



# NORTH GREENBUSH NOTES

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## A Glenwood Road House in History

There is a phrase historians often use: "If only the walls could talk". This means there are many historical tales associated with a house. This is especially true with a dwelling on Glenwood Road.

Maes Bloomendal leased 386 acres here in 1789 from Stephen Van Rensselaer. His son Peter inherited a part of this property and in turn Peter's son, George P. Bloomingdale became owner and presumably built the first house on this site around 1850.

George was a bachelor, therefore a nephew Henry Van Valkenburgh inherited the property at Bloomingdale's death in 1865. Thirteen years later, Henry remodeled the house in the Victorian style as it remains today. Van Valkenburgh was a dairy farmer who was quite successful: "With the wolf of poverty, gaunt and grim, he had never had any personal experience"-this according to his obituary.

Henry was active in community affairs being a lifelong member of the Masons. He paid lifetime dues in advance and proudly displaying the framed certificate in his sitting room.

Van Valkenburgh died in 1897 but there may have been some longevity genes associated with the house. His wife lived to the age of 102, dying at a daughter's Albany house in 1943. One son Howard lived to be 90 and attributed his longevity to "moderation"-he limited

himself to three cigars a day and once in a while a glass of beer.

The Glenwood Road property passed to the Gardner family in the early 1900's. Locals will remember the last Gardner who lived there. That would be Helen, a beloved local school teacher who died in 2015 at the age of 97 (she also must have "inherited" the house's longevity genes).

Helen remembered when there was no electricity on the unpaved Glenwood Road. Her family used oil lamps throughout the house. She rode her bicycle to school and came home for lunch in the summer. I wish I could interview her again about her experiences in the Glenwood Road house. But now these stories only exist in the walls of the house. If only the walls could talk.