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Groenwald, Anthony, 1898-1987.

Interview with Anthony Groenwald / narrated by H. Bertram Keller ; interviewed by Adele Hagmann. - Valley Stream Historical Society, March 21, 1987.
1 cassette.

NOTE: H. Bertram Keller prepared this recording on February 20, 1991, based on the notes taken by Adele Hagmann when she originally interviewed Anthony Groenwald in 1987.

Anthony Groenwald's recollections of life in Valley Stream include tales of hunting and fishing in local woods and streams.

1. Groenwald, Anthony, 1898-1987. 2. Valley Stream (N.Y.) - History. I. Valley Stream Historical Society. II. Hagmann, Adele. III. Keller, H. Bertram, 1915-

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS:

1. Outline of interview - Prepared by Helen Dowdeswell.
2. Transcript of interview from March 21, 1987 - Prepared by Adele Hagmann.

VALLEY STREAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

Anthony Groenwald

(Anthony 's words recorded by H.B.Keller)

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GROENWALD, ANTHONY 1898-1987

Tony's recollections of life in V.S.

before WWI read by H.B.Keller include
tales of hunting and fishing in local
woods and streams.

(Interview -Mar. 21, 1987 -Recorded

Feb. 20, 1991)

March 21, 1987

Oral History by Anthony Groenwald

recorded by Adele Hagmann

Wheeler Avenue school - before the wooden school building school was held in a little frame building on the other corner and my wife's mother, Mrs. Dillon was the teacher.

I was born in Valley Stream on January 12, 1898. My father came from Holland and my mother from Germany. He had a successful barber shop in Brooklyn (five chairs) but he wanted to come to the country. So he came to Valley Stream and started raising chickens as a business. He would take the chickens and eggs into the city by horse and wagon to sell in the market. One morning we awoke to find every chicken dead. A weasel had gotten in the coops and killed every one. Times were tough then and my mother had to get rid of the family cow. She bought a goat and we had goat's milk.

Later the chicken coop was located on Shaw Avenue and eventually moved to the southwest corner of Central Avenue and Merrick Road. Finally the coop building was moved to the corner of Rockaway Avenue and Lincoln Avenue. There were no buildings located there at all at that time.

There were eight children in our family - five sisters and two brothers. Mary, the oldest was born in Brooklyn but John was born in Valley Stream. My parents lived into their eighties. Most of the people in town were farmers and large families were the rule. Reisert, who owned a large farm, had eighteen children. After a minimum of schooling the children went to work on the farm and the school schedule often took the farmer's work into consideration so the children could help.

Fred Finkenstadt's father had a store on Rockaway Avenue and he would display his fresh fruit on a stand outside the store. I remember when I was in elementary school we boys would sometimes dump the stand over and as the fruit rolled around we would pocket some. Hammond had an ice cream parlor on Rockaway Avenue then. When I was 10 or 11 years old my father taught me to shoot a shotgun and when I was 12 he bought me my own shotgun and I was allowed to go shooting locally on my own. I became interested in taxidermy and by the time I was 18 had quite a collection of stuffed birds and animals. We hunted ducks (we called them helldivers and butterballs) various owls, including the great horned owl, cranes at the pond, fishhawks, weasels and rabbits. The rabbits my mother cooked and we all enjoyed them. I also stuffed a large turtle which we caught in the pond. The hunting was best in what is now the Gibson area which was then heavily wooded. When I first started hunting no license was required but when I was thirteen my father took me to Hempstead for a license by way of the traction trolley which went there via Freeport.

I later raised beagles and other hunting dogs and had two champions. I still have many trophies won by my dogs in the field trials. I always had a dog when I was a boy and trained even the mutts to retrieve when hunting. At one time I had 11 hounds in the house behind the building ~~where~~^{here} the Valley Stream Auto parts is today.

On Sunday afternoons in those days farmers would put their families in the horse and buggys (the surreys with the fringe on top) and ride over to Herman's Hotel at Elmont Road and Central Avenue and would spend the afternoon with other families visiting and picnicking.

I met my wife in high school, Rockville Centre's Southside High where I graduated in 1916. After graduation I worked for the Goodwin Motor Sales in that town located at Observer Street (now Sunrise Highway) and Park Avenue. At the same time I commuted to New York University at night, working toward my Bachelor of Commerical Science degree. One night coming home on the Long Island Railroad I fell asleep and went past Jamaica Station into Hempstead at midnight. When I finally got home after waiting for trains back to Jamaica and then to Valley Stream, I decided that was all the education I needed. I took the trolley to Rockville Centre to go to school except when I wanted to buy my best girl a soda--then I walked to save the money.

When World War I came along I would see the groups of enlistees gathering at the railroad station for induction and I went home to tell my mother that I wanted to enlist. She would ask me to wait "until after Christmas" or "after Easter" or various other upcoming occasions. I finally enlisted and joined the Navy. My ship was the "Granite Steel" which never left its mooring in New York City. Other

sailors were billeted in Columbia University and I was able to continue my commercial courses;

I remember one occasion when I was in the Columbia dining hall and they were serving a dish we all got very tired of--cheese fondue. We even had a song about it. I felt very sick while eating but did not want to report to sick bay because I had home leave coming up in a few days, and wanted to make sure I got home. At that time Spanish influenza was rampant and they would often load up the ambulances with four or five sailors to take them to the hospital. A man in uniform was forbidden to ride the subways. How was I to get home? When leave day came a chauffeured limousine drove up and the woman owner, who had heard of the dilemma we sailors were in offered to have us driven home. Even though I lived out in the country in Valley Stream she had her chauffeur take me there. As soon as I got home Doc Foster came over to treat me. He signed the necessary medical forms to extend my leave. On my first day out while going for a walk near the station, I heard about the armistice. The fire bell at that time was a heavy iron ring and hammer. I got the hammer and rang the alarm together with all the whistles and church bells declaring peace at last.

At one time I wanted to build a canoe to go duck hunting. At that time I tended the fires at the Holy Name

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of Mary church and early on Sunday mornings I built my canoe. When it was finished I called my friend, Joseph Colbel on February 22 to try it out. There had been a snowstorm and there was still ice along the edge of the lake. We went out on the water and wanted to go down the stream to look for ducks. They appeared suddenly and we grabbed for our shotguns and the canoe went under. A local fireman gave us dry clothes to go home in.

When the pipeline was being installed the kids had a great time running through it.

Trout fishing was another favorite sport. The best spot was in the 'warm' water stream flowing into the lake. Under the bridge on Hendrickson Avenue was where the big ones could be found. Adults seeing the size of the fish which we kids landed with bent hooks couldn't believe it. Also at that point was a turnoff on Hendrickson Avenue where the horses could be driven down into the stream for water and out the other side up to the road again.