred dollars annually."<sup>19</sup> Imagine "fragrant buckwheat . . . then cover[ing] from one to three of every farmer's back lots" together with fields lush with rye grass, which was grown "more successfully than wheat" in these parts -- and ground into flour "furnish[ing] bread for the family."<sup>20</sup>

Staple farm produce, "[p]otatoes, vegetables, and fruits were . . . at hand in their season, and preserved with care and judgment for winter use."<sup>21</sup> Pigs bought or raised on the farm were "turned to pasture and corn-fed for a month or two in the autumn. About the last week in November, usually a Tuesday, from one to four fat porkers were seen hanging in a row in the farmer's backyard. A week or two later, the dressed carcass . . . would be hanging in the farmer's barn."<sup>22</sup> Apple trees were abundant, making the "apple crop . . . one of the most

important of the farmer's products," with the sale of this "choice fruit" usually good for "[t]hree or four score dollars" to the farmer's account.<sup>23</sup> Gardens, featuring "[c]ertain standard flowers, shrubs, and herbs," were the province and "pride of the housewife."<sup>24</sup>

"The late autumn and early winter months, after the busy season was over and the larder stocked," was the time for leisure and socialization.<sup>25</sup> At these gatherings, "[t]he conversation would turn upon farm matters, neighborhood gossip, general news . . . upon political subjects and -- not infrequently -- church and religious topics."<sup>26</sup> The children entertained themselves in ways familiar to some today -- with "wrestling, blind-man's-bluff, hide-and-seek, [and] hunt the slipper."<sup>27</sup> It was "a time when goats pulled carts so their owners could travel afar" and "[a] team of oxen was often used for hauling supplies."<sup>28</sup>

The "peaceful simplicity" of life in this part of the valley began to change in the 1850s, when "prospecting parties visited the valley" to identify depot locations and to discuss the "prospective value of land."<sup>29</sup> It was the "period in which the Northern Railroad became a controlling force in the Northern Valley," leaving forever its mark on the history of this place.<sup>30</sup>

### **1859 to 1894: "The Touch of the Magic Wand of Gold"**

With the arrival of the Northern Railroad in 1859 -- the laying of its line to and beyond Tenafly completed in October of that year -- the village of Tenafly was on its way to becoming something altogether new and

different, the prototype for what it is today: a suburb “within the sound almost of the hum of the great metropolis.”<sup>31</sup> Over the balance of the century, the “quaint houses and commodious barns dott[ing]” the “broad acres of the valley” gave way to the “mapping of farm lands . . . followed by the brass band, free ride, and free lunch auction land sales,” in and around, for instance, Tenafly’s first neighborhood -- the area immediately surrounding Highwood Avenue.<sup>32</sup> During this time, trains bearing “the tide of fashion and wealth” to and from New York City brought change to the land and people.

As Dr. Haring lamented in his memoirs:

“The comfortable owners of the broad acres were not clamoring for relief from any burdens -- real or imaginary. Their happiness lay in the undisturbed enjoyment of their rural surroundings. The great city lying so near them had no fascinations for them.”<sup>33</sup>

For him (and no doubt others), “the touch of the magic wand of gold wielded by the hand of enterprise” in the latter half of the nineteenth century represented a “drifting away of the good old times” for what had for generations been a land of farmers.<sup>34</sup>

One of the “prospecting parties” was comprised of “a group of five men, two lawyers, one engineer, once speculator, and one capitalist,” who in the late 1860s combined their energies, enthusiasm and wealth to create the Highwood Park Association.<sup>35</sup> Among its number were counted Charles Sisson, the engineer “who built the Northern Railroad,”<sup>36</sup> and John Lyle, a principal of Lord & Taylor, who purchased

“lands on the western slope [of the village] comprising the entire holdings of an old-time farmer.”<sup>37</sup> George Huyler, once one of the town’s largest land-owners -- whose father John purchased land here in the late eighteenth century, just after the American Revolution -- was likewise “instrumental in the opening up and grading of the public roads,” including Hillside Avenue, Clinton Avenue, and Engle Street.<sup>38</sup> Other prominent boosters of this era were J. Hull Browning, who not only ran the Northern Railroad from 1875 to 1897, but “took a deep interest in the advancement and welfare of Tenafly,”<sup>39</sup> and Judge Ashbel Greene, a man “of cultivated tastes and ambitious desire” who “gave his [land] preference to the eastern slope of the valley”<sup>40</sup> -- today’s East Hill.

These men, and like-minded others, harnessed the railroad as a means of converting the “table-lands of the Palisades” range from farms and forests “into beautiful [suburban] parks and villas.”<sup>41</sup> Together, they began the building of parks, civic buildings, schools and other “public places that foster and symbolize communal identity.”<sup>42</sup> They saw in this place called Tenafly the potential for “a neighborhood beautiful with its green hills and abundant trees” capable of becoming “the finest suburban section in the metropolitan district.”<sup>43</sup>

The Highwood Park Association first constructed a boarding house for laborers, which eventually became a “commodious summer boarding house” under the management of a “well-known hotel proprietor.”<sup>44</sup> In time called the Highwood Hotel, this establishment welcomed some the

early suburban residents to Tenafly, who “started out as summer visitors at the hotel, and later rented or purchased property for their summer homes, coming here from New York City and Brooklyn,”<sup>45</sup> among other places. This “popular house of its class” was destroyed by fire in 1873 -- when “on a quiet autumn night, by accident or otherwise, it took fire, and when morning came nothing remained of this summer resort but ruins.”<sup>46</sup>

In 1872, there was “erect[ed] the ornate stone station” at a cost of \$12,000.<sup>47</sup> Designed by noted American architect Daniel Topping Atwood, whose shop stood at the south end of West Railroad Avenue during the station’s construction, the town railroad depot opened in 1874 and quickly became “the pride of the village”<sup>48</sup> -- in its day considered one of the finest stations on the Northern Railroad’s line.

The different societal institutions around which men and woman traditionally gather and organize themselves soon followed. Just as they had helped to open the Jersey wilderness to the first settlers venturing out from Manhattan and elsewhere in the pre-Colonial period,<sup>49</sup> houses of worship played a part in the resettlement of communities like Tenafly through suburbanization. A Presbyterian congregation took root in 1865 as an outgrowth of “a Union Sunday school organized in 1863.”<sup>50</sup>

Episcopalians organized the Church of Atonement in 1868, just after the Civil War,<sup>51</sup> and Catholic services were first offered with the arrival of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church in 1873, which originally located

itself on Mahan Street, just off County Road, in the 1880s.<sup>52</sup> Grace Chapel followed later, in 1899.<sup>53</sup>

Educational facilities required attention, too. Until 1870, the only school available to local children was the Liberty Pole School, “a tiny building on Tenafly Road just south of the present borough line”<sup>54</sup> -- not too far down the road from today’s Stillman Elementary School. With the village’s expansion, however, “County School Superintendent Alexander Cass . . . formed [a] new district, designated as No. 12” in 1871.<sup>55</sup> Until completion of the Browning School -- “a fine brick structure . . . 40 x 60 in dimensions, two stories in height, with basement, and mansard roof” -- at the corner of West Clinton Avenue and Tenafly Road in October 1872,<sup>56</sup> classes were initially held nearby “over the store of Peter Westervelt.”<sup>57</sup>

Along the avenues and streets opened through the former fields of this village, merchants began arriving to the call of the community’s growing business and pleasure needs. Early on the Highwood Park Association invited Col. A. G. Demarest -- the Cresskill station agent and merchant -- “to move himself and his supplies to this vicinity and establish a general store.”<sup>58</sup> He planted himself on “a triangular plot situated a short distance north from the depot,” at the corner of Highwood Avenue and East Railroad Avenue (now Piermont Road), where he traded in general merchandise, such as “groceries, boots [and] shoes, dry goods, wines and tea.”<sup>59</sup> He had company and, naturally,

competition. “Fancy groceries, fruits [and] vegetables” (with free delivery) were available at Sweeney Demarest Smith Co. on Hillside Avenue,<sup>60</sup> and G.M. Coyte owned and operated a “variety store” nearby.<sup>61</sup> Bower Pharmacy arrived in 1882, first trading on Highwood Avenue.

Horses, carriages and wagons could be had for hire at Taveniere and Johnson’s livery stable on Washington Street (which became Washington Avenue in the 1930s).<sup>62</sup> The Richter Manufacturing Company -- with 12 employees, specializing in “wall coverings, dyed and treated” -- arrived in 1887.<sup>63</sup> Headed by Paul Richter, the company manufactured burlap “from manila and Indian hemp . . . for wall covering or decoration . . . used in many of [the country’s] best colleges, such as Columbia and Bryn Mawr, and similar institutions . . . as well as halls and hotel.”<sup>64</sup>

Basic public works improvements soon followed: telephone service “was made available to residents . . . in 1883”;<sup>65</sup> the first water main was installed in 1889 (replacing wells and cisterns);<sup>66</sup> and the Tenafly Fire Association was formed in 1891 -- the first fire house being located at West Clinton Avenue and Franklin Street.<sup>67</sup> The town’s distinctive “[f]lagstone sidewalks [were] laid under the direction of Mr. Browning on [Palisades] Township account” in 1884.<sup>68</sup>

In time various civic organizations developed in response to calls upon the citizenry for general civic improvement. The Tenafly Library Society, for instance, was organized on February 5, 1891 (incorporating

in March 1895) with “its object being the improvement of its members in literary matters and for maintaining a reading room.”<sup>69</sup> Messrs. Colver, Hull and Jellison -- the men who called for this organization -- deemed these “reasons sufficient for enlisting the good will and kind support of every truly public spirited citizen of the village.”<sup>70</sup> The Tenafly Library Society offered the community “entertainments consisting of lectures, debates, public socials, and other affairs for amusement or improvement.”<sup>71</sup>

Others saw virtue in opening the charms of this place to those needing respite from the burgeoning scale and pace of the nearby metropolis. To this end, Mrs. J. Hull Browning established the Rethmore Home in 1892 (a “Fresh Air Establishment for Children”) “on the Westervelt estate, comprising about four acres for a playground.”<sup>72</sup> Two years later, Mrs. J. S. Lyle “started a fresh air home, called ‘Happy Land’, where hundreds of children from the overcrowded city were entertained during the hot weather.”<sup>73</sup> Still later, in 1899, Ms. Mary Fisher opened a home on Jay Street (now River Edge Road) in Tenafly for “retired professional women.”<sup>74</sup>

The early turning and transformation of this place toward the shape and lines we know today -- largely at the hand of “the magic wand of gold wielded by the hand of enterprise” -- was dutifully reported to the public by William Jellison (a New York printer) who “decided to print in

his spare moments a monthly paper of local events,"<sup>75</sup> which he printed in Tenaflly (beginning in 1885) and called *The Record*.<sup>76</sup>

In a nutshell, this was Tenaflly during the latter half of the 1800s -- with a population of roughly 1,000 by 1890.

### **An Almanac of Village Life -- The Everett Family**

Through the years of transformation and change in Tenaflly from the late 1850s to the 1890s, many different people arrived to claim the village as home, including famed suffragette Elizabeth Cady Stanton -- who took up residence here in 1868 with her husband, himself then a leader "in the great anti-slavery agitation and other political movements of the period."<sup>77</sup> They stayed until 1880, living in a house on Highwood Avenue where Mrs. Stanton -- with Susan B. Anthony and Matilda Joselyn Gage frequently at her side -- wrote the first three volumes of the *History of the Women's Suffrage Movement*,<sup>78</sup> and from which Mrs. Stanton set out in November 1880 to "the polling place at Tenaflly" where "her ballot was refused by the election officers."<sup>79</sup> Others were less well known, but just as happy here -- like the Everetts of New York City, who arrived in Tenaflly at roughly the same time as did Ms. Stanton and her family.

Charles Everett was an inventor responsible for, among other things, a locomotive braking system and a device for cooling meat and vegetables in transit to market.<sup>80</sup> He commissioned architect Richard Morris Hunt, who also designed the Statue of Liberty's base, to design

and build a residence on what was then Ravine Road (now Forest Road). (In the mid-1900s, the house was occupied by artist Harvey Dunn).

The Everett household consisted of Charles (who commuted to his office in the city by train), his wife Constance (nee Minns), their six children -- Constance Louise ("Lulu"), Charles Jr., Ethel, Agnes, Will, and Christabel, and the children's nanny, Bella. Charles and Constance had married in New York on October 15, 1863, and moved to Tenafly five years later, when Mr. Everett was 32, and Mrs. Everett was 29. Except for Lulu (born in New York City in 1865), all of the Everett children were born in Tenafly: Charles James Everett on March 21, 1868; Ethel Everett on July 27, 1870; Agnes Howard on May 13, 1872; William Minns on February 10, 1874; and Christabel on December 25, 1875 (perhaps explaining her unique name).<sup>81</sup>

The Everetts kept a family diary from 1876 until 1890, which they humorously titled "a record of the notable sayings, doings and nonsense of the 'Upper Everetts'," their relations at nearby Highland being the "Lower Everetts."<sup>82</sup> This journal, kept largely by Mrs. Everett, but with occasional entries by Mr. Everett and the children, is a key-hole into the past -- providing a first-hand look at the quality and nature of life and values in the village of Tenafly as it drifted towards the twentieth century. In it, one sees evidence of the area's "rural surroundings" that so enchanted old and new alike -- shaping and influencing the soul of this place called Tenafly. In this memorialization of days gone by, we are

given detailed and often eloquent descriptions of the landscape, the passing of seasons, examples of community spirit and neighborliness, all manner of diversion, and family life in late nineteenth century Tenafly.

The Everett journal opens in the year 1876 -- the country's centennial year -- with an account of how the festivities were observed that year in Tenafly.

***“The Centennial 4<sup>th</sup> . . . Rockets Began to Rise”***

“July 4<sup>th</sup> [1876]. ‘Fourth of July,’ this being the ‘Centennial 4<sup>th</sup>,’ was celebrated everywhere with unusual zest, despite the melancholy ‘hard times’ [referring to the financial Panic of 1873]. The day was fine and not unpleasantly hot. Our children had plenty of fire-crackers during the day, and [a] few colored roman-candle rockets, etc. after the usual public evening display. By ‘public,’ I mean the grandview of other people’s fireworks in the eve[ning] which we have seen every ‘4<sup>th</sup>’ for 8 years, from our little front, 2<sup>nd</sup> story balcony, which command[s] a view of a half circle of some 15 to 18 mile radius. The children took their [tea] on a table spread underneath our largest tree, south of the dwelling . . . which has always been designated ‘The Maple’ by us to distinguish it from all lesser trees and maples. As soon as it was dark, rockets began to rise from Englewood [and] distant points, and the ball opened. The display was really beautiful, and lasted for 2 hours. Mr. Waddell, our neighbor, had a particularly fine selection. Our own fireworks followed, and we all went to our beds, tired but satisfied.”<sup>83</sup>

Other July 4<sup>th</sup> celebrations are described as well, such as this entry from 1877, which closes with word of a parade of Tenafly boys “march[ing] up from the village” to cheer Mr. Waddell for his fireworks display.

***“An Unusually Fine Display of Fireworks”***

“A ‘jolly’ day for the children. Papa bought firecrackers [and] torpedos and a few wheels [and] roman candles. Charlie Jr. had the pleasure of spending fifteen cents at Coyte’s on Monday, and he added his small stock. Agnes and Will were satisfied with very few crackers, but the torpedos gave them unfailing pleasure. Even Baby enjoyed them, and finally had to be taken into the house, she was so much in the way. Grandpa came up in the morning, and staid [sic] over night. Mr. Waddell had an unusually fine display of fireworks in the evening. He placed them where we had a fine view of them. All the children were on the balcony and all were very good. Baby went to bed early, so that Bella could enjoy the night. After the fireworks ceased, we all heard the sound of a drum and a very small fife. A procession of boys had marched up from the village to thank Mr. Waddell and after a few cheers . . . they departed.”<sup>84</sup>

Throughout the seasons, Tenaflly’s rural surroundings held certain charms and fascinations for the Everett family -- and no doubt others -- who often visited favorite spots in the nearby woods for picnics and quiet time together. Entries from November 4, 1876, and September 2, 1877, are illustrative.

### **“To the Woods”**

“November 4<sup>th</sup> [1876]. This P.M. I took Lulu, Charly[,] Ethel [and] Agnes with me to the woods on Pallisades [sic] Slope. About [half a mile] from the house, we stopped at a steep ledge of rocks, which lie in picturesque confusion near ‘Highwood Ave,’ and built a fire in a natural fireplace at the foot of the ledge, having a good chimney [and] draught. Here we heated a kettle of chocolate, brought with us, and with our buttered biscuit, made a nice [tea] grouped around our warm [and] sparkling wood fire, in the chilly eve[ning]. Little Ethel, seated on a stone in the ‘chimney corner’ with her cup of cocoa [and] biscuit in either hand made herself particularly comfortable. We did not reach home until after dark.”<sup>85</sup>

“September 2<sup>nd</sup> [1877]. A lovely rather Fall-like day. Late in the afternoon we went to the woods, leaving at home only Bella and Baby, with the dogs to guard them. It was Will’s first visit to the woods and he enjoyed it thoroughly. We went finally to the woods where the children had a picnic last Fall. The children were very much interested in all the flowers that they saw and my hands were soon too full of flowers . . . But when they were allowed to clamor over the rocks, everything else was forgotten and we had to urge them to leave again and again. Ethel thought she might like to live there. Agnes suggested the possibility of our forgetting her and leaving her there, a lost-child. When Papa quoted [the story of the] kitten who lived in a dreary wood, they all agreed that the woods were the reverse of *dreary*” (emphasis in original).<sup>86</sup>

The nearby woods housed all manner of wild things, including owls. Mr. Everett’s encounter with one on “a cold but bright clear very sunny” day in early January 1877, caused him to wax somewhat philosophical.

**“Even An Owl Has Rights”**

“January 2, [1877]. [T]his P.M. an owl was discovered by Charly, perched on a pole near the house. Having a gun loaded, I fired from the window [and] he fell. He was not large, but a handsome spotted plumage, with feather ‘horns’, which he erected as the children looked at him, before I fired. He doubtless had design upon some of the small birds which were feeding about the house at the time, but still I felt sorry that I killed him. He filled a gap in Nature which is now vacant, and his death does not benefit me. The various notes [and] cries of the owls are always musical to my ear at night, and I shall now miss this very victim, [and] deserve to! Even an owl has rights.”<sup>87</sup>

The Everetts were fond of sleighing and coasting in and around the village, and several entries record their pleasure as well as the conditions

required for enjoyment of this past-time, such as these from 1878 and 1881.

***“To the Village with Their Sleds”***

“January 4<sup>th</sup> [1878]. This morning at 7 o’c[lock] there was a slight covering of snow on the road and paths. The snow increased rapidly and at twelve o’c[lock] the trees were loaded and there was a prospect of a severe blockading snow-storm. Lulu, Charlie and Ethel went to the village with their sleds and Ethel was so overcome by the cold that Charlie stopped at Dr. Haring’s with her to warm her. I started to go for her when Lulu reached home, and going down the path I met the two little fellows chattering like magpies. Ethel had quite recovered, and Charlie drew her home in the sled from the chestnut tree. The children were very happy in the prospect of using their sleds, but they were in despair when about two o’c[lock] the rain began. The trees were soon despoiled of there burden of white and the rain fell fast all the afternoon.”<sup>88</sup>

***“An Old Fashioned Winter”***

“February 12<sup>th</sup> [1881]. [S]leighbing is gone. It began on Monday Dec. 27<sup>th</sup> and continued without interruption until Feb. 11<sup>th</sup> nearly seven weeks, giving us a real old fashioned winter. We had not much sleighing, but enjoyed seeing others enjoy it. Walking has been good also, except for a day after each snowstorm. Coasting has been excellent, but we allowed the children to enjoy it only when we watched on the hill, except on the lawn, where they had full liberty. The last few days of December were bitterly cold. After Jan. 1<sup>st</sup> the weather was more moderate, but we have had an exceptionally severe winter.”<sup>89</sup>

Before there was a fire department in Tenaflly, there were only neighbors to respond to the “alarm of fire” in the village. Mr. Everett -- even when “not well” -- was such a neighbor. Even children had a role to

play once a fire was subdued, as this account of a fire at Col. Demarest's store in 1878 attests.

***“Alarm of Fire . . . To The Village At Once”***

“January 5<sup>th</sup> [1878]. Cold weather . . . Alarm of fire at 4 o'clock. Papa was at home, not well [and] he went to the village at once. Mr. Demarest's store was on fire. It was fortunately confined to the cellar, and although the house was dismantled, it was not injured by fire. Charlie and Lulu watched the fire from the old depot [across the street] and after the fire was subdued, their Father called them to help pick up the small articles scattered about. They worked for some time and made home about dark.”<sup>90</sup>

Three years later, Charles Everett Jr. -- aged thirteen -- returned home from the woods to report a fire that he, along with siblings and extended family, fought themselves.

***“A Queer Procession”***

“November 31, [1881]. [O]ne day last week, Charlie-boy came from the woods and reported a fire in a large dead chestnut, probably started to smoke a squirrel out. I was alarmed, and the whole family turned out. We collected all the waste water, fearful of using more than was necessary from the cistern, and started, a queer procession. Ethel and Ellie, with Charlie between them, carried two paper jars of water. Then came Michael carrying two pails. Agnes had a tin can, Will a large watering pot, while I managed a . . . pitcher. Christabel went to see what was going on, and Louise who was not strong enough for a load, shouldered an axe. Maggie toiled in the rear with another pail, and we reached the spot just as the flames were bursting forth, the roots and . . . ground having burnt in a smoldering way before Michael and Charlie with axe and water soon extinguished the fire, and we probably prevented an extensive conflagration.”<sup>91</sup>

The brooks abounding in Tenaflly once lured children, especially young boys, to their banks with the thoughts and dreams of youth. In these waters, Charles Everett Jr. found sailing adventure in 1878.

***“A Not Altogether Successful Experiment”***

“March 10<sup>th</sup> [1878]. [T]oday we went to the woods. The sun was hot, and the air so mild, we were uncomfortable in merely our ordinary indoor clothing. The brook is full, and Charley is looking forward to using his dory that Papa is making. He took a small wash-tub to the brook one day and enjoyed a sail, but the water came in, and his experiment was not altogether successful.”<sup>92</sup>

With “Papa’s” completion of the dory a week later, the Everetts returned to the brook in the woods “for a sail.”

***“To The Woods for a Sail”***

“March 19<sup>th</sup> [1878]. “Papa staid [sic] at home [and] took Lulu, Charlie [and] Ethel to the woods, to try the boat. They made a dam [and] cleared a space in the brook long enough to give them a pleasant sail. They did not reach home until 3 o’c[lock]. Lulu had had a bath in the boat. After dinner, Papa wanted Mama to see the sailing, so we all helped and washed the dishes, and all the children with Bella and the Baby, Papa with a hastily made paddle, and Charlie with the boat in the wheelbarrow, started for the woods. Each child had a sail, and finally Baby enjoyed it so much she began to rock the boat, and tried to stand up.”<sup>93</sup>

The Everett journal is also liberally sprinkled with accounts of local flora and fauna, especially relating to the family’s flower gardens. This entry from May 1878 reveals the extent of Mrs. Everett’s knowledge of and passion for the abundance of the local landscape -- both what was natural and cultivated.

“May 9, [1878]. Papa set out 30 tomato plants. We have had the flower beds dug up, ready for seeds and some daisies, English violets and verbenas already put out. The daisies have continued in flower, and are now blooming freely -- Lulu’s lilies of the valley are almost gone. They bloomed unusually early owing to the warm weather early in the spring. We generally expect them on Lulu’s birthday . . . The spirea primifolia still is in blossom, but owing to the continuous rain, the flowers have not been fresh and pretty as usual. Flowering dogwood still looks finely; has been in blossom more than a week. Flowering almond is gone. It was very beautiful. We did not have many lilacs this year, and they are already gone. The flowers faded very quickly . . . Wild violets have bloomed profusely and the flowers have generally been unusually large . . . Saxifrage was abundant in the woods. Last Sunday . . . it was gone. We found anemones and wild geranium, and a few violets. The two apple trees nearest the house [--] one on the east, one on the south [--] were covered with blossoms. A few still remain. Very few pear blossoms. We had a great many pears last year.”<sup>94</sup>

While Dr. Haring’s regrets about the “drifting away of the good old times” are understandable, the Everett family journal reveals that those who followed Haring’s generation here found just as much “fascination” and “happiness” with the rural surroundings. More than anything else, however, the Everetts found in this suburb (like those who later followed them here) “relief from [their] burdens,” which caused them (like their predecessors and contemporaries, people of “sturdy character and practical common sense”) to be good stewards of this place called Tenaflly.

*Mr. Wallace, a practicing attorney, serves as Tenaflly Borough Historian.*

## ENDNOTES

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- <sup>1</sup> Wirzba (ed.), *The Essential Agrarian Reader: The Future of Culture, Community, and the Land*, at 18 (The Univ. Press of Kentucky, 2003) (hereinafter “Wirzba”).
- <sup>2</sup> *Englewood-Tenaflly and Vicinity in Pictures* (Englewood Press, 1924).
- <sup>3</sup> Westervelt, *History of Bergen County New Jersey: 1630-1923* at 411 (Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1923) (hereinafter “Westervelt”). The tract was “one mile in width” and ran “from the Hudson River to the Tiena Kill.” Harvey (ed.), *Genealogical History of Hudson and Bergen Counties New Jersey* at 27 (N.J. Genealogical Publishing Co., New York, 1900) (hereinafter “Harvey”).
- <sup>4</sup> Harvey, at 27; *see also* Westervelt, at 411.
- <sup>5</sup> Westervelt, at 411.
- <sup>6</sup> Haring, *Floating Chips: Annals of Old and New Times* at 81 (1924) (hereinafter “Haring”).
- <sup>7</sup> *Id.* at 7.
- <sup>8</sup> Westervelt, at 271. In the period immediately following the American Revolution, Huyler’s Landing became “the shipping point for the entire Northern Valley.” Sisson, *Story of Tenaflly* at 15 (1939) (hereinafter “Sisson”). *See also* Brown & Warmflash, *The Architecture of Bergen County, New Jersey: The Colonial Period to the Twentieth Century* at 39 (Rutgers Univ. Press, 2<sup>nd</sup> printing, 2001).
- <sup>9</sup> Harvey, at 10.
- <sup>10</sup> Anonymous, *Final Appeal for Local Self-Government for Tenaflly* at 1 (1894).
- <sup>11</sup> Levy, “The History Lesson,” *Connections: The College of Arts and Sciences* at 2-3 (Syracuse University, Spring 2004) (interview of historian David McCullough).
- <sup>12</sup> Van Valen, *History of Bergen County New Jersey* at 658 (NJ Publishing & Engraving Co., 1900) (hereinafter “Van Valen”).
- <sup>13</sup> Haring, at 135.
- <sup>14</sup> Haring, at 7.
- <sup>15</sup> *Id.* at 135.
- <sup>16</sup> *Id.* at 58.
- <sup>17</sup> Westervelt, at 411.
- <sup>18</sup> Haring, at 19.
- <sup>19</sup> *Id.* at 27.
- <sup>20</sup> *Id.* at 13-14.
- <sup>21</sup> *Id.* at 14.
- <sup>22</sup> *Id.* at 17.
- <sup>23</sup> *Id.* at 14.
- <sup>24</sup> *Id.* at 11.
- <sup>25</sup> *Id.* at 22.
- <sup>26</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>27</sup> *Id.* at 9.
- <sup>28</sup> *A Pictorial History of Tenaflly* at 31 (1994).
- <sup>29</sup> *Id.* at 7 and 56.
- <sup>30</sup> *Id.* at 70.
- <sup>31</sup> *Id.* at 7.
- <sup>32</sup> Haring, at 56.
- <sup>33</sup> *Id.* at 50.
- <sup>34</sup> *Id.* at 53, 85.
- <sup>35</sup> Sisson, at 31.
- <sup>36</sup> *Englewood-Tenaflly and Vicinity in Pictures* (Englewood Press, 1924).
- <sup>37</sup> Haring, at 70.
- <sup>38</sup> *Id.* at 82.
- <sup>39</sup> Westervelt, at 413.
- <sup>40</sup> Haring, at 71.

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- <sup>41</sup> Van Valen, at 167.
- <sup>42</sup> Wirzba, at 194.
- <sup>43</sup> *Englewood-Tenaflly and Vicinity in Pictures* (Englewood Press, 1924).
- <sup>44</sup> Haring, at 74.
- <sup>45</sup> *A Pictorial History of Tenaflly* at 14 (1994).
- <sup>46</sup> Haring, at 74-75.
- <sup>47</sup> *Id.* at 75.
- <sup>48</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>49</sup> Leiby, *The Early Dutch and Swedish Settlers of New Jersey* at 74 (Van Nostrand, 1964).
- <sup>50</sup> *Englewood-Tenaflly and Vicinity in Pictures* (Englewood Press, 1924).
- <sup>51</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>52</sup> *A Pictorial History of Tenaflly* at 12 (1994).
- <sup>53</sup> *Id.* at 33.
- <sup>54</sup> Sisson, at 37.
- <sup>55</sup> Westervelt, *History of Bergen County New Jersey: 1630-1923* at 412 (Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1923).
- <sup>56</sup> *Id.* at 412; *Englewood-Tenaflly and Vicinity in Pictures* (Englewood Press, 1924). “[A] garden was part of the landscape to the north of the building,” with “the pupils responsible for [its] care.” *A Pictorial History of Tenaflly* at 25 (1994). According to Dr. Haring, the school schedule was “arranged as to enable the boys and girls to devote the month of June to strawberry picking.” Haring, at 27. “Regular school hours were invariably from nine to four. Thirteen weeks constituted a terms and four terms a school year. This schedule covered the entire year.” *Id.*
- <sup>57</sup> Sisson, at 37.
- <sup>58</sup> Sisson, at 32.
- <sup>59</sup> Haring, at 75; *A Pictorial History of Tenaflly* at 15 (1994).
- <sup>60</sup> *A Pictorial History of Tenaflly* at 15 (1994).
- <sup>61</sup> Zeiller, *Oh, My, How Tenaflly Has Changed* at 24 (unpublished/undated manuscript) (available in the Mosley Local History Collection, Tenaflly Public Library).
- <sup>62</sup> *Id.* at 36.
- <sup>63</sup> Westervelt, at 291, 412; Van Valen, at 251.
- <sup>64</sup> Van Valen, at 251.
- <sup>65</sup> Sisson, at 39.
- <sup>66</sup> *Id.* at 33; *A Pictorial History of Tenaflly* at 7 (1994).
- <sup>67</sup> *A Pictorial History of Tenaflly* at 7, 19 (1994).
- <sup>68</sup> *The Record* (Feb. 9, 1895).
- <sup>69</sup> Van Valen, at 656.
- <sup>70</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>71</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>72</sup> Van Valen, at 656, 658; *A Pictorial History of Tenaflly* at 7 (1994).
- <sup>73</sup> Westervelt, at 412.
- <sup>74</sup> *A Pictorial History of Tenaflly* at 7 (1994).
- <sup>75</sup> Sisson, at 39.
- <sup>76</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>77</sup> Westervelt, at 290; *A Pictorial History of Tenaflly* at 11 (1994); Haring, at 87.
- <sup>78</sup> *A Pictorial History of Tenaflly* at 11 (1994).
- <sup>79</sup> Westervelt, at 290.
- <sup>80</sup> Mosley, *Tenaflly Trivialities* (1986).
- <sup>81</sup> See <http://worldconnect.rootsweb.com/cgi-bin/igm.cgi?op=GET&db=irishgenealogy&id=I16093> (visited June 3, 2004) (copy available from author).

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<sup>82</sup> *Everett Family Diary* (1876-1890) (unpublished) (available in the Mosley Local History Collection, Tenafly Public Library).

<sup>83</sup> *Id.* at 2.

<sup>84</sup> *Id.* at 19.

<sup>85</sup> *Id.* at 4.

<sup>86</sup> *Id.* at 21.

<sup>87</sup> *Id.* at 8-9.

<sup>88</sup> *Id.* at 27.

<sup>89</sup> *Id.* at 47.

<sup>90</sup> *Id.* at 27-28.

<sup>91</sup> *Id.* at 52.

<sup>92</sup> *Id.* at 32.

<sup>93</sup> *Id.* at 33-34.

<sup>94</sup> *Id.* at 34-35.