NORTH GREENBUSH NOTES

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WHY TWO GREENBUSHES?

I'm often asked why there are two towns with almost identical names. People write me asking for family information but after examining their query, I have to tell them the family lived in East and not North Greenbush and I politely refer them to the East Greenbush Historian.

Several people have inquired why then isn't there a West Greenbush or a South Greenbush? From where I live in Defreestville, I tell them West Greenbush would probably be an island in the Hudson River. A South Greenbush would likely be in Schodack.

So how did the Greenbushes evolve? When Rensselaer County was founded in 1791, the Town of Greenbush was established. This contained today's City of Rensselaer, North and East Greenbush and portions of Sand Lake and Poestenkill. The latter two entities soon broke off to form their own towns.

The trigger point for our two Greenbushes was a 1849 State Law which allowed county boards of supervisors to divide townships upon the application of at least twelves freeholders of each proposed new towns. The application included more freeholders from the East Greenbush area. All the names were well known, successful farmers with names like Defreest, Witbeck,

Van Alstyne and even a Rockefeller. The application was approved in 1854.

However this still leaves the question "why". I've heard two theories expounded. There were many Defreest families in both towns. Perhaps it was a "power grab" so each family could run their own town. Or I've heard it said that it was because of the quality of roads. Evidentially one area had better roads and didn't want extra taxes to fix roads in the other area. You can guess which town that was-I don't know.

The actual first town meetings were held on April 3, 1855. East Greenbush was originally called Clinton, but it was soon changed because there was already another town with that name near Utica.

Do you think the two Greenbushes will ever combine? Don't hold your breath.