

Town of Greenburgh
**ASSISTANT
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———— felicia barber + riley wentzler ————

*Rising from the Ashes: Greenburgh's
First Town Hall: Town Halls of the
Past Part I*

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with research assistance from Ryan Stuzin



177 Hillside Avenue Greenburgh New York, all of Greenburgh's residents know this is where the Town Hall is today. However it should be equally obvious to all that it wasn't always here since the Town of Greenburgh was founded in 1788 (<https://www.greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/5651/A--Thousand-Words-Which-You-Never-Knew-The-Forgotten-Story-of-The-Seal-of-Greenburgh>) and the building at the Hillside Avenue address was constructed in 1990 (Town of Greenburgh Assessor's Office- Greenburgh Town Hall Property Card). Let us now turn our attention to Greenburgh's very first town hall.

Romer-Van Tassel House (1793-1843):

Apparently, for the first 5 years of its existence, Greenburgh didn't have a town hall since the first record of a town hall appears in 1793. This is a building called the "Romer-Van Tassel House" and it is located at 2121 Saw Mill River Road Elmsford, NY 10523. The building takes its name from the original family which owned the house. It was originally owned by a man named Cornelius Van Tassel and his wife, Elizabeth Storms (<https://www.theclio.com/entry/104202>). The original structure was built in 1684(Wolfert 2013). Cornelius was an officer in the Westchester County Militia. Unfortunately, because of his allegiance to the Patriot cause, the British Army burned the house to the ground on November 17, 1777 (<https://www.theclio.com/entry/104202>).

Prior to burning the house, the British Army arrested Cornelius who would spend a year in a military prison. Even as the house was burning, Mrs. Elizabeth (Storms) Van Tassel was frantically searching the structure for their two-year-old daughter, Leah. Luckily, in an act of mercy, one British soldier had carried their daughter out of the house, wrapped her in a blanket and placed her in the snow (<https://www.theclio.com/entry/104202>).

Sixteen years later in 1793, Leah Van Tassel and her husband, John Romer, built a new house on top of the foundation of the destroyed one. Since this house was very close to the geographical center of the Town of Greenburgh, the town asked to use the home as a town hall and polling place. This arrangement remained in place for 50 years, until 1843.

John Romer was an active member of the freemasons. Interestingly, from 1805-1843, his house also served as the meeting place for the masonic lodge to which he belonged, Solomon's Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons #196. The house was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1994 (<https://www.theclio.com/entry/104202>). If you want to learn more about the freemasons in Greenburgh in general and Solomon's Lodge #196 in particular, see our article Greenburgh's Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth Click here- ([BROTHERLY-LOVE-RELIEF-AND-TRUTH--in-Greenburgh \(greenburghny.com\)](https://www.greenburghny.com/BROTHERLY-LOVE-RELIEF-AND-TRUTH--in-Greenburgh))

At some point, a 14-term New York State Assemblyman, The Honorable Richard Brodsky, moved in. Richard Louis Brodsky the son of William and Louise (Snow) Brodsky was born on May 4, 1946, in Manhattan, New York. His father was a structural engineer and his mother was a dental hygienist. Richard spent his first eight years of life in Brooklyn. He and his family moved to Greenburgh when he was nine. He attended Ardsley High School. After graduation, he attended Brandeis University, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts in political science. He was always a passionate democrat. Then he went to Harvard Law School, where he earned his law degree. He served 14 terms in the New York State Assembly from 1982-2010 (Roberts 2020). As an assemblyman, he championed many causes including: environmental protection, gun-control, and cyber security.

In 2010, he left the New York State Assembly to run for New York State Attorney General. He was one of five candidates running in the Democratic Primary (Wolfert 2013). He came in fourth, and the eventual winner of the Democratic Primary, Eric Schneiderman, became the State Attorney General (Wolfert 2013).

Richard lived in the Romer-Van Tassel House for a large portion of his adult life. He knew about the history of his home and loved talking about it at his annual August barbecue which he held for local democratic candidates (Wolfert 2013). He passed away on April 8, 2020 (Roberts 2020).



Previous Slices of History include:

- **Greenburgh's BROTHERLY LOVE, RELIEF AND TRUTH: A History of The Freemasons in Greenburgh (9/12/18)**
<https://www.greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/5658/BROTHERLY-LOVE-RELIEF-AND-TRUTH--in-Greenburgh>
- **Greenburgh and The Arts (9/22/18)**
<https://www.greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/5665/Greenburgh-AND-The--ARTS>
- **A Final Resting Place for "Man's Best Friend": The Peaceable Kingdom (9/29/18)**
<https://www.greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/5653/A-Final-Resting-Place--for-Mans-Best-Friend>
- **Greenburgh's Hall of Heroes: Ferncliff Cemetery Where Memories Live Forever (10/12/18)**
<https://www.greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/5667/Greenburgh-Hall-of-Heroes>
- **Greenburgh at The Great American Crossroads: Greenburgh's Civil War Story(10/19/18)**
<https://www.greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/5666/Greenburgh-at-The-Great-American-Crossroad>
- **A Different Kind of Rebel: Greenburgh's Contributions to the Underground Railroad (10/27/18)**
<https://www.greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/5680/A-Different-Kind-of-of-Rebel--Greenburghs-contributions-to-The-Underground-Railroad>
- **"The Disappearing Railroad Blues" in Greenburgh: The Fate of the Putnam Railroad Line and the old Putnam Trail (11/6/18)**
<https://www.greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/5675/The-Disappearing-Railroad-Blues-in-Greenburgh>
- **A Thousand Words Which You Never Knew: The Forgotten Story of the Seal of Greenburgh (11/17/18)**

<https://www.greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/5651/A--Thousand-Words-Which-You-Never-Knew-The-Forgotten-Story-of-The-Seal-of-Greenburgh>

- **How a Flat Tire led to a Happy Escape: The Story of Carvel in Greenburgh (12/11/18)**
<https://www.greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/5670/How-a-Flat-Tire-led-to-a-Happy-Escape>
- **The Guardians of History: Greenburgh's Historical Societies (1/6/19)**
<https://www.greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/5676/The-Guardians-of--History>
- **A Small House, an Important Meeting, a Huge Victory: The Story of the Odell House (1/12/2019)**
<https://www.greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/5654/A-Small-House--an-Important-Meeting--A-Huge-Victory>
- **The Intersection of Banking, Ballet, and School: Greenburgh's Warburg Estate (Updated) (10/22/19)**
<https://greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/6095/The-Intersection-of-Banking--Ballet--and-School-updated>
- **Lost History: The Tragedy of Malkasten (1/26/19)**
<https://www.greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/5673/Lost-History--The-Tragedy-of-Malkasten>
- **A Beautiful View for the Perfect Event: The Belvedere Estate (2/9/19)** <https://www.greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/5652/A-Beautiful-View-for-The-Perfect-Event--Belvedere-Estate>
- **The Power of Wealth and Humility: A Reflection on Two Highly Influential African Americans (2/18/19)**
<https://www.greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/5679/Wealth-and-Humility>
- **Greenburgh Under the Hollywood Lights: The TV shows and movies Filmed in Greenburgh Part I (2/23/19)**

<https://www.greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/5668/Greenburgh-under-Hollywood-Lights-Part-I>

- **Oh, The Places Your Mail has Gone: A History of The Hartsdale Post Office (3/9/2019)**
<https://www.greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/5674/Oh-The-Places-Your-Mail-has-Gone>
- **From Insurance to Symphonies: The Home of Charles Ives (3/16/19)**
<https://www.greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/5664/From-Insurance-to-Symphonies--The-Home-of-Charles-Ives>
- **Greenburgh Under the Hollywood Lights: The TV shows and Movies Filmed in Greenburgh Part II (3/29/19)**
<https://www.greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/5669/Greenburgh-Under-the-Hollywood-Lights-The-TV-shows-and-movies-Filmed-in-Greenburgh-Part-II>
- **From Chasing Rabbits to Setting Records: The Amazing Story of Larry James (4/7/2019)**
<https://www.greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/5661/From-Chasing-Rabbits-to-Setting-Records>
- **From Fixing Cars to building Infrastructure: How Massaro Park Got its name (4/13/2019)**
<https://www.greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/5663/From-Fixing-Cars-to-Building-Infrastructure-How--Massaro-Park-Got-Its-Name>
- **There is no church here, but “the brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated” this ground: The Story of The Little White Church Cemetery (4/27/19)**
<https://www.greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/5678/There-is-no-church-here-but-the-brave-men-living-and-dead-who-struggled-here-have-consecrated-this-ground>
- **Irvington in Chains and our Process A History of Slavery in Irvington and A look at how Slices of History are made (and our**

interview with historian Robert Marchant) (5/11/2019)

<https://www.greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/5671/Irvington-in-Chains>

- From Farmland to Shopping District: The Rise of Central Avenue (5/25/2019)
<https://www.greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/5662/From-Farmland-to-Shopping-District-The-Rise-of-Central-Avenue>
- Like a long lost friend”: The story of how summer recreation has evolved in Greenburgh (6/7/2019)
<https://www.greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/5672/like-a-long-lost-friend>
- Abandon Ship!!! The Story of United Nuclear Corporation and their Short-lived Elmsford Facility (6/28/19)
<https://www.greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/5656/Abandon-Ship>
- Beyond Heritage Versus Hate Toward Hope and Reconciliation: The story of Mount Hope Cemetery and its Confederate Monument (7/13/19)
<https://www.greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/5657/Beyond-Heritage-Versus-Hate-Toward-Hope-and-Reconciliation---The-story-of-Mount-Hope-Cemetery-and-its-Confederate-Monument>
- Hidden History: The Story of Fairview Fairgrounds Part I (7/27/19)
<https://www.greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/5660/fairgrounds>
- Entertainers for Justice (8/3/2019)
<https://www.greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/5659/Entertainers-for-Justice>
- A Tale of Two Towns: Greenburgh, NY, and Muncy, PA (8/23/2019)

<https://www.greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/5655/A-Tale-of-Two-Towns--Greenburgh-NY-and-Muncy-PA>

- **When Greenburgh Went “East Bound and Down”: Greenburgh During Prohibition (10/6/2019)**
<https://greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/5992/When-Greenburgh-Went-East-Bound-and-Down-Greenburgh-During-Prohibition>
- **From Mopping The Floor of One Institution to Managing Three at Once: The Amazing Story of Former Westchester County Commissioner of Public Welfare Ruth Taylor (12/12/19)**
<https://greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/6272/From-Mopping-The-Floor-of--One-Institution-to-Managing-Three-at-Once>
- **Greenburgh Gets its “Sun Daze on” Under the Watchful Eyes of the Boys in Blue (1/9/2020)**
<https://greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/6366/Greenburgh-Gets--its-Sun-Daze-on-Under-the-Watchful-Eyes-of-the-Boys-in-Blue>
- **Making Martin Luther King Jr’s Dream Come Alive the Success Story of the Parkway Homes/ Parkway Gardens Community:(1/18/2020)**
<https://greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/6377/Making-Martin-Luther-King-Jrs-Dream-Come-Alive-the-Success-Story-of-the-Parkway-Homes-Parkway-Gardens-Community>
- **Formed By Adversity, Held Together by Faith: The History of the Parkway Homes/Parkway Gardens Community (2/27/2020)**
<https://greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/6547/Formed--By-Adversity-and--Held-Together-by-Faith-The-History-of-the-Parkway-Homes- Parkway-Gardens-Community>

- **From an Apple Orchard to The Olympics: The Saint Andrew's Golf Club (3/8/2020)**
<https://greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/6591/From-an-Apple-Orchard-to-The-Olympics--The-Saint-Andrews-Golf-Club>
- **Ashes "Ashes, Ashes!!We all Fall Down"(3/23/2020)**
<https://greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/6653/Ashes-Ashes-We-all-Fall-Down>
- **A Leading Medical Institution at The Border of Greenburgh: The Story of New York Medical College (4 /4 /2020)**
<https://greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/6685/A-Leading-Medical-Institution-at-The-Border-of-Greenburgh>
- **When the Cure was Worse than the Disease: A Look back on When The Medical Profession Wasn't so Reliable: (4/18/2020)**
<https://greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/6728/When-The-Cure-was-Worse-than-the-Disease>
- **All Aboard!!! The Story of The Old Putnam Railroad In Greenburgh (5/31/2020)**
<https://greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/6909/All-Aboard-The-Story--the-Old-Putnam-Railroad>
- **Juneteenth: A Day of Liberation (6/6/2020)**
<https://greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/6920/Juneteenth--A-Day-of-Liberation>
- **The Jewel of Greenburgh: The Life of Charles Lewis Tiffany (7/25/2020)**

<https://greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/7049/The-Jewel-of-Greenburgh---The-Life-of-Charles-Lewis-Tiffany>

- **Hastings' Best and Brightest: Nobel Laureates of Hastings (8/1/2020)**
<https://greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/7065/Hastings-Best-and--Brightest---Nobel-Laureates-of-Hastings>
- **Happy Hour Amid Civil Strife In Elmsford The Story of How the Brother Against Brother Nature of the American Revolution Led to the Cocktail. (8/8/2020)**
<https://www.greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/7158/Happy-Hour-Amid-Civil-Strife-in-Elmsford>
- **A Woman Rebel In Hastings: The Life of Margaret Sanger (1879-1966) (10/7/2020)**
<https://www.greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/7166/A-Woman-Rebel-In-Hastings-The-Life-of--Margret-Sanger>
- **Headless Horsemen, Long Naps, and Sunshine: Washington Irving and Sunnyside (10/17/2020)**
<https://www.greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/7171/Headless-Horsemen-Long-Naps-and-Sunshine>
- **A General's Residence in Greenburgh (10/21/2020) [A-Generals-Residence-in-Greenburgh \(greenburghny.com\)](#)**
- **The Ghost of Restaurants Past in Greenburgh Part I (12/12/20)**
[The-Ghost-of-Restaurants--Past-in-Greenburgh-Part-I \(greenburghny.com\)](#)

- **A Truly Trailblazing Road: Historic Roads in Greenburgh Part I- The Bronx River Parkway (12/19/2020)**
<https://www.greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/7292/A-Truly-Trailblazing-Road-Historic-Roads-In-Greenburgh-Part-I>
- **On The Road Again: Significant Roads In Greenburgh – Saw Mill River Parkway (1/2/2021)**
<https://www.greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/7413/Saw-Mill-River-Parkway>
- **The Baby Brother of Parkways The Sprain Brook Parkway (1/9/2021)** [The-Baby-Brother-of-Parkways---The-Sprain-Brook \(greenburghny.com\)](https://www.greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/7413/Saw-Mill-River-Parkway)
- **Tarrytown is Alive with The Sound Music: The Tarrytown Music Hall (1/30/2021)**
<https://www.greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/7525/Tarrytown-is-Alive-with-The-Sound-of-Music-Tarrytown-Music-Hall>
- **The Black Contribution to The Thin Blue Line: Greenburgh's First African - American Police Officers (2/6/2021)** [The-Black-Contribution-to-The-Thin-Blue-Line \(greenburghny.com\)](https://www.greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/7525/Tarrytown-is-Alive-with-The-Sound-of-Music-Tarrytown-Music-Hall)
- **African- Americans Nobly Serving Their Community At the Levers of Power: African-American Town Board Members Past & Present (3/1/2021)** [African--Americans-Nobly-Serving-Their-Community-At--the-Levers-of-Power \(greenburghny.com\)](https://www.greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/7525/Tarrytown-is-Alive-with-The-Sound-of-Music-Tarrytown-Music-Hall)
- **The Legacy and Influence of Alexander Hamilton In Greenburgh: The Life of His Great-Great Granddaughter - Mary Schuyler**

Hamilton

(3/13/2021) <https://www.greenburghny.com/DocumentCenter/View/7635/The-Life-of-Alexander-Hamiltons-Great-Great-Granddaughter---Mary-Schuyler-Hamilton>

- **Alcohol, The Irvings and the Hamiltons: The Sanctuary of Zion Episcopal Church(3/27/2021)** [Sanctuary-of-Zion-Episcopal-Church \(greenburghny.com\)](#)
- **From the Basement to Trailers and Beyond: The Story of June Castleberry and The Lois Bronz Children's Center (4/3/2021)** [The-Story-of-June-Castleberry---and-The-Lois-Bronz-Childrens-Center \(greenburghny.com\)](#)

About the Authors:

We are both Assistant Town Historians 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. **To suggest a topic for next week's article, you can contact me at assistanthistorian@greenburghny.com, 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 **To suggest a topic for next week's article, you can contact me at assistanthistorian@greenburghny.com. To learn more about my artwork or to help me find employment you can contact me at feliciadbarber@gmail.com.**

Volunteer - Research Assistant - Ryan Stuzin:

I was born and raised in Scarsdale, New York. I am a senior at Edgemont High School, where I am captain of the varsity ski and golf teams. I also cover the ski team for the Scarsdale Inquirer. I have been a volunteer junior ski patroller at Stratton Mountain in Vermont and founded the Red Cross Club at my high school. I will be attending Colgate University in the fall, with a plan to study political science and/or history and eventually go to law school. I participated in the Town of Greenburgh internship program last summer, which inspired me to learn more about our town and its government. That, coupled with my love of history, is what prompted me to reach out to Riley and Felicia to help them with their articles about the history of Greenburgh.

Two Interviews with the authors:

<https://riverjournalonline.com/around-town/a-love-of-history-and-each-other/13708/>

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

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Wolfert, S. (2013, October 9). A Former New York State Assemblyman is Still Rolling. *Westchester Magazine*, p. Online.