



Gilboa Historical Society

Dedicated to learning about, sharing, and preserving our history

Fall 2009

Volume II, Issue 3

This article is reprinted from the
Schoharie County Historical Review, Spring 1964.

GILBOA ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

(More or Less)

Katherine S. Harrington,
Town Historian Gilboa, N.Y.

My story was supposed to be about Gilboa, one hundred years ago—but I am going to cheat a little; since I am, most of the time, a land surveyor, I shall use the surveyor's privilege; you know land is always described as "more or less"; so, since I know far more about Gilboa in 1870—some 90 years ago—than I do about it in 1859, that's the time I shall talk of, for old Gilboa did not change much in a few years, and undoubtedly was the same in 1870 as it was 10 years before.

This is Gilboa as it was.

The soft May sunshine spills over the hilltops into the long, narrow Valley of the Schoharie, onto the street that runs along the river. It gilds old houses and newer ones; warms into brightest green the young grass on the valley floor. Purple lilac bushes nod in the dooryards; there are jonquils and iris—the flower our ancestors innocently called "flower de luce," blandly unaware of its French pronunciation. Along the flagstone sidewalks, piles of stove wood are neatly stacked, and from these, even this early—for it is only about six o'clock—aproned women and shirtsleeved men are taking in armfuls of wood to build the breakfast fires. This is an early-rising village; the work day for most begins at seven. Stores open then; so do the mills, the blacksmith shops, the cooper shop. Now and then a "rig"—a team or single horse-drawn wagon—trots into town. Here and there a Nottingham lace curtain is pulled aside, as someone peers out to see who is going by.

Down at Luman Reed's store, a redheaded grocery clerk is sweeping out the accumulation of matches, papers, and quids of "chawin' tobacco" that lie around the cracker barrel from last night's session of the

local club. That cloud of dust briskly approaching from up Flat Creek way is Dr. Philip Zeh, returning from an all night session with a "confinement case." Here he comes in his two-wheeled doctor's gig, drawn by a rangy sorrel coming on at a fast trot. Tired as he is, the doctor is whistling; you can see everything is all right; there's a fine boy at Jim Kingley's; a boy who will be named, in grateful appreciation, Philip Zeh Kingsley. No wonder Dr. Zeh smiles; he has, besides, two dollars in his pocket for his good night's work.

While we have been watching the doctor, a number of men have appeared on the street, heading up toward Strykersville (West Conesville to us). They carry tin dinner pails; up on the Manorkill stands the Gilboa Cotton Mill, toward which they are hurrying, for the mill is a thriving concern; presently, at seven, you will hear the steam-whistle blow to start the day's work. This is the town's clock, for it blows at seven, twelve, one and six. Other men are bound for the foundry, which stood lower down in the village. There goes an early farmer with a load of scrap iron; Jim Ellis at the furnace will melt it down

Please turn to Old Gilboa, page 8

Fall Schedule

September 16, 7:00 P.M.

Bee Mattice, the historian of the Town of Conesville, will talk of herbal medicines and the natural healers of the area. See page 9.

October 21, 7:00 P.M.

Sheriff Bates will talk of his work while serving on the "Select Committee on Assassinations of the U.S. House of Representatives" in the 1970s. See page 10.

November 18, 7:00 P.M.

Paul Trotta will discuss the stone-age technology of Native Americans of the area and demonstrate flintknapping. There will also be numerous examples of primitive tools. See page 18.

December 16, 7:00 P.M.

At the Historical Society's Annual Holiday Bottle Auction, you can purchase an attractively wrapped bottle, financially help the Society, and socialize over great desserts before the winter sets in.

Remember to BYOB (not necessarily alcoholic). And, please bring nonperishable foods for the winter food baskets.

Cultivation of Hops in the Schoharie Valley

Hops was a major crop throughout the lower (northern) end of the Schoharie Valley in the eighteenth century. The industry declined as more productive lands were opened to the west and it was decimated by the “noble experiment” (Prohibition) in January 1919. Mary Bowers’s article reprinted here specifically relates to the Town of Seward, but it also describes hop farming that occurred in any of the lower Schoharie towns. The *Knickerbocker News* article starting on page 3 describes the music played at the end of hop harvests at that same period of time.

Hops farming in the valley made a resurgence with the repeal of the 18th Amendment in December of 1933, but commercial cultivation of hops faded completely in the 1950s. For this later period, we offer a *Schoharie County Historical Review* article by William Pindar on the gilboahome.com Web site called “Hops in Schoharie County.” An excellent recent article by Mark Simonson for the *Daily Star* of June 27, 2009 provides an overview of hops production in Middleburgh and is available on the Daily Star site at www.thedailystar.com/archivesearch/local_story_178034534.html

This article is reprinted from the
Schoharie County Historical Review, Spring 1965.

HOP GROWING IN THE TOWN OF SEWARD

Mary S. Bowers, Town Historian

The production of hops in Schoharie County was a major industry for many years. The N.Y. State Gazetteer (1860) gives the agricultural production of hops, as reported by State Census of 1855, as 440,754 pounds in Schoharie Co.

As I am concerned mainly with the town of Seward, the agricultural statistics from census of 1865 of that township was 224,542 pounds of hops harvested during 1864. Nearby Sharon produced 234,596 pounds for that same year. Both towns were the largest producers in the county at that time.

The market was favorable and buyers plentiful. The climate and soil conditions seem to be well suited for hop raising. The fertile valleys and even hillsides were ideal.

While so many were engaged in this business that it would be difficult to enumerate each grower, but a few would be the Hynds farm in Hyndsville; Wm. J. Dunckel of the Clove, who was the first to introduce hop raising in this area; Patries. and Handys of Bush Street Road; Fance, Fraats and Hynds of Seward; Hagedorn, Esmay, Devenpeck, France of Dorloot; Sternberg, Frederick and

Rowley of Gardnersville; and many more.

The culture of hops varied little throughout Schoharie County. Much of the equipment was made by hand. In those days “The Organization that helps farmers help themselves” was unknown. The farmer had to rely on self judgement, know the productivity of the soil, be his own weatherman, take a gamble on the results of the harvest, and most important of all, when and to whom to make the sale. He didn’t receive monthly checks for his produce, but only once a year did he get the much needed cash.

Hops were his chief source of income, along with minor industries such as dairying, sheep raising, apples and other minor produce.

The hop yards ringed from small fields of an acre or more to larger farms where several acres were cultivated.

Nearly all farms, large



Hop Picking, Alonzo Hynes Farm, Seward, 1910. Photo courtesy of the Schoharie County Historical Review.

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**The Gilboa Historical Society meets at
7:00 PM at the Gilboa Town Hall on
the third Wednesday of the month,
March through December**

The **Gilboa Museum**, 122 Stryker Road,
is open noon-4:30 on Saturdays and Sundays,
from July 4th through Labor Day, and
Columbus Day weekend.
Also by appointment for groups (607 588-9413).

**Newsletters, audio recordings of Newsletter
articles, other GHS publications, pictures of
the village, and podcasts by our seniors**
are available online at www.gilboahome.com

Please contact Gerry Stoner
with feedback or suggestions on the Newsletter
(607 652-5988, gerrys@gilboahome.com).

Turn to Hops, page 11

This article is reprinted from the
Knickerbocker News, Albany, N.Y., Mon., April 22, 1957.

Moore, Old Caller, Recalls at 90 HOP-PICKER HOPS TOPPED ROCK 'N' ROLL

Tony Burton

Tall, white-haired Andrew Moore, who celebrates his 90th birthday at his home in Guinea, near Middleburgh, tomorrow, never has done any rock 'n' roll. He has watched it and likes the look of it. But he reckons it's a pretty lazy way to dance compared with what they did in the old days, when he was caller at the local hop-picking dances.

"After a hard day's work among the hops, we would start our square dance at about 9 P.M.," he says. "And then we would keep right on going until the sun came up. So you can tell that we enjoyed ourselves. I think we had even more fun than the rock 'n' rollers."



Happy Birthday—Andrew Moore, 90, conjures up memories of the old days when he fiddled and acted as caller at the hop-picking dances. He has used the same fiddle for 50 years.



Eight Years to 90 Years Old—Four generations of Moores, spanning 82 years, get together to make music in Middleburgh. Next to Andrew Moore, with violin is his son, Birdsley, at the family's old foot-pedal organ. With them are granddaughter, Mrs. John Serrie, and great-granddaughter, little Linda Mueller, 8.

Moore will be swapping stories about those old days with his cronies when his family holds an open house for his birthday. About 100 invitations have gone out to relatives and friends in the form of a poem composed by his granddaughter, Mrs. John Serrie, a teacher in Middleburgh Central School. The invitation ends:

Drop in anytime from morning 'til night,
And then Pop's day will be just right.

On the front cover is a drawing of a fiddle. All the guests will know about that. For Mr. Moore used to play it while he was calling. He had the same one for 50 years and still plays occasionally when his great-grandchildren—he has 10—want to dance on the porch.

"I learned to play in the woodshed, because my mother thought it was wicked," he said. "She said the devil was in a fiddle so I had to keep out of the way when I played it."

Mrs. Serrie plans to tape record some of the old tunes that he plays and put them on as background music when the visitors arrive. "I want to tape them anyway because those old tunes are almost unknown nowadays and I think we should have a record of them," said Mrs. Serrie.

They include such numbers as "The Old Cow Died on the 'Tater Hole," "The Beaux of Oak Hill" and "The Incorporation of Broome Center."

"In those days, the caller shouted, he didn't sing like they do now. Also, the dancers were more graceful, I think, even if they only had rough floors to move about on," said Mr. Moore.

"The people didn't really pick hops for the money. They came for the fun that everybody had. The pickers used to be paid 30 cents to fill a box with hops and that used to take about four hours.

"One of the tricks was to get hold of a girl and throw her into her box so that the hops were pressed right down and she would have to pick as many again to fill it.

"Another time, some of the boys put a wagon right up on the top of the roof. I remember I had to help get it down.

"Oh, we had fun. We had a deaf teacher at school and one time we looked out of the window and saw some sheep being dipped. We decided we wanted to help, so while her back was turned, we all slipped out to get among the sheep."

Farmers in the Middleburgh area stopped growing hops about 50 years ago because it became uneconomic and those fun-filled two weeks of picking hops came to an end. But they still live on in the mind of Mr. Moore.

"I guess, I'll play cards with my friends on my birthday," he said. "And we'll talk about those old square dances and maybe do one once more. One thing, though, I shan't have to act as Bouncer like I used to."

FAMILY TREE MAKER

Reports and Charts

Teena (Mayham) Schroeder

The genealogy software program, *Family Tree Maker*, is capable of a wide variety of reports and charts. These can be customized to your specifications that include a choice of data or facts to show a variety of fonts and sizes, colors, etc. The size of each report or chart depends on the number of generations and people included. A graphical chart is a great way to visualize your family.

I now am up against the economic concerns of the newsletter format—we cannot show all of the charts and variations in this issue because of the cost of printing and mailing; and yet you really have to see the flexibility of genealogical software. Therefore, I am including written descriptions of many different formats to give you an idea of the power you can harness using the computer, but photos of only a few. The full page printouts of these various reports are available in .pdf format at www.gilboahome.com. The report titles are shown in **boldface** in the captions.

In addition to the charts and reports, a genealogy book for your family can be created with custom pages and reports. When satisfied with the layout, you can automatically add a table of contents and an index of individuals with correct page numbers, and save or distribute it as a traditional book or electronically as a .pdf.



Teena Schroeder lived most of her adult life in New Jersey, is married with an adult son, had a career as an accountant, and is now retired to the Adirondacks. Her interest in the Historical Society comes from her family history on Blenheim Hill and South Gilboa in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Individual Report for Mayham, Benjamin Stephen

Individual Summary: Mayham, Benjamin Stephen

Sex: Male

Father: Mayham, William

Mother: Howard, Abigail



Individual Facts:

Name: Mayham, Benjamin Stephen [1]

Sex: Male

Birth: Oct 13, 1824 in New York, USA [1, 2, 3, 4]

Census: 1850 in Gilboa, Schoharie, New York, USA [5]

Occupation: Farmer, sawyer, miller [1]

Death: Feb 01, 1910 in Delhi, Delaware, New York, USA [1]

Burial: Feb 1910 in South Gilboa, Schoharie, New York, USA; Brewster Cemetery [6]

Orig Source: 1950; The Mayham Family 1795-1950, page 11, 13 [1]

Updated: Bet. 1985-2007

Cemetery Stone: Yes, Photo (1985) [7]

Shared Facts: Baird, Harriet

Marriage: Dec 15, 1850 [1]

Children: Mayham, Frank Baird

Mayham, Martha Alice

Shared Facts: Wilson, Susan

Marriage: Nov 19, 1864 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA [1]

Children: Mayham, Lillian H.

Mayham, Eloise

Sources:

- 1 Eva Grace Mayham (Goodenough) Raymond, *The Mayham Family 1795-1950 (ORIGINAL): The Family of Henry Maham of Blenheim Hill, Schoharie County, New York* (New York: Mayham Family Reunion Committee, 1950).
- 2 1850 Federal Census-New York-Schoharie Co.-Gilboa, (Roll: M432_595), Page 155 A - Place of birth.
- 3 1900 Federal Census-New York-Schoharie Co.-Gilboa, (Roll T623_1161), Page 130 B - Place of birth.
- 4 1860 Federal Census-New York-Schoharie Co.-Gilboa (Roll M653_860), Ancestry.com, Page 160.
- 5 1850 Federal Census-New York-Schoharie Co.-Gilboa (Roll: M432_595), Ancestry.com, Page 155 A.
- 6 New York-Schoharie Co.-Cemeteries: Brewster Cemetery, South Gilboa, Schroeder, Teena E. (Mayham)-Photographs.
- 7 Schroeder, Teena E. (Mayham)-Mayham Family Researcher.

Text reports pertaining to individual records:

Individual Report shows all of the facts, notes, and sources associated with a specific record. Based on this information, other reports organize the information based on **Descendant**; **Family Group**; **Place Usage**; **Marriage**; **Source Usage**; **Kinship**; **Parentage**

Photo Album for Benjamin Stephen Mayham

Benjamin Stephen Mayham
 Birth: Oct 13, 1824 Father: William Mayham
 Death: Feb 01, 1910 Mother: Abigail Howard
 Marriage: Dec 15, 1850 Spouse: Harriet Baird



Mayham, Benjamin Stephen



Mayham, Benjamin & Susan (Wilson) with grandchildren, Ben & Louise



Photographic reports on individuals :

Photo Albums display the name, birth, death, marriage information, and all the photos associated with one individual. Only certain popular image formats can be displayed in two to six columns (more columns, smaller pictures). This is a nice way to show photos you have in your collection for each individual or record.

Photo Album for Albert Champlin Mayham

Albert Champlin Mayham
 Birth: Feb 01, 1866 Father: Cornelius Mayham Jr.
 Death: Oct 03, 1918 Mother: Lucinda Champlin
 Marriage: Jun 26, 1895 Spouse: Harriet B. Armour



Mayham, Albert Champlin



Mayham, Albert Champlin

HIKING THE LONG PATH to *Huntersfield Mountain*

Clarence Putman

The Long Path crosses Huntersfield Mountain, which is over 3400 feet in elevation. This is the Long Path's highest point outside of the Catskill Park. Hikers can expect a vigorous workout. The spectacular views make it well worth the effort. Huntersfield Mountain is on Schoharie County's southern border with Greene County.

The trail to the mountain is on the Huntersfield State Forest, which is administered by the Department of Environmental Conservation. The trail is maintained by volunteers from the NY/NJ Trail Conference and from the Long Path North Hiking Club.



1. From the parking area at Macumber Road to the peak of the mountain is 2.15 miles. Macumber Road is accessed from Greene County Routes 10 and 11 out of Prattsville.



3. Part way up the mountain there is an opening from a ledge with a westerly view looking into Schoharie County. The Gilboa Reservoir can be seen from this point.



2. Shortly after leaving the parking lot, the trail intersects an old wood road. It continues on this road for about a half of a mile before turning sharply uphill. This picture shows the Long Path's trail marking indicating the right turn heading up the mountain.



4. On top of Huntersfield Mountain there is a yellow trail that leads to a lean-to. Before the lean-to, there is a nice view to the east showing the ridge line the Long Path follows to Ashland Pinnacle.

Thanks to all for the Ice Cream Social

Connie Ruehle

The Gilboa Historical Society would like to thank two organizations that contributed so much to this year's Ice Cream Social: Peter Holmes and the Esperance Band for providing the music and Stewart's Ice Cream Stores for donating the ice cream and toppings.

We should also thank Mother Nature for her calm and balmy evening, and all of you for providing such great attendance and support!

Your support, great music, scrumptuous desserts, and beautiful weather made for a great Wednesday!



5. Huntersfield Mountain Lean-to is a great place to take a break from the hike up the mountain. The lean-to was built and the views cleared by the inmates from the Summit Shock Camp.



6. Looking south from the lean-to, hikers can view some of the higher peaks of the Catskills. Hunter Mountain and Slide Mountain can be seen from here.



7. The yellow trail is a quarter mile long and loops back to the Long Path trail. Hikers continuing on the yellow trail will have a westerly view that includes a large portion of Schoharie County. Mount Utsayantha can also be seen from this point.



8. The Power Authority's upper reservoir of the Blenheim-Gilboa pump storage complex is also part of the view. After returning to the Long Path from the loop trail, hikers will return to Macumber Road or continue east past Ashland Pinnacle to Bluebird Road in the town of Conesville.

MUSEUM NEWS

The Gilboa Museum presents "Antique Toys and Sports Memorabilia."

Kristen Wyckoff

The Gilboa Museum is having a great season celebrating "Antique Toys and Sports Memorabilia." The Open House was very successful with over 100 people attending—thank you everyone for supporting us! I think kids and adults had a great time—the stilts borrowed from the Stone Fort in Schoharie were a big hit.

"Gilboa Gifts" has been an asset too so far this year. We have unique souvenirs of Gilboa and the area. Reasonably priced historical magnets, wooden toys, T-shirts, local art, books and fossil jewelry! Sterling silver wrapped brachiopods are the latest fashion—did you know?

Our visitor numbers have increased from any other year so far, which is encouraging. I think our marketing

strategy is working! We have newly printed brochures that we put in many of the tourism places in the surrounding counties. We have a website: <http://www.gilboafossils.org/> in working process for the first time so out-of-towners can find us and plan their day trips to the museum. Just putting a new sign at the end of Stryker Road has forced folks going by to really notice that we're there!

Keep spreading the word and bringing your guests and family to one of the most unique spots in the area!

Columbus Day weekend (Oct. 10th & 11th) is the final Saturday and Sunday that museum is open to the public this year. Remember we are open by appointment at any other time. Please call, 607 588 9413 for more information.

Old Gilboa, continued from page 1

and turn it into something useful. In spare time, some of his workers will cast the little fancy iron trivets to hold flat irons or teapots, trivets which are now eagerly bought as antiques. And here comes a farmer with a new Middleburgh plow in his wagon. He had to go all the way to that village to buy it, because, due to some freak, the company's franchise gave them the right to sell and deliver their plows only within a twelve-mile radius of their plant!

Look over there, down the street. The hitching racks and posts in front of the stores are filling up. There goes Newell Goff, from up west of Mackey, with his neighbor, Dave Brown, the man for whom Dave Brown Mountain Road is named. They are going into Dave Friable's harness shop for some hame straps, then back up to Broome Center to the cooper shop. Both are prosperous dairymen; they are going to order some "hard cooperage"—butter firkins to store their summer's crop of butter. In the fall, the butter buyer will come through to pick it up. Meanwhile, it will be carefully stored deep in the cool cellars.

Now what are they laughing about as they come out? That old story about Charles Harley of Moresville (Grand Gorge). Charlie, it seems, went out to California in the gold rush of '49, but he didn't go to the mines. Instead, he saw the need of a ferry on San Francisco Bay, started one, and made more money that way than many a miner in the hills. When he came home, he took to shopping produce out to the west coast by sailing ship—butter, eggs, etc. One day he got a letter from his consignee:

"Dear Sir:

For Heaven's sake, don't ship any more eggs or butter 'round the Horn; send it across the Isthmus, or else wait till there's a railroad; the stuff's spoiled when it gets here!"

That yarn is always good for a big laugh among butter-makers.

Well, well—here comes an oxcart drawn by two fine red Devon steers: It creaks to a stop in front of the harness shop, and we can see that it is Origen Goodfellow, from 'way over in Bates. Perched on a bag of shearings which his father is bringing in to trade at the store is little John Goodfellow, a lad of eleven, who sits staring round-eyed at all the sights of the town. Mr. Goodfellow with his family of some six or eight children still lives in a log cabin; not one of his children has ever yet been inside a schoolhouse. He must have started in the middle of the night to get here by nine, making all that long trip up over Leonard Mountain. He has stopped, too, at Harvey M. Bliss's Mill on the Plattekill, to leave two bushels of prime winter wheat to be ground. Bliss's mill is famous; it has four run of stones and can turn wheat into the finest flour, better than any other mill around.

Let's look at curly-headed little John, sitting solemnly on his bag of wool. This remarkable youngster spurred to ambition by what he is seeing on this very trip, perhaps will, when he is fourteen, go voluntarily to work for his

board and room in the home of the schoolmaster James Chichester of Broome Center for the sole privilege of going to school. "So," he tells us in late years, "that I shouldn't be beat out of all I earned." He studies hard, and his teacher wisely concentrates on reading, spelling and arithmetic. John learns to speak and write very well. When he can read well enough, Mr. Chichester gives him a history book so that he shall know something about his country. At seventeen, he goes out to work for himself, at Lamb's Corners in Albany County, but, eager for self-improvement, for three years more he buys copy-books and painstakingly fills them; his writing is beautiful and legible to the end of his days. In the last year of his long life, at eighty-four, John hears over his radio that the government wants more food for World War I so he grows, cleans and bags 11 pounds of navy beans, which he sells in Albany; they are so clean that the commission dealer gives him a premium price!

That good-looking young man there coming out of the tailor shop with his father is one of the Mattice boys. He will be twenty-one next month, a man. In sign that his dependence his family is over, and he is on his own, his father is giving him a new suit of clothes and \$100, to start life on, and he has just been measured for his suit. What fun he will have just as the clock strikes 12 midnight on his birthday, running down stairs waking everybody with shouts of "Ma—there's a man in the house!"

There comes Solomon D. Mackey from Flat Creek, just pulling up his fine team of Morgans at the blacksmith shop. Mr. Mackey, whose farm on the Flat Creek Road is one of the showplaces of the section, contemplates a long drive to Catskill on some business, and wants to be sure his horses' shoes are well set for the trip. Also, he thinks the tires of his carriage are a bit loose on the felloes, and plans to drive down the creek and through the ford to tighten them up a little; the water will swell the dry wood, and he doesn't now want to spend the time to have the tires re-set.

There goes the noon whistle! The Moresville stage has just pulled up in front of the Gilboa House, and mine-host Charlie Stryker comes bustling out to greet his guests; two travelling men and a very pretty lady with three hat boxes, a trunk and a carpet bag; look, she's wearing the new, narrower skirt, with rows of ruffles; must be from New York—what, Kingston? She's a visitor coming to Daniel Wyckoff's? What's that fellow carrying? Oh, one of those new-fangled cream separators, that some say may replace milk pans; he probably is going to try to sell one to Leman Reed; if Mr. Reed should stock them in his big store, a good many will be interested, especially the women; they do all the skimming of milk. Going to make the girls lazy, I'm afraid!

Postmaster Alonzo Stryker is taking in the bags of mail; he'll have the Albany papers, with the newest word from Washington;

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RECOLLECTIONS OF THE 1940S

Life in the Hills Remembered—Part 3

Maude Bailey Haskin

The 1940s were a time of great change for Maude and the entire way of life of everyone here in the hills. Electricity and all that came with it was completely new, eventually even such wonders as television and electric milking machines for the small farms. There was a great war, women went to work outside of the home, and little girls grew up.

Almon continued to drive the school bus, along with doing farm work. From 1935 to 1944 he earned \$75 a month to drive the bus, 1944–1947 \$80, and 1947–1948 \$100 a month. The girls started school in 1939 when Loretta was 6 and Beatrice had just turned 5, and stayed together through graduation in 1951. In first grade (no kindergarten then), Loretta was sick one day and could not go to school. A crying little Bee got on the bus and when they arrived at school, no one could make her happy (to put it mildly), so she came back home with her Daddy when he had finished his morning bus run. The little girls had always been together.

Sometimes they had a hired man on the farm, but not for long periods. Maude said she would rather do the farm work herself than have someone around. The girls would help a little with the barn chores (very little as Beatrice remembers), maybe helping get in the cows, feeding the calves, or gathering eggs. One of the girls wrote in 1944 for a school project, that they had 21 cows at that time (and that was a lot for a small farm). “Tippy” was the cow dog. “On the summer nights, Tippy goes after the cows and brings them to the barn, while my father stands at the barn.” You could see the whole pasture then—now it has all grown up to brush.

World War II broke out on December 7, 1941. Maude’s memories of the war will be a separate article.

The farm prospered through the years and Almon built an addition on the barn. Some time in the ’40s Ford Nickerson of Gilboa installed a barn cleaner that was his own patent. They

had the horses, Prince and Kit, for years. They bought a silo for \$15 from Van Buren’s in Hobart, where they bought all their farm machinery. In 1947, they bought their first tractor for the farm, and also a milking machine. Maude said, “Oh my, that milking machine was such a help!” Both these items were great timesavers for the farmer, and his wife. In later years they had all registered Holstein cows.

In the summer Maude was busy in the house taking city boarders, as was a common thing among many neighbors. She did all the cooking and baking, getting up at 5 a.m. or earlier to bake pies for dinner and cakes for supper, before starting breakfast. Favorites were banana cake and rhubarb pie. Gracie Place would clean the bedrooms and do the ironing of muslin sheets for all the beds.

Almon’s mother, Ethel, would come each day and help in the kitchen. Her “warmed-up potatoes” were a big hit for supper. Almost every afternoon she cut up the potatoes left over from the noon meal, and browned them in bacon grease, stirring them for an hour or so. An early 1940s advertisement in a New York City newspaper, told that the charge for the boarders was \$2 per day.

The boardinghouse business grew and in 1943 they bought the place where the Molles live now, and made each room a bedroom. In 1947 they remodeled a large old barn on their property into a dining hall with six bedrooms upstairs. With these additions, at the most they had 87 people boarding. Often on Saturday evenings,

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Ailments, Potions and Medicine Men

Beatrice Mattice

Beatrice Mattice speaks on “Ailments, Potions and Medicine Men” at the Gilboa Historical Society meeting on September 16 at 7 P.M.

She will tell of the doctors who practiced here in the 1800s when the population was double what it is today. Besides physicians and surgeons, herb doctors were listed in the census records, and the talk will include some of the early home remedies. Her research has uncovered information on the traditions of witchcraft and a contemporary interview with a local gentleman (with a name very familiar even today) on fortune tellers, witch doctors and unusual people.

SNOWBIRDS

Your snail mail *Newsletter* will *not* automatically be forwarded by the Post Office. To avoid missing it, notify us if you have a temporary address for any of our mailings (the first of the months of March, June, and September).

607 652-5988
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Please let us know if you want to receive the PDF version of the *Newsletter*, or if you want it sent to distant friends or relatives.

All issues of the newsletters are available online for free access—but in addition, each article is also available as individual .pdf files and as individual podcasts.

There are also podcasts of interviews that we have held on broad topics like farming and one-room schoolhouses, and pictures and information on the village of Old Gilboa.

The address for all products and services is:

WWW.GILBOAHOME.COM

The 1940s, continued from page 9

the boarders would meet in the dining hall and peel apples so she could make pies in the morning. Without their help, there was no way she could peel all the apples and make pies for 70 or 80 before breakfast. The guests treated this like a party. Almon often entertained the “city kids” at the barn. They loved the animals and a chance to ride in his little old truck.

Haskin’s dining hall became a community center during the winters, with many Chapel Church suppers, retirement and birthday parties, Saturday night dances, wedding receptions and showers. For the dances, the music was old-fashioned bluegrass type with local fiddlers, Almon’s father Almearon and Dick Mattice. John Shafer was on guitar, Mr. Archibald on banjo, and Almon or Belle Mattice played chords on the piano, with any strangers just joining in. Many local young people learned how to square dance at these dances. It was a good and safe place for the young folks. Old, young and in between danced. The ladies brought sandwiches or a cake for refreshments and a “hat

was passed” for the musicians. The large dining room and kitchen took up the whole downstairs. It was heated with a big fireplace that would be just “a-roarin” on those cold winter nights.

About 1948 Almon went to work for the Town of Gilboa operating the grader, snowplow, and bulldozer until 1972 when he retired. His wages through the years were: 1926–28, 40¢ an hour; 1930s, 30–35¢ an hour [notice the cut in Depression pay]; in the 1950s, \$1.25 an hour; and in the 1960s \$1.50 to \$2 an hour.

Maude went to work in the school cafeteria in 1947 and worked until 1950. She went back in 1962 as cafeteria manager and retired in 1973. Many former students remember her “mystery sandwiches” and “pine bark chowder.”

Time went on and soon it was 1950. Her recollections will be in the next issue.



Maude Bailey Haskin has been an observer of life in Gilboa for all of her 95 years, and is documenting her views on life in these decades. The war years will be covered in a later issue.

JOHN, MARTIN, AND BOBBY

John S. Bates Jr.

Forty years ago, the final report of the United States House Select Committee on Assassinations was filed.

The current sheriff of Schoharie County, John S. Bates Jr., was a firearms specialist for the state police of New York and was named as one of five investigators used by this panel to review the evidence in the assassinations of John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King.

Sheriff Bates will recall that time and that work at the October meeting of the Gilboa Historical Society to be held on October 21, 2009 at the Gilboa Town Hall, at 7:00 P.M.

ACTIVITIES AND HISTORY OF LANSING MANOR AND THE BLENHEIM-GILBOA POWER PROJECT

Historic Lansing Manor is an early American country estate built in 1819 by John Lansing, who had represented New York as a delegate to the Constitutional Convention in 1788. The Manor House was restored by the Power Authority in 1977 and is filled with authentic furnishings from the first half of the 19th century. The Manor includes a servants’ quarters, horse barn, land office, tenant house, and visitors center housed in a 19th-century dairy barn.

September 26, 10AM–4PM

Annual Wildlife Festival & Energy Expo

October 10, 11AM

Fall Hike and Woodsman’s Day

October 24, 11AM–1PM

Spooky Halloween Event

November, Sundays 2PM

Movies to be announced

December 1–January 3, 10AM–5PM

Festival of Trees

December 12, 11AM–1PM

Photoshoot with Santa

Outbuildings around period farms were an integral part of life itself, and Lansing Manor was no exception. There was a tenant house built in 1804 by Abraham Shoemaker who farmed approximately 120 acres, and also surviving from around 1819 are a (horse and) carriage barn and a land office. The office served the farm and received goods in payment of rent from tenant farmers, later served as a “summer kitchen” in warm weather, and may also have served as a laundry. Of course there is our large and stately barn that was the talk of the town in 1880 and that now houses the Visitors Center. The silo attached to the barn was an “add-on” after 1900 by the Mattice family.

In addition to these buildings we had a corn crib, ice house, milk house, servants’ quarters, and smoke house—all of which were so necessary to survival and life on the grounds of the Manor.

Admission to Lansing Manor is free and guided tours are available from May 1–October 31.

Closed on Tuesday. For more information, call 800 724-0309 or visit www.nypa.gov.

Blenheim-Gilboa Power Project Visitors Center, 1378 State Route 30, North Blenheim, NY 12131



The Hynes Farm, Hyndsville, 1910. Photo courtesy of the Schoharie County Historical Review.

Hops, continued from page 2

or small, had a hop house, a good size one story building used for curing and storing of hops and housing of hop equipment as well as other farm machinery.

Hop Culture

Suppose we start with a newly planted yard. Plants or cuttings were obtained from runners of established plants. As these runners spread quite rapidly over the ground, a new yard was easily and inexpensively started from old roots. In spring the “sets” were planted in hills, each hill about six feet apart, in rows of some distance, enough space to allow a horse to get through for plowing and cultivating. The first year, poles were not required. The poles were mainly cedar, and usually shipped in flat cars by railroad.

In an established yard, poles were set in March or April, then plowed between the rows, grubbed and cultivated. By May or June the task of hop tying began. This job employed a number of people, both men and women. In tying hops, the vines were tied to the pole about two feet above the ground and trained east to west around the pole. About six or seven feet from the ground a nail was driven into the pole and hop twine tied to it. This twine came in large balls and was made of heavy, firm, yet smooth twisted material. It called for great skill to carry the twine from pole to pole and only men who were experts were allowed to do this job. A fourteen foot pole was used, called a “twining pole,” with an extension down one side, screw eyes at bottom, top and end of extension, through which the twine was threaded. The ball of twine was carried in a pail by the man or “twiner” and with this pole, the twine was wound around the top of pole and carried down to next pole opposite. This process was repeated throughout the entire yard.

All this work had to be completed by June or first part of July, for then the “haying” season began.

As the season advanced and hops became heavy on poles and twine, great damage was often caused by hail and wind storms.

Preparation for Harvest

Preparing for the hop harvest involved a great deal of extra labor. The hop house had to be cleared of non-essentials, kiln cloth replaced if needed, hop boxes and tents repaired, hop sacks mended, new ones added if necessary. The “pickers” and “box tenders” engaged for the season. Many of the local people were hired from year to year, they usually boarded themselves while the “city pickers” remained at the farm during the harvest.

The Cherry Valley branch train played an important part in transporting hop pickers from distant places to the various railroad towns where they were met by the farmer by whom employed.

The house wife’s task was not an easy one. Huge quantities of food had to be prepared well in advance. (I have often heard my Aunt relate these words “we were all summer getting ready for hop picking.”)

As freezers of any kind were unknown in those early days—meat had to be preserved by an entirely different method. Perhaps in later years the “ice box” was used but this was small compared to the amount of food that was required. Much of the meats used were of salted variety, salt pork, corned beef, dried smoked beef and smoked hams, carefully stored. Later, fresh meats, veal, beef, mutton were placed in the ice house wrapped in a clean cloth, then in a bran sack and placed between cakes of ice and covered with sawdust.

Jars of preserves, pickles, relishes, large quantities of fried cakes, cookies and cakes that would remain fresh, such as fruit and applesauce cakes, were made in advance. When the harvest began, fresh cakes and pies were baked almost daily. The large swing shelves, tables, and screened cupboards in the cellar were about the only way of keeping fresh foods from day to day.

Extra sleeping quarters were needed, while houses were large in those days and bedrooms not a few, yet often an attic was converted into sleeping quarters or extra rooms over a woodshed or workshop were used. All these extra beds called for many bed linens and blankets, all of these made ready for use.

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Hop Picking, Patrie Farm, Janesville, about 1895. Photo courtesy of the Schoharie County Historical Review.

Old Gilboa, continued from page 8

looks as if President Grant would be elected for another term, although there are rumors that he isn't doing so well in the Whitehouse; he's too easy going.

There goes Justice John I. Jackson, with Lawyer Andrew Baldwin, up the steps of the Gilboa House; that man with them is Ovando Tallerday from Livingstonville, renting agent for Anthony Livingston; may be some of that old anti-rent trouble, seeing he's with two lawyers, although that business has mostly blown over, and the partrons have sold out. You know they say that Ovando can hardly read or write, and can't count above a hundred, but he's a shrewd man, just the same, and owns land all over Albany county and in Conesville, too.

There's the school bell, for one o'clock. See the children hurry; they don't want to be late; they know if they don't get in on time, they may have to stay after school.

. . . Comes the long afternoon; lazy, warm and dreamy; farmers out in the flats are ploughing; women are planting gardens; teams come and go, in clouds of dust; sun-bonneted women go in and out of the stores, buying calico and gingham, molasses, tea and coffee—things they cannot raise or make at home. Now one goes in to the cobbler's shop to be measured for a pair of shoes, or into the millinery shop for a hat. A long funeral procession winds through town toward the cemetery, the women swathed in black crepe veils, the men solemn with crepe on their plug hats. What would they say, I wonder, if they could know that their departed friend, yes, and themselves too, would one day be lifted from their quiet graves and moved far away upon the hill, when Gilboa is no more a village, but a giant lake?

The light goes out slowly—faster in the valley, but on the hill-tops it lingers a long time. The farmers have gone home to do the chores; the mill and the foundry are silent; folk gather 'round the supper tables; the lamps and candles are lit; the town grows still, save for some laughter from the bar room of the hotel, and the sound of organ music where the choir of the Dutch Reformed Church is practicing next Sunday's hymns.

A dog barks briefly; a serenading cat from the grist mill strolls by; up the hill, a hoot-owl cries. . . .

Dream on, old Gilboa. It will be eighty years and more before the waters cover you; you will see floods, and wars; Custer and his men will die bloodily at Little Big Horn; Wall Street will have it's Black Friday, and the repercussions of it will make you tremble; the dread black diphtheria epidemic of the eighties will sweep over you with merciless fury; there will come an abortive railroad, with promise of prosperity, only to meet defeat at the "paddy-hole;" the paddy-hole, now a village dump, grave of the nameless Irishman of long ago, who died there in a cave in. Dream on, unaware that the city will come and swallow you at last—Good night, old Gilboa!



Katherine Harrington (1893–1986), a focal personality in Gilboa and the county during most of the twentieth century, was a teacher, surveyor, town historian, and author of a book of poems on rural New York life (Ballads of the Hard Hills). She celebrated the fact that "the old rocking chair had failed to stop" her, continuing to write stories and articles until her death.

THE IMPACT OF WEATHER ON FARMING IN THE NORTHERN CATSKILLS

George Wilson

Farmers need forage crops like hay and corn for their animals, and the best quality forage is produced by a combination of good growing conditions and good harvesting conditions. Corn Silage (corn chopped green and stored in an air-free condition) and haylage(hay chopped after a little drying time and also stored in an air-free condition) as well as hay provide nutrients for animals. Working animals such as milking cows, race horses and horses being shown or ridden need rations of high quality forages.

Local weather this year has shattered historical records: June was bad, and July 2009 was the wettest July on record and the third coldest ever. This record has severely depressed forage production .

As you read in the last issue of the *Newsletter*, hay has to be dried before it can be baled. This summer has been a disaster for area farmers of hay because there were not three or four hot, dry days in a row in June or early July: nearly all

of the first cutting hay crop has ended up as haylage, and the second cutting of the year generally is much smaller.

Corn is a different story, liking "hot weather and dry feet" in July to grow and mature. This year's weather has thus set the timing for mature corn back as well—the outlook for silage is okay, but the production of ear corn depends on the temperature in July and August and the timing of the first frost.

Diane DiGiovanni needs pictures, information, and feedback on Broome School District 8. The one-room school was in Gilboa on Stone Store Road. didigi@optonline, or phone 607 652-2665

Hops, continued from page 11*Harvest Time*

The hop harvest usually began the last of August or fore part of September and lasted well into September and often into October, depending on size of yards and if a heavy yield of hops. As the hops reached maturity, the blossoms were examined. They had to be firm, rounded and when the hop was broken open, emit a strong pungent odor from the golden yellow pollen inside. This was an indication that the harvest was at hand.

No doubt many a farmer had often made the remark “we begin picking next week.” The pickers were notified and within a day or so were ready to begin work. Local help was often transported to and from the yard by his employer with a hay-rigging or perhaps an old band wagon. Work began about seven in the morning. At that time of year mornings were usually cool and heavy dew called for extra wraps and an ample supply of gloves, as vines remained wet for some time. When pickers arrived at fields, the hop boxes were in place. A box was about 8' x 4' and divided into four sections or single boxes. Each box 24" deep. At each corner were heavy wooden handles about 2' long, placed between two heavy pieces of wood nailed to box. These were used to carry boxes from one setting to another. Sometimes a muslin tent was attached to box to protect from sun or sudden light shower. In center of the ends of box was an upright to which the tent, when used, was fastened and on which the “lug” pole was placed through large holes. This lug pole was used to rest the pole of hops on while pickers stripped the hops from vines into the box. Each full box in the yard had its own setting. This set consisted of at least 16 hills. When all hops were picked in the set, the box was then carried into a new setting. Each “tender” cared for one box (consisting of the 4 singles). He cut the vines above the ground with a heavy knife and with a jack, pulled the heavy poles. A strap hung

from one shoulder and fastened to iron clamp which gripped the pole tightly. The pole of hops was carried to the box, resting the end of pole on the lug pole. Pickers were instructed to “pick clean” — no vines and no large leaves and to clean up hops which had fallen to the ground. When a pole of hops had been picked and the picker was ready for more, the familiar cry of “Hops-Hops” was audible. The tender supplied a new pole of hops and stripped the vines from the one already picked. A box of hops when full was 24" high. Great care was used not to jar the box, causing hops to settle. The looser the hops could be kept, the more the picker could be credited with picking. When a box was full, the call “Sack-a-box” was heard and the tender scooped the hops with his arms into a huge sack, held firmly by the picker. The sacks picked up later with the hay wagon were tied at end and laid aside, to be carried to the hop house.

An average picker could pick 4 or 5 boxes a day. Some more, all depending on condition of hops. The price per box was from 50–60 cents for those boarding themselves, those receiving board and lodging with the farmer received 40–50 cents.

The wearing apparel for women usually consisted of old clothing, large brim straw hats or cloth sunbonnets and heavy cotton “hop gloves.” Often long stockings were attached to gloves and drawn up over the dress sleeve.

Kerchiefs too were used around the neck. One had at all times to protect ones face, neck and arms from the rough, prickly vines. Bugs and worms were numerous and kerchiefs helped to protect neck from these.

Mothers often brought smaller children with them. Too small to pick in a box, they were given a basket or bucket to help mother fill her box and rewarded with a few cents per basket.

By now, everyone was ready for lunch. Those boarding themselves usually ate in the shade of hop box or under a nearby tree, and what appetites one had at this time! If the odor of hops could possibly have an effect on ones abnormal appetite I never really knew.

Pleasant times were enjoyed along with the long hours of work. Visiting among themselves, or the singing of familiar songs, the men discussing the coming election, or perhaps making plans for the coming event the “Cobleskill Fair.” At that time the Fair was held much later than today. Often extending a few days into October.

Among other things less important but always associated with hop picking was the “kissing loop.” It was a loop formed by a vine turning, making a perfect loop and twining around itself again. Whoever of the male sex found a vine of this type, would cut this portion from the main vine and run desperately in search of

Please turn to Hops, page 15



John S. Huit's Hop Warehouse #6, Cobleskill. Destroyed by fire, March 1919, Loss \$50,000.

Photo by L. H. Martin, courtesy of the Schoharie County Historical Review.

ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE VILLAGE OF GILBOA:

Various Pipes Found at the J. Reed Site

Richard A. Kastl

While smoking is today recognized as a significant health risk both for the smoker and the second hand recipient, smoking was once ubiquitous throughout society. The development of smoking technology is a useful tool in understanding an archaeological deposit.

The J. Reed Site in old Gilboa yielded a rich array of clay smoking pipes. Such pipes were first manufactured by Europeans in the seventeenth century and remained the most popular smoking device until the mid-nineteenth century. At that time, the briar pipe began to be manufactured and gained in popularity among middle class smokers. (The briar pipe is made from the root of the tree-heath [French *bruyere*], found in the Mediterranean Sea area.) However, the clay pipe continued to be manufactured in abundance and were cheap (if fragile). As they sold for a few cents per gross, they remained the smoke of choice for the working classes into the early twentieth century, and many working men made a practice of cutting the pipe stem so that they could hold the pipe in their teeth, thus freeing both hands for work.

Early clay pipe forms were often undecorated. By the mid-nineteenth century, pipe manufacturers had a vast array of decorated forms. Catalogs would feature 300–400 varieties to choose from. Clay pipes became a public expression for the smoker, and motif themes included Irish nationalist, Masonic, and patriotic.

Pipes from the J. Reed Site reflect styles popular during the mid-nineteenth century, roughly between the 1840s and the 1880s. Most of the styles recovered were general designs popular during this time period and of no known special significance. However, three of the styles recovered were of patriotic motifs and include the “Turks Head,” “Shield and Eagle,” and the “TD with stars.” What is interesting is that the only identifiable motif is a patriotic one, and thus reflects the sentiments of the smoker.

Some of the pipe forms found at the J. Reed Site have been seen at many sites throughout North America. Effigy pipes became common by the mid-nineteenth century. They were known as early as 1648 (Kenyon 2008:10). The turbaned human effigy form found at the J. Reed Site has been known as the Turks Head pipe. Various forms of this pipe have been found in Canada and the United States. The Henderson Company in Montreal manufactured a form identical to the J. Reed effigies between 1847 and 1876. Their pipe also included the “United States of America” along the headband of the figure, and thus were likely exported to the United States. The Henderson Company was taken over by W. H. Dixon who continued to make pipes until 1894. No makers mark was found on any of the J. Reed specimens—it is not possible to attribute the source as popular pipes were widely copied. Other examples of this style have also been found in Rome, NY (Hanson 1971).



Pipes from the J. Reed Site, Gilboa, NY:

Rows 1 and 2: Fluted and plain pipe forms; Row 3: L-R, “TD” pipe with stars, “Turks Head” effigy piped; Row 4: L-R Shield and Eagle pipes, fluted forms. Row 5: decorated pipe stems, Row 6: wood or bone pipe stem from a composite pipe.

The Shield and Eagle pipe found at the J. Reed Site has also been found at other sites. Reckner (2000:103) notes two different examples of this motif from the Five Points Site in New York City and a 13 star TD pipe, similar to one found at the J. Reed Site. Another example of the 13-star TD pipe has been recorded from Sacramento, California (Humphrey 1969:28). Many of the specimens from Sacramento seem to date from a fire in a sundries store in November 1852. Reckner (1999:35–37) notes the 13-star TD pipe in contexts dating between 1840 and 1860. Examples of the Shield and Eagle pipe were also found in the same context. The effigy example from Fort Stanwix in Rome, NY also dates to the mid-nineteenth century.

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Hops, continued from page 13

some fair maiden, and as the name implies, through the loop bestow a kiss or two upon the chosen one.

Doubtless many who were familiar with hops, surely remember the little “hop merchant.” It was a little rough looking cocoon, attached to a vine or leaf by a thread-like portion of what appeared to be the head, later emerging into a not too handsome butterfly. Down the back were two rows of metallic like dots, about five in each row. These dots had the appearance of either bright gold or silver. As the old saying was “if gold”—hops would bring a very good price that year—but “if silver”—the indication that a much lower price was to be expected.

Quitting time was usually five o'clock. If a box wasn't quite full or only a few inches in box, they were measured with a yard stick and the number of boxes picked that day, plus the remaining inches were recorded in a book by employer.

The large hay wagon and team picked up the sacks of hops and took them to the hop house where they were hauled (by pulley) to upper floor, emptied and spread out evenly on floor of the kiln. This room was large. The floor was made of heavy slats spaced about two inches apart and covered with an open mesh cloth known as “kiln cloth.” This allowed the heat from furnace below to dry the hops that night. The furnace room was the size of the kiln above, the walls of which were plastered to retain the heat. Inside the furnace were iron pockets for the brimstone, as well as three or four iron kettles suspended from the ceiling. Heated horse shoes were placed in these to melt the brimstone. The fumes from the brimstone produced a yellowish color that hops required in the drying process.

Curing or drying the hops was a very important job. The man in charge usually slept in the hop-house as the furnace had to be kept fired until about three o'clock in the morning after which a slower fire was needed. Once during the night the hops had to be turned. The next day when thoroughly dry, they were scooped up with an open frame shovel with kiln cloth fastened to the frame. Then with a wooden scraper the remaining hops were scraped up, and lastly, the pollen and core were swept from the kiln, all thrown into an adjoining room until time for baling.

Social Life

Hop picking was a round of good times as well as hard work. An annual event looked forward to by so many, the “city pickers” who remained at the farm for the season, as well as local pickers. Young and old joined in the many pleasant activities.

The first two verses of H. H. Johnson's poem written Sept. 1883, entitled “Hop-Picking” tells of the anticipated good times awaiting them.

“Hop picking is coming!” the boys shout in glee.
“What jolly good times we are going to see!

“We'll meet all the girls we have met years before!
“And we'll have all those jolly times over once more!”

“Hop picking is coming!” the girls smiling say.
“We've been looking ahead for many a day
to the dances we'll have, and the jokes and the fun,
We'll enjoy it so well when hop-picking's begun!”

The evenings were spent in singing, parties, outdoor chicken roasts, visiting among the older people, and dancing was very popular. Dances were held in a barn or hop house, perhaps not too smooth a floor, but for the ever popular square dance it served its purpose. Usually some local fiddler and caller was available in the neighborhood. Saturday night was a night in town. Dances were held in nearby hotels or perhaps a town hall. The local stores were well patronized on such nights as well as on rainy days.

The roving photographer played a most important role. His photos are still to be found in many homes, usually well preserved. They told a story of hop picking. Pictures were either taken of the pickers in groups by the hop boxes or assembled in the yard or on a porch of the farm house.

Harvest Over

For many, the hop harvest ended all too soon. New friends had been made, old acquaintances renewed, often a romance started at hop time, but another year of work and gaiety was eagerly looked forward to. So it was “good-bye” for now—but to the farmer and wife it was not quite over. Again I must quote the last two verses of H. H. Johnson's poem “Hop-Picking,” which might have well described the situation:

Hop-picking is over! Thank God it is done!
Hop-picking is over! Thank God it is done!
If ever man wishes himself dead, I'm that one!
They have tumbled my house from the cellar to dome,
Till it looks more like bedlam than it does like a home!
Thus the hop-grower groans as he looks o'er his place
With despair in his heart and a frown on his face;
And he thanks all his stars, yes each separate sphere,
That hop-picking comes only once in a year.”
(Hyndsville, Sept. 20, 1883. H. H. J.)

About the next step, and I dare say the most important decision to make, was the sale of hops. It was almost always a gamble. Hops have brought anywhere from the very low price of 4¢ per pound to the once fabulous price of \$1.00 per pound. A news item of October 1892 reads as follows “Few sale of hops about here, 18–21¢. Can't buy any more at those prices, buyers will have to bid higher. There was a train of

A LETTER IN RESPONSE

to the Article in the Previous Newsletter

“Archaeology of the Village of Gilboa” by Dr. Michael Jacobsen

As the Chairperson of the Gilboa Museum Committee I felt the need to respond to Dr. Jacobsen’s article. I and other members of the historical society were quite offended about the article’s history of our town and many of the facts quoted were wrong. A letter has been written with explanations of each mistaken quote to the archaeologist, Dr. Jacobsen and I will mention a few here.

In Jacobsen’s summary of our town’s history he quotes “the city’s offer to buy their property became an opportunity for a better life outside the village.” Wrong. I don’t think anyone was happy from the interviews we did with our historical society or from Board of Water Supply reports that they fought for their “fair market value,” to the diaries that exist of families today. The people did not want to leave their homes or their way of life; it was forced upon them. It certainly was not felt to be an opportunity.

“The reservoir submerged many buildings” Wrong. All buildings were tore down or burned before the reservoir was filled.

“Over the years, trees, and brush reclaimed the area . . . became overgrown hiding the village’s historic past.” This was because the city owned the land, fenced it, and wanted the trees and brush to grow.

“Much of the memory of life in the village during the 1800’s has faded away. However, the village’s unwritten history awaits rediscovery.” Our memories of the old village of Gilboa have not faded away. We have many personal diaries that tell of their way of life, quite completely, as well as numerous magazine and newspaper articles. Many, many descendants of these early Gilboa people still live in the area. We have many maps: 1855, 1866, 1902 and others that show just where each house was in the village and who lived there. Censuses through the years tell all about each family. A large collection of photographs show pictures of the houses, the people and their life. Our history has been well preserved because of the tragic elements of our past.

“But nothing (is known) of how they fed and housed their employees.” Wrong. We have complete collections of annual reports of the Board of Water Supply for all the years of the construction and these reports describe how they fed and housed their employees, even photos that show the inside and outside of these buildings.

Regarding Solomon Mackay: “The historic records are silent about the personal history of this family. . . .” The correct spelling is Mackey and we know a lot about the Solomon Mackey and his many descendants. We have a folder about an inch thick on Solomon. And we are quite sure they had a “matched set” of dishes!

We realize that Dr. Jacobson is hired by NYC to do this research prior to any construction that is going to take place on the dam in the future. Our community is grateful for any information we may not have been aware of about the people; especially since we are not allowed to investigate our own ancestors or go on the property at all. I think Dr. Jacobson should be more sensitive to the ancestors of today and giving the impression that Gilboa was suffering and the people wanted to leave! Gilboa was like any other town at that time going through industrial changes such as the tanning industry vanishing and the introduction of cars that allowed tourism to diminish in the Catskill area. Other towns went through it, Prattsville, Stamford, and Roxbury for examples, are still here. People are still allowed to live there.

There are many more little false statements in the article that have been brought to Dr. Jacobson’s attention that I shall not scrutinize here. We may be a little sensitive from generations of anger and resentment, but families don’t forget when cemeteries of loved ones are removed and children and grandchildren can never go back and visit their ancestral homes, never ever.

In writing this letter “we” have the documents, newspaper articles and photographs to back up all the information. The “we” referring to the Gilboa Historical Society and our local town historians Richard Lewis and Beatrice Mattice.

Sincerely,

Kristen Wyckoff

LETTERS FROM THE FRONT

to Mother, Father, and Daniel Reed

Robert Morrissey

Jeremiah W. and David H. Reed wrote at least six letters home over a period of time from November 28, 1862, through March 23, 1864. I assume that they were brothers, and it appears that they may have lived in the village. I found the letters in the trash when moving into my new home in Broome Center.

I find it especially interesting that this issue of the *Newsletter* includes an article on the excavation of the J. Reed site in the village (p. 14). The tax rolls of the village in 1920 includes five separate Reed properties although understandably the first names of those villagers do not match any of the names from these letters written 50-some years earlier.

This first letter, dated November 28, 1862, is transcribed here with a scan of the first page. All four pages of the letter are available at the www.gilboahome.com.

We will reprint these letters one per issue so you can look forward to them much as Mother, Father, and Daniel Reed did. Note: we have maintained the spelling of the original letters in the transcripts but have added minimal punctuation.

November the 28 '62
kind brother Daniel

I thought that you would like to hear from me and to hear that i am well and Ellis is the same. we are within 2 miles of Fair fax where we have bin since we came from thorough fair gap but we shant stay long hear. we shall take winter quarters in a day or to betwen hear and Washington. it may be that we may stay hear a week but i gess not if we do take quarters. then i shall send for a pair of boot and some provision. then we shall have nice tents and then we shall take comfort. i like it hear better and better. we have no snow hear yet onely it came about one inch or so when we moved that Sunday but it has froze hard enough to bair up a man severl times. but we sleep warm and have enough to eat and tip top good water. now i will send this letter without any stamp on for i have not got any nor i cant get none and they say we aint obliged to put any on nor you aint obliged to pay the postage to get it out of the office for they say that solders letters goes free. now you tell pap to find out wether it is so or not and let me no if it is so for it will save a good many three cents. pap must send me 2 or three dollars for i hant got one single cent and i dont know when we will get any. tell the children i often think of them and often dream of you all. the other night i drempt that pap and i we fit each other and we had some awful quarels. now that is a sine for something. our old dream book said it was a good sine to quarel with your father and mother. you tell pap and ma to send me some stamps

Please turn to Letters, page 19

Nov the 28 '62.
~~kind father~~ kind brother Daniel
I thought that you would
like to hear from me and
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Hops, continued from page 15

23 loaded cars left the depot a few days ago. Longest train ever left this depot so says Mr. G. France.”

In the early nineties hops did bring \$1.00 per pound but this all time high price was of short duration. At these prices farmers were able to make progress, even “lay up” for future security. They had dreams, hopes and of course a desire for a higher standard of living. They plowed up more land and started new yards thinking these fancy prices would continue.

A few lines from H. T. Dana’s poem, “The hop growers Song” portrays the excitement caused by these unusual prices:

We must plow up the meadow—the wheat field the same,
And the raising of hops must now be our game,
For the wealth of the Indies will become our reward,
And we’ll praise our good luck, and give thanks to the Lord.

The sale of hops depended largely on quality, proper curing and even distribution through the bale. Often they were sold on the vine but more often after baling and in some instances sales were not made until the following year.

The dried hops which had been thrown into huge piles in the storage room were scooped up and thrown through an opening in the floor into the press below. The press had already been lined with hop baling. Two men stamped the hops firmly until the press was full, after the press was removed the bales were sewed on one side with hop twine, threaded through a heavy, curved steel needle. When the hops had been sold they were hauled to the railroad station and shipped in freight cars to distant breweries.

In the fall the yards had to be cleaned up, dead vines burned, equipment stored and hop poles carefully stacked. Before the ground was frozen, barnyard manure was applied on each hill. This was the only fertilizer used and it also served as winter protection.

Blue Mold

The hop industry which had been the chief source of livelihood for several generations was beginning to decline. In the early 1900s the downward trend began. Unfavorable weather conditions and the uncertainties of the hop market forced farmers gradually to seek other ways for farm produce. A disease known as “blue mold” was slowly taking its toll. The excellent quality of hops of former years was disappearing—disease caused hops to be reduced in size, discolored and mold appearing on both hops and leaves.

About 1912 hops were bringing 40 cents for best grades and 30¢ for poorer grades. Already some of the old yards were beginning to be plowed up, but many who had been thinking of going out of the hop raising business had decided to hold on and see what the season developed and a continuation of a fair price. Newly set yards continued to be cultivated however, in hopes of no serious recurrence of

the devastating blue mold. But to start new yards was much a gamble that many were gradually going out of business and fields plowed up and used for other crops. A spray of sulphur was used at first, with little success. This was expensive and required extra labor.

Gradually hop raising gave way to the dairy industry. About 1910, Sheffield Farms began the erection of creameries in Seward, Hyndsville, and other nearby localities. This afforded farmers a good market for their products. The dairy industry has expanded greatly over the years and as a result one today finds large fields of corn and alfalfa where once was hops. Excellent herds of Holstein and Guernsey cattle are to be found on nearly every farm. There are also the fine farm organizations willing and able to assist farmers with the many problems confronting them today.

Driving through the countryside we find many of the old hop houses, some well preserved and put to good use—others either demolished or left to fall in and decay.

The hop poles, no longer needed, were used for fence posts, especially cedar, or burned for fire wood. After all the years since hops were no longer grown, one can still find a vine growing along a stone wall producing some fine hops.

In fact, in my back yard is a hill from one of these old roots, each year bearing a fine specimen of “English Clusters.” This year I am hoping for a “bumper crop” about the fore part of September. The vines have already (in May) been tied, and trained with the sun.

We might even brew a cup of hop tea!

TECHNOLOGY OF PRIMITIVE TOOLS

Paul Trotta

Paul Trotta has been passionate about primitive American technology for 24 years, and has authored articles on flintknapping, arrow woods, and rawhide, leather, and glues. His article on “Native American Tools” will be in winter *Catskill Life*.

In this presentation, he will demonstrate techniques for chipping cutting edges from native flint and shaping these flints (cherts) for use as tools. He will also discuss the skills to use wood, leather, and rawhide.

A wealth of replica tools—such as needles, spears, arrows, pipes, and axes—will be passed around for the audience to handle, all of which would be typical of technology in use before the time of Columbus.

Trotta will be speaking at the Gilboa Historical Society meeting to be held on November 18, 2009 at the Gilboa Town Hall, at 7:00 P.M.

DEDICATED TO LEARNING ABOUT, SHARING, AND PRESERVING OUR HISTORY

Gerry Stoner

I started working on the *Newsletter* for the fall 2006 issue. We now have 10 issues and 3-plus years under the belt, and it is obvious that I have loved working with all of you—contributors, readers, and critics alike.

One noticeable aspect of our community is the boundaries that are placed on us: the land within an hour of home is broken into nearly 100 hamlets, four watersheds, three counties, over a dozen villages and cities, four communication markets, and three marketing centers—without a common newspaper or broadcast station. And yet, in some regards—such as local history—this area is an integrated community of the northern Catskills.

northerncatskillshistory.com is a celebration of this commonality—a web site dedicated to learning about, sharing, and preserving our northern Catskills history. The site will include features of gilboahome.com, but with added input from the broader range of hamlets, watersheds, counties, villages, cities, and communication and market centers. There will also be an emphasis on documenting and recording local history based on experience with the *Newsletter*—how to *write* local history.

The site will feature a new, quarterly newsletter free to all individual and historical societies. Historical and genealogical societies will benefit by being able to distribute the newsletter to their own memberships much as the Gilboa Historical Society has done for the last few years.

My hope is that area historical societies will integrate their own activities with the newsletter and web site of northerncatskillshistory.com to help increase membership and activities of the local societies in the northern Catskills; and to catalyze and mentor writers of history in Blenheim, Broome, Conesville, Gilboa, Jefferson, Middleburgh, Roxbury, Stamford, the Mountaintop towns, and all the northern Catskills.

To implement northerncatskillshistory.com, I regretfully have to step down as editor of the Gilboa Historical Society *Newsletter*. I hope the Gilboa Historical Society will be the first society to take advantage of this new effort, and that you individually wish me luck on this new adventure.

Letters, continued from page 17
 for i had as live spend my money in hearing from home as any way and when i get my pay then i will send them a fue dollars. then when pay day comes then i shall have quite a pile of money. all i cair of being to home this winter. i could run about some now. i don't see any thing to hender you from taking comfort for you cant have to work very hard for the oats is threshed and got part of the winters wood got. now give my respects to all and tell the chrildren to not abuse their parents for that is all of my greatest trouble to think i have bin sasy to them and to grany and if i never see them again i hope that they will forgive me for all i hant bin so very sorry. i often think of it and often shall and you all do the same. rite soon. give love to my father and mother. i aint home sick one single bit. i take comfort on my marches and evry thing else. now you may say i lie but i dont for i think it will make a man of me. i never had better health.

from David Reed
to Daniel Reed

Membership Application Form

Name: _____	() Lifetime membership (\$100.00) \$ _____
Subscription format for Newsletter: Physical <input type="checkbox"/> Electronic <input type="checkbox"/>	() Family membership (\$25.00) \$ _____
Email: _____	() Couples membership (\$15.00) \$ _____
Address:* _____	() Individual membership (\$10.00) \$ _____
_____	() Senior or student membership (\$7.00) \$ _____
_____	() Scholarship fund \$ _____
City: _____	() Gilboa Historical Society <i>Newsletter</i> \$ _____
State: _____ Zip Code: _____	() Gilboa Historical Society Museum \$ _____
Phone: _____	() <i>Old Gilboa</i> DVD (\$19.70 w/ shipping) \$ _____
	() General fund \$ _____
	() Memorial gifts [†] \$ _____
	() _____ \$ _____

* Please specify any temporary addresses in effect for our mailings in early March, June, and September (there is no winter issue).

[†] The Board is developing a wish list of memorial gifts: please inquire of a board member, and provide the wording of the dedication, your name and address, and the name and address of a next-of-kin who should be notified.

Total amount enclosed \$ _____

Gilboa Historical Society, Post Office Box 52, Gilboa, NY 12076

Pipes, continued from page 14

Pipe stems found at the J. Reed Site are almost all undecorated, with few makers marks. This lack makes it difficult to place the collection into a more specific temporal context. There is one possible maker's name from one stem marked "Whit TO." This may indicate a pipe manufactured in Toronto, but no positive identification has been made. If marked Toronto, then this pipe specimen would date before 1891, when the McKinley Tariff Act requirement to include the country of origin was not in effect. The lack of identifying marks or at least partial marks may be an indication that the assemblage dates before 1891.

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Richard A. Kastl is a member of the Society for Historical Archaeology, The Vernacular Architecture Forum, The Pioneer America Society, and the Council for Northeast Historical Archaeology. He received his MA from Southern Illinois University, has spent 11 years working for local history museums in the midwest, and has worked for PAF since 1989. PAF is the research center in Binghamton University's Department of Anthropology and trains specialists in field and research operations. <http://paf.binghamton.edu/>.

Please check your membership status

As you know, subscription to the *Newsletter* is free, but we would love to have you also join us as a member. The Society's fiscal year is the calendar year, and you can check your membership status by referring to the address used on this mailing. Current members have an asterisk beside their name.

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