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# Gilboa Historical Society

*Learning, sharing, and preserving our history*

v. 17.4

QUARTERLY CONTENTS—WINTER 2015

## ADDITION TO THE GILBOA MUSEUM

*The Gilboa History Center Is Happening!*

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PHOTOS ON FACEBOOK

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## Flood Relief Organizations

- Blenheim:  
and  
Breakabeen:** { Rural Area Revitalization Effort, Inc., a non-profit at 125 Creamery Road, North Blenheim, NY 12131, 518 925-7700, rareny.org and/or North Blenheim Presbyterian Church, Clauverwie Road, Middleburgh, NY 12122
- Middleburgh:** Village of Middleburgh Flood Relief, P.O. Box 789, Middleburgh, NY 12122
- Prattsville:** Prattsville Relief Fund, c/o NBT Bank, P.O. Box 380, Grand Gorge, NY 12434
- SALT:** Schoharie Area Long Term, 258 Main Street, Schoharie, NY 12157, 518 702-5017, info@saltrecovery.org, www.saltrecovery.org

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Lee Hudson, Vice President

Janette Reynolds, Secretary

Wilma Jones, Treasurer

Shirley Kutzscher, Recording Secretary

Irene Hess, Linda Stratigos, Kristin Wyckoff, Directors

The Gilboa Historical Society meets at 7:00 P.M. at the Gilboa Town Hall on the third Wednesday of the month, March–December.

The Gilboa Museum, 122 Stryker Road, is open noon–4:30 Saturdays and Sundays, from July through Labor Day, and Columbus Day weekend and by appointment (607 588-9413) <http://www.gilboafossils.org>

[www.facebook.com/groups/gilboahistoricalociety](http://www.facebook.com/groups/gilboahistoricalociety)

Send feedback to Amy Sternstein at [geonoodle@nycap.rr.com](mailto:geonoodle@nycap.rr.com)

Village photographs, Gilboa Tourism Map, GHS *Quarterly*, and other items are available online at <http://www.gilboahome.com>

Send feedback about the GHS *Quarterly* to [gerrys@gilboahome.com](mailto:gerrys@gilboahome.com) or [HUDSONLEE2@AOL.COM](mailto:HUDSONLEE2@AOL.COM)  
Gerry Stoner, 152 Starheim Road, Stamford, NY 12167

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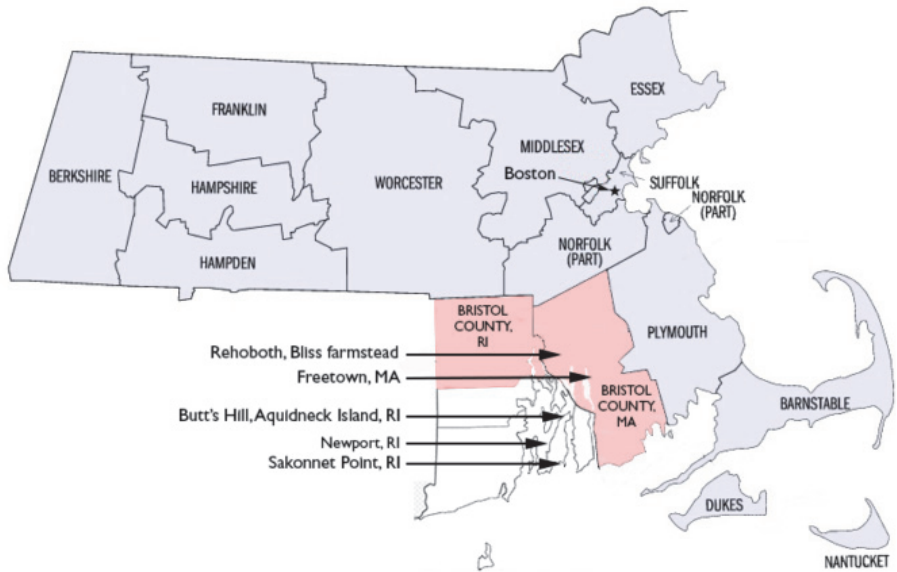
# SAMUEL BLISS, JR.

## *Revolutionary War Patriot Buried in Flat Creek Cemetery*

*Mark Sullivan*

In the last issue of the Gilboa Historical Society *Quarterly*, there was a biography of Judge Walter Bliss, one of Schoharie County's most respected jurists. Here is an early history of the Bliss family, which settled in Gilboa after the American Revolution.

Samuel Bliss, Jr. was born on September 4, 1761 in Rehoboth, Massachusetts Bay Colony. During the Revolution, he served three noncontinuous tours of duty. He first enlisted in the American army in 1777 and performed shore duty along the Rhode Island coast. In 1779 he marched to Freetown and was in a skirmish with the British based in Rhode Island who wanted to



Early Bristol County included all of what is now Seekonk, Massachusetts, and East Providence, Rhode Island, as well as parts of the nearby communities of Attleboro, North Attleborough, Swansea and Somerset in Massachusetts, and Barrington, Bristol, Warren, Pawtucket, Cumberland, and Woonsocket in Rhode Island.

After a civil land dispute, Bristol County was split between the states of Massachusetts and Rhode Island and both states now have adjacent Bristol counties. The Bliss farm was in the current county of Bristol, MA, and Samuel Bliss Jr. served in both of the Bristol counties and around Narragansett Bay.

burn the Fall River mills. The British burned one mill and retreated. He then marched to Butts Hill where he joined a battle between the Americans under General Sullivan and the British. Near the end of his last enlistment, Samuel became sick at Sakonnet Point in Rhode Island. This illness required hospitalization and basically ended his active participation in the Revolutionary War. His father fetched him back home from Freetown where Samuel's regiment was then located.

After the war, Samuel applied for a pension for his services:

State of New York  
Schoharie County

On this sixth day of January in the year of our Lord One thousand eight hundred thirty three personally appeared in open court before the Honorable William Beckmann, Harry Shafer and William Mann, The Court of Common Pleas of the County of Schoharie in the State of New York, now SAMUEL BLISS, a resident of the Town of Broome\* in the said County of Schoharie, aged seventy years, nearly seventy one years, who being duly sworn according to Law doth in his oath make the following declaration in order to obtain the benefit of the Act of Congress passed June 7th 1832.

That he enlisted in the service of the United States under the following named officers and served as herein stated Colonel Walker, Captain Israel Hicks, Lieutenant James Horton, Ensign Samuel Carpenter. That he does not recollect the names of the other officers, nor the Christian name of the Colonel. That he entered the Service as a private in the first day of January in the year 1777, and that he left the service the first day of April in the same year. That he resided in the Town of Rehoboth in the County of Bristol in the state of Massachusetts when he entered the service. That he entered the service as a volunteer to enlist for the term of three months. That he joined the Company at Rehoboth, immediately on his enlistment marched with them to Providence in the State of Rhode Island & there joined the Regiment to which he belonged, and marched to the Town of Warwick in the State of Rhode Island, lay there as a guard to the shore until the expiration of the term of his enlistment, when he was dismissed and returned home. That he was in no battle & saw no Continental Regiment, Company, or Officer during the period.

\* The Town of Gilboa was formed in 1848 out of lands formerly in the towns of Blenheim and Broome.

And the said Bliss further saith that he again entered the service of the United States under the following named Officers and served as herein stated: Colonel Jacobs, Captain Jacob Fuller, Lieutenant Samuel Horton, Ensign Michael Mollon. That he does not recollect the names of the other officers nor the Christian name of the Colonel. That he entered the service as a private in the fore part of the month of March in the year 1778, the day of the month he does not recollect, and left the Service for part of the month of March in the year 1779, one year from the time he entered it. That he resided in the Town of Rehoboth in the County of Bristol in the State of Massachusetts, when he entered the Service. That he entered the Service as a Volunteer & enlisted for one year. That he joined his Company at Rehoboth immediately on his enlistment and marched with them to the Town of Freetown in the said County of Bristol. Soon after he arrived at this place he was in a skirmish with a party of British, who had come from Rhode Island for the purpose of burning Fall River mills. They succeeded in burning one of the mills and then retreated. That he lay there about five months with the Company and then marched to the Town of Taunton in the State of Rhode Island where he joined his Regiment and immediately crossed into the Islands of Rhode Island, and marched to Butts Hill in the said Islands, and there joined the Army of General Sullivan. That he lay on the Islands of Rhode Island about three weeks. That he was in the Battle on Rhode Island between the Americans under General Sullivan & the British. That soon after this battle he marched with his Regiment to Sakonnet Point on the main land. Lay there about six weeks. That he was taken sick at this place and was confined to the hospital. That the Regiment then marched back to the Town of Freetown in the State of Massachusetts. That he was carried with them and stayed there a short time. Then he went home on his parole. That he returned unable to do duty until the expiration of his term of enlistment. That it was at least eight months from the time he enlisted into the service until he went home.

And, the said Bliss further saith that he has no documentary evidence of his Service as above states, and that he never received any written discharge from the Service. And, that he knows of no person whose testimony he can procure who can testify to his service except Esther Kingsley, whose affidavit is hereto annexed. That he was born in the Town of Rehoboth in the County of Bristol in the State of Massachusetts, where he resided until the spring of the year 1782; when he removed to the State of Rhode Island, where he resided until the spring

of the year 1785; when he moved to the County of Berkshire in the State of Massachusetts, where he resided until the spring of the year 1803, when he resided in the County of Saratoga in the State of New York until the year 1807, when he moved to the Town of Pownall in the County of Bennington, in the State of Vermont, where he resided until the spring of the year 1815, when he removed to the now Town of Broome in the County of Schoharie, State of New York, where he has since resided. That he has a record of his age in his family Bible.

He hereby relinquishes every claim whatever to a pension or annuity, except the present and declares that his name is not on the Pension Roll of any state.

Sworn to & subscribed the day and year aforesaid in open court.

JOHN GEBHARD JR., CLERK

SAMUL BLISS [his own signature.]<sup>1</sup>

An affidavit of Esther Bliss Kingsley was included in the application. Esther was a sister of Samuel who also moved to Gilboa with her husband, Cranston Kingsley, after the War.<sup>2</sup>

State of New York  
Schoharie County

Before me, Ephraim TREADWELL, a Justice of the Peace in and for the County aforesaid personally appeared this day, ESTHER KINGSLEY, a lady that is well known to me to be of respectability and truth, and made oath that SAMUEL BLISS (who also was present before me) is brother to said deponent. And that said SAMUEL is two years older than herself, and from records she was born in the year 1764 on the 4th day of March, and that she well recollects of hearing this family talking of her brother's being in the service of the United States under two different Captains to her personally known. The first was Captain Israel Hicks, of Rehoboth Massachusetts, and the second, Captain Jacob Fuller of the said State. She recollects that her father went after his son brought him home sick. Does not recollect how long sick—Gave out after time—She also says that said SAMUEL was all the own brother she had, and recollects her fears of never seeing him again after she heard that he was sick in the Army, and further remembers not.

Subscribed and given

Before me Aug. 18th 1832

E. Treadwell Justice of the Peace

Esther Kingsley

\* \* \*

Captain Samuel Bliss, Sr. was a farmer who commanded a company of 43 Minute Men that marched on the alarm of April 19, 1775 at the Battles of Lexington and Concord. These were the first military engagements of the American Revolutionary War and marked the outbreak of open armed conflict between Great Britain and thirteen of its colonies. He also served as a Captain in Colonel Timothy Walker's (Bristol County) Regiment for eight months and served three years under Col. Henry Jackson, Sixteenth Massachusetts Continental Regiment, in Captain Slade's Company. He spent some time on "His Excellency's Guards" as General George Washington's steward at Morristown, appointed on Aug 27, 1777 "on Command with Gen. Washington."<sup>3</sup>

According to a sworn statement by Samuel after the War, when applying for a pension, he enlisted in the "War of the Revolution as Searjeant [*sic*] in the Continental Establishment:<sup>4</sup>

I, SAMUEL BLISS, of Rehoboth in the County of Bristol and Commonwealth of Massachusetts, do testify and say that I served in the War of the Revolution as Searjeant in the Continental Establishment, for the term of three years in the Sixteenth Massachusetts Regiment, commanded by Col. Henry Jackson, and at the expiration of which terms, to wit, on the fourth day of September 1780, was formally discharged from the Continental Army, having completed the terms according to engagement, willfully appear by this discharge, herewith essential. I further testify and claim that I am in redound circumstances, and stand in need of support from my Country.

SAMUEL BLISS

Also included in the pension application were the discharge papers of Capt Bliss from September 1780:

This is to certify that Samel Bliss, Sgnt in the 16th Massachusetts Regt. Commanded by Col. Henry Jackson, has this day faithfully completed the term of three years which he engaged to serve the United States and is hereby honorable discharged from this American Army.

Given under my hand at Camp Ten-Eyck, Sept. 4th 1780.

To all persons, David Cobb, Lt. Col., Commandant."

Samuel Bliss, Sr. received a pension of \$8.00 per month. It is said he was a man of considerable influence and was much respected for his patriotism and other excellent traits. He died in April 17, 1816 and is buried in Rehoboth, Bristol Co., MA.

Samuel Bliss, Jr. settled in Gilboa around 1815; he may have received a land bounty as result of his military service. He received a pension for his services at the rate of \$36.66 per year. He died on March 15, 1837 and is buried at the Flat Creek Cemetery, Gilboa along with his wife, Anna.

Judge Walter Bliss (the subject of the article in the previous issue of the Gilboa Historical Society *Quarterly*) is the great-great-grandson of Samuel Bliss, Jr.

Samuel Bliss married Anna Mason on Sept 16, 1790 in Cheshire, Berkshire Co., MA., and they had nine children, one of which was Harvey Carpenter Bliss, born Jan 10, 1794.

Harvey Bliss married Betsey Ploss on Dec 25, 1817 (born 1792, died March 3, 1875 in Gilboa, Schoharie Co., NY), and they had seven children. He became a member of the New York state assembly from Schoharie County, 1839, and died on May 14, 1874. He was buried in Gilboa, Schoharie Co., NY.

One of Harvey and Betsy's sons, Harvey Mason Bliss, married Elizabeth Weyant. They had five children, one of whom was Franklin Winslow Bliss who married Alberta Becker; they in turn had four children, one of which is Judge Walter Bliss, born on April 27, 1892.

### Notes

1. Pension File of Samuel Bliss, Jr. # S 12239
2. Esther Bliss Kingsley was born April 4, 1764, and died May 10, 1848. She married Cranston Kingsley, who died December 13, 1847. Both are buried at the Flat Creek Cemetery, Gilboa, NY, on Flat Creek Road near Parsonage Hill Road.
3. From *Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailors in the War of the Revolution*, Vol. I–XVII. Boston, MA, USA: Wright and Potter Printing Co., 1896: "Bliss, Samuel, Rehoboth. Captain of a company which marched on the alarm of April 19, 1775; service, 8 days; also, Col. Timothy Walker's (Bristol Co.) regt.; list of officers; commissioned May 24, 1775; also, returns for supplies, etc., for his company, dated Roxbury, June 8–July 25, 1775; also, muster roll dated August 1, 1775; engaged April 28, 1775; service, 3 mos. 11 days; also, company return dated October 6, 1775."
4. Pension File of Samuel Bliss, Sr., # S 34048

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*Mark Sullivan is a frequent contributor to the Schoharie County Historical Review. He recently retired from the US Army and is a Department of the Army Civilian employee in Korea.*

**Gilboa Historical Society Museum Website**

OPEN 24/7

[www.gilboafossils.org](http://www.gilboafossils.org)



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## GILBOA MILITARY SERVICE PERSONNEL

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*LaVerne Hubbard*

We continue to develop an honor roll of everyone who has served in the military and has lived at some point in Gilboa . . . and we still find new names to add.

The alphabetized list should be easy for you to check that relatives, classmates, and neighbors are all listed—we take pride in our military, so please take a couple of minutes to make sure we miss no one!

AR American Revolution  
 12 War of 1812  
 CW Civil War  
 SA Spanish-American

I World War I  
 II World War II  
 K Korea  
 K-V Korea to Vietnam

V Vietnam  
 AV After Vietnam  
 DS Iraq, Desert Storm  
 AC Afghanistan Current

Ackerly, Oscar (CW)  
 Aleksejczyk, Walter W (II)  
 Ames, Francis C (CW)  
 Andrews, George (CW)  
 Bailey, James L (CW)  
 Baldwin, William L (CW)  
 Banker, Stanley (II)  
 Barlow, John (CW)  
 Barlow, Joseph (CW)  
 Batchelder, David (CW)  
 Beach, Willard O (CW)  
 Beattie, Donald (K)  
 Beattie, Donald J (DS)  
 Becker, Paul (II)  
 Becker, William A (CW)  
 Becker, William M (CW)  
 Bellinger, James (V)  
 Beltman, John (CW)  
 Benjamin, Philo (SA)  
 Bevins, Dennis (CW)  
 Bevins, Ernest (II)  
 Bevins, Gene (II)  
 Bevins, Gene (V)  
 Blakslee, Charles (II)  
 Blakslee, Rudolph (II)  
 Bliss, Donald (KV)  
 Bliss, F Walter (I)

Bliss, Samuel (AR)  
 Boehning, Robert E (II)  
 Borst, George (SA)  
 Borthwick, Alex (CW)  
 Boschetti, Aramando (II)  
 Brainard, Charles (K)  
 Brainard, Donald (K)  
 Brainard, Floyd (K)  
 Brainard, Richard (KV)  
 Bremer, Ernest Sr (II)  
 Brewster, J L (CW)  
 Brewster, Otis (CW)  
 Brines, Harvey J (CW)  
 Brosnam, William F (II)  
 Brown, Franklin (KV)  
 Brown, James (V)  
 Buel, George (II)  
 Buell, Endwell (KV)  
 Burkett, Beth (AC)  
 Cain, Ruben (CW)  
 Cain, William (CW)  
 Callahan, Arnold (II)  
 Carpinelli, Bernard (KV)  
 Case, Charles (I)  
 Case, Clifford (KV)  
 Chapman, Omer (CW)  
 Chase, Victor (II)

Chichester, George (CW)  
 Clapper, Arnold (KV)  
 Clark, Amos (12)  
 Clark, Benjamin (K)  
 Clark, Benjamin (KV)  
 Clark, Charles (V)  
 Clark, Elwood Jr (II)  
 Clark, Frank (V)  
 Clark, George (II)  
 Clark, George (KV)  
 Clark, James (CW)  
 Clark, James (KV)  
 Clark, Joshua (AC)  
 Clark, Kenneth (KV)  
 Clark, Larry (V)  
 Clark, Lester (II)  
 Clark, Louis (K)  
 Clark, Orville (II)  
 Clark, Richard (II)  
 Clark, Richard (KV)  
 Clark, William (II)  
 Clark, Floyd (II)  
 Conine, Douglas (II)  
 Connelly, Robert (K)  
 Conro, Carlton (II)  
 Conro, Darrel (KV)  
 Conro, David (KV)

- Cook, Claude (K)  
 Coon, Timothy P (CW)  
 Cornell, Lawrence (II)  
 Cornell, Lyndon (II)  
 Cornell, Marvin (II)  
 Creghton, David (CW)  
 Creghton, Henry (CW)  
 Cronk, Kenneth F (II)  
 Curtis, Richard (II)  
 Cutler, Ralph (K)  
 Damm, John (II)  
 Davis, John (II)  
 Davis, John O (I)  
 Davis, Keyes (I)  
 Dayman, Charles (CW)  
 Decker, Frank A (II)  
 Dent, Gerald (KV)  
 DeSyliva, Andrew (CW)  
 DeSyliva, Henry A (CW)  
 DeSyliva, Homer (CW)  
 Dingman, Robert (II)  
 Disbro, Charles (CW)  
 Driggs, Charles A (CW)  
 Duncan, Orra M (CW)  
 Efner, William M (12)  
 Egnor, Nathan (CW)  
 Eglin, Ernie (KV)  
 Eisner, Hollis (II)  
 Eklund, Carl (KV)  
 Ekstrom, Robert (II)  
 Ekstrom, Eugene (K)  
 Ekstrom, Clyde (II)  
 Ellerson, Charles (CW)  
 Ellerson, David (AR)  
 Ellis, Glendon (II)  
 Ellis, Paul E (KV)  
 Face, Erastus (CW)  
 Fanning, Benjamin (CW)  
 Feiterling, William (KV)  
 Finch, Stephen (CW)  
 Finch, William (CW)  
 Fisher, Joseph A (II)  
 Flint, Amos (II)  
 Foland, George (II)  
 Foote, Robert (V)
- Fowler, Regnald (II)  
 Fox, Elmer (CW)  
 Franklin, Nelson Willard (CW)  
 Fraqher, Arthur (CW)  
 Frazee, Russell E (II)  
 Freeman, Donald (KV)  
 Fries, George (CW)  
 Friest, Wesley (CW)  
 Gadrick, Edward (II)  
 Gaffney, Charles (II)  
 Gardner, Charles (CW)  
 Gavit, Leander (CW)  
 German, Stanley (II)  
 Gifford, Mark (KV)  
 Gifford, Shawn (AC)  
 Gonzlik, John (II)  
 Goodfellow, Martin (CW)  
 Gordon, Ralph (K)  
 Gordon, Seth R (CW)  
 Gordon, Stephen (CW)  
 Gregory, Raymond (II)  
 Gregory, William (II)  
 Hager, George (II)  
 Hager, Julian (II)  
 Haight, Manley (KV)  
 Hallock, Glen (KV)  
 Hallock, Warren (I)  
 Hanley, Harold R (II)  
 Harrington, Anton (II)  
 Harris, Roscoe (CW)  
 Hartwell, Charles (CW)  
 Hartwell, Donald (K-V)  
 Harwood, Hubert A (II)  
 Hawkins, Jeannie Clapper (AV)  
 Hay, Alden M (CW)  
 Hay, Jefferson (CW)  
 Heinzinger, Walter (K)  
 Hilliker, David (II)  
 Hilliker, Donald L (II)  
 Hilliker, Ernest (II)  
 Hinman, Avery (I)  
 Hinman, Robert (II)  
 Hitchcock, Edgar L (CW)
- Hoagland, Guy (II)  
 Hoagland, John (AR)  
 Holdridge, Orlando (CW)  
 Hollis, Eisner (II)  
 Houghtaling, Edward (CW)  
 Houghtaling, Samuel (CW)  
 Hubbard, Clifton LaVerne (KV)  
 Hubbard, David (KV)  
 Hubbard, Douglas (KV)  
 Hubbard, Everett B (II)  
 Hubbard, Gerald (KV)  
 Hubbel, Richtmyer Dr (CW)  
 Hubble, Solomon D (CW)  
 Jackson, David (CW)  
 Jackson, Jeremiah (CW)  
 Jenkins, John (CW)  
 Johnson, Robert (K)  
 Jones, Albert (II)  
 Jones, James (AC)  
 Juried, Nicholas (K)  
 Kandora, Walter (K)  
 Karlsen, Per B (II)  
 Kaufmann Harwood White, Catherine (II)  
 Koerner, Paul (II)  
 Kohler, Lewis (II)  
 Krieger, Earl (I)  
 Krieger, Henry (I)  
 Lafferty, Peter (CW)  
 Lake, Martin (CW)  
 Lane, Perry (CW)  
 Lateula, Gregory (V)  
 Latta, Wilfred (K)  
 Laux, John (II)  
 Lawyer, Francis (CW)  
 Layman, Wallace (CW)  
 Lee, Peter (CW)  
 Leger, Carl R (KV)  
 Leger, John George Jr (II)  
 Leger, John George Sr (I, II)

- Leger, Paul R (II)  
Leger, Raymond A (K)  
Leger, William H (II)  
Lemlily, Winslow P (CW)  
Lewis, Donald (II)  
Lewis, George Harlan (II)  
Lewis, H O (CW)  
Lewis, Richard (II)  
Licursi, Albe (V)  
Lindsay, Horace W (II)  
Lord, Vernon (II)  
Mace, Donald (K)  
Mace, Victor (K)  
Mackay, James A (CW)  
Mackey, Daniel (12)  
Marchase, Michael (II)  
Marold, Paul (KV)  
Marsh, Joseph (K)  
Mattice, Abram (I)  
Mattice, Alonzo (CW)  
Mattice, Ford (II)  
Mattice, Henry C (CW)  
Mattice, Leo (I)  
Mattice, Paul (CW)  
McGinnes, Barney (CW)  
McIntyre, Archibald (CW)  
Meeghan, David (V)  
Meeghan, John (KV)  
Merwin, Joel A (CW)  
Monroe, Henry (CW)  
Monroe, Paul (CW)  
Moon, Luman D (CW)  
Moore, John (SA)  
More, Timothy S (CW)  
Morkraut, Michael (KV)  
Morrisey, Robert (V)  
Mower, Leroy (KV)  
Mueller, Herb (KV)  
Mueller, Robert (V)  
Mullenix, Averil (KV)  
Nakoneczny, Kenneth (AV)  
Newcomb, Sylvester (CW)  
Nickerson, Franklin (II)  
O'Hara, James John (II)  
Oakley, Fred (II)  
Oakley, Fred III (KV)  
Oakley, Richard (DS)  
Orlando, Donald (V)  
Orlando, Michael (AC)  
Palmer, Jacob W (CW)  
Palmeri, George (II)  
Paradowski, Rudolph (V)  
Parker, Lewis Jr (KV)  
Peckham, Vivian B (II)  
Peek, Alvah (CW)  
Peters, Everett (K)  
Peterson, Everett (II)  
Peterson, Harold (II)  
Pickett, Robert (KV)  
Porter, Jason (AC)  
Proper, John R (CW)  
Reed, Morton (I)  
Reed, William L (CW)  
Reed, Gordon (II)  
Regular, Laurence (II)  
Richtmeyer, Richard (II)  
Rider, Ruben (CW)  
Riedman, Valentine (K)  
Rijos, Felix (AC)  
Roe, Daniel S (CW)  
Roe, Herman (12)  
Roe, Jinks P (CW)  
Ruehle, Alfred (K)  
Safford, Owen D (II)  
Sauveur, Timothy (AV)  
Saxe, Charles (CW)  
Schermerhorn, Hiram (CW)  
Schermerhorn, Warren (CW)  
Schermerhorn, Warren (II)  
Schermerhorn, William (CW)  
Schwartzwaelder, Allen (I)  
Sellick, Whited (CW)  
Shafer, Thomas L (CW)  
Shaffer, George (I)  
Shaffer, Nelson (12)  
Shaffer, Nelson (SA)  
Sharick, Sara L (AC)  
Shoemaker, Abram (CW)  
Slater, Ralph [Pete] (KV)  
Smith, Hiram (CW)  
Smith, Sylvester J (CW)  
Snyder, Derrick (AC)  
Snyder, James Jr (KV)  
Snyder, William (12)  
Southwick, Calvin (CW)  
Sowles, Lorenzo (CW)  
Sprague, Elisha (12)  
Standhart, James (AV)  
Standhart, John (K)  
Starheim, Olaf (K)  
Stewart, James (AR)  
Stillwell, Hiram (CW)  
Stoner, Gerald O (KV)  
Stryker, Carson (KV)  
Stryker, Monte (KV)  
Swartz, Edward (II)  
Taylor, James Barry (KV)  
Terry, William (V)  
Thorn, Frank D (K)  
Tibbets, James (CW)  
Tompkins, Irving (K)  
Tompkins, Norwood (K)  
Truesdell, Larry (V)  
Van Aken, Arthur (II)  
Van Aker, Kipp (V)  
Van Hoesen, Marshal (II)  
Varrecchia, Clement (II)  
Vonderhide, Marilyn Hubbard Harris (KV)  
Vroman, Albert L (CW)  
Vroman, William (CW)  
Wales, Levi (12)  
Wally, Ronald M (II)  
Ward, Philip (II)  
Warner, Milo (CW)  
Waters, John (CW)  
Welch, Michael (CW)  
Wells, Randall (II)  
Whitbeck, Alton (II)  
Wickert, Fredrick (KV)  
Wier, Donald (II)

Wiesmer, Malbone (CW)	Wood, Charles (CW)	Wright, George (CW)
Wilber, Hiram (CW)	Wood, Charles N (CW)	Wright, John (CW)
Wilber, Philip (CW)	Wood, Donald E (AV)	Wyckoff, Donald (AC)
Wilber, Stephen (CW)	Wood, Jared L (K)	Yeomans, Charles (CW)
Williams, George (CW)	Wood, John (CW)	Yeomans, Horace (CW)
Williamson, Josh (AC)	Wood, Michell E (AV)	Yeomans, George (CW)
Wilson, Randolph (II)	Wood, Philip (II)	Zimba, Stanley (V)
Wiltse, William W (CW)		Zinner, Henry Carl (II)

Please send omissions to LaVerne Hubbard at 106 Mulberry Lane, Middleburgh, NY 12122, clhubb@midtel.net, or 518 827-5239.

## **Janette Reynolds Appointed Historian for the Town of Gilboa**

Richard Lewis has been the Gilboa Town Historian since at least the 1990s. He could tell you anything about Gilboa that you asked him. That wealth of knowledge will be missed since he passed away September 5, 2015 at the age of 90.

Hello! My name is Janette Reynolds and I have accepted the Gilboa Town Historian position. I grew up in Flat Creek and have lived in Gilboa all my life. My grandparents lived in the old village of Gilboa.

I will try my best to help answer your genealogy questions or anything pertaining to the old village. If not, I will point you in the direction of someone who can help.

You can contact me at [janrey51@yahoo.com](mailto:janrey51@yahoo.com) or Gilboa Town Historian, P. O. Box 25, Gilboa, NY 12076

I would like to thank the Gilboa Town Board for selecting me for this post. I will do my best to fulfill my duties. Also, thank you to those who have supported me since this announcement. I do appreciate it.

**Mary Jane Laban**  
**History of the Gilboa Bridge**  
**March Meeting of the Society**  
**Carpool a Friend**  
**Wednesday, March 16 at 7:00**  
**Gilboa Town Hall**

---

## PUBLIC WATER SUPPLY IN GILBOA VILLAGE

*Gilboa Aqueduct Company, Gilboa Water Company*

---

*Lee Hudson*

Barely a year after Gilboa's incorporation as a town in 1848, a major village improvement was under way. The Gilboa Aqueduct Company was incorporated by an act of the Legislature in April 1849. The Law gave the corporation the right to create a public water supply and distribute the water to the village, negotiate its sale to individuals, and if unable to buy any land they needed for the system, the right to take it. It defined the village boundaries as the land within a one mile circumference from Sidney and Clarisa Tuttle's residence. The Company booked a subscription for capital stock at \$1,500, divided into twenty \$75 shares.

The first stockholders and directors of the company included John Reed, James P. Bogardus, Samuel W. Jackson, Nelson Fanning, Jacob Morse, Warren P. Street, George Lawrence, and William B. Hays.<sup>1</sup> The Company acquired land and water rights from the Stevens family to build a spring-fed wood aqueduct system over to upper Main Street and then north through the center of the village.

Forty-one years later, a terrible fire made the system's inadequacies painfully clear. In the early morning hours on Sunday May 4th 1890, Lute Hildreth discovered that a fire had broken out in the Arcade building on lower Main Street and raised the alarm. With the blaze quickly raging out of control, Dr. John Tom Benham resourcefully suggested the use of dynamite to break its path. Luman Reed's store and the residences of M. D. Spencer and Ira Travell were sacrificed and the fire was contained.

In all, 25 buildings were lost, including the entire business section, some homes, and notable buildings like the Gilboa House and the Methodist Episcopal Church. Half the village was decimated because the bucket brigade was no competition for the flames. Ironically for Gilboa, the village was nearly lost because of too little water, not too much.

Four months later, *Monitor* editor P. T. Hoagland challenged his readers: "The worth of a good system of water supply to be used in case of a like conflagration need not be argued in this village. Everyone realizes and knows that but a meagre supply of water on the morning of May 4th would have saved the town and the *Monitor* would respectfully ask the people if they expect to depend upon the bucket brigade as of old or will they in the

near future take such steps to prevent a like occurrence as sensible citizens are taking in nearly every town around us and which will give us protection from a second annihilation by fire.”<sup>2</sup>

By 1891, the company voted for a new iron pipe waterworks to replace the first iron pipe system installed in 1881. The earlier pipe system had replaced the original wooden aqueduct with its small reservoir, old street pump logs, and tubs of water on Main Street that supplemented individual wells and cisterns. But in the years that followed, the limited reach of the small two-inch pipe system, no hydrants, heightened health and safety concerns, frequent freezing, and other shortcomings led to the consideration of an entirely new system.

Gilboa's public water delivery needed a complete overhaul, but it was nine more years in coming. After much discussion in the village as to whether the new system should be private or municipally controlled, the Gilboa Aqueduct Company sold its rights to the new Gilboa Water Company.

The officers at the time of the transaction were:

Gilboa Aqueduct Company—Charles Zelig, President; Stephen Haines, Secretary; and Charles Ellarson, Treasurer;

Gilboa Water Company—Charles S. Gutter, President; Frank R. Thomas, Secretary.

It was soon official. The Gilboa Aqueduct Company was conveyed in September, 1901 to the new Gilboa Water Company in exchange for payment of its note of \$1,050 owed to Mary Conover and other minor debt.

The new company incorporated with \$15,000 of capital stock subscribed for 150 shares at \$100 a share and named its directors. H. Louie Reed, Daniel V. Chichester, Frank R. Thomas, Charles L. Tuttle, Edmund Brand, and Peter J. Richtmyer of Gilboa, Charles E. Nichols, Richtmyer Hubbell and Ezra Moxley of Jefferson. In the spirit of “Gilboa for the Gilboans now and forever,” Zelig and Ellarson led the majority vote of the old company directors to support the motion for sale.<sup>3</sup>

Community pride also had a place at the table. With the practical goals of the water system came the town's desire to “be the leading village in the Schoharie valley” and utilize the natural advantage of the village's location between the Manorkill Falls above and the Minekill Falls below. After Gilboa's Town Board<sup>4</sup> studied the successful new water system in nearby Jefferson, they hired Ezra W. Moxley, an experienced civil engineer living in Jefferson and involved in the construction to design and build Gilboa's. Beginning in October, 1901, and working with locals, he had most of the system operating by 1902 and the extension under the Schoharie by 1903.



The picture above was taken in 1881 and surprisingly captures some of the logs on upper Main for the replacement water system—probably before the shift to iron pipe took place in November. Photo courtesy of the collection of Lee Hudson



Ezra W. Moxley (1857–1929) civil engineer, designed and supervised the construction of Gilboa's second public water supply system for the Gilboa Water Company in 1901–1903. He lived in Jefferson and worked on numerous systems for many other nearby towns including Bloomville, Jefferson, and Windham. Photo courtesy of the Thompson family.

The Gilboa Water Company tapped the same source as that used by the Aqueduct Company: five springs on a hillside elevation of over 70' now located on Albert and Mary Clark's property<sup>5</sup> about one mile southeast of the village center. The water was piped to a covered concrete catch basin (the "little reservoir") then flowed out 600' into a concrete lined timber roofed large masonry reservoir 32' x 54' x 8' deep with a capacity of 104,000 gallons. From there, the water flowed by gravity through the 1.5 miles of 4- to 6-inch diameter water mains right down the street toward the village. The villagers tapped these mains from the roads for the hydrants and to pipe the water into their homes and businesses.

The water flowed quickly and abundantly through the catch basin and large reservoir to serve its customers. Since the large storage reservoir refilled immediately and was consistently full, it would always be available for fire purposes. For cleaning the large reservoir, the "two reservoir" system allowed village water to bypass the lower large reservoir while it was being cleaned and have an uninterrupted flow of water to the village.

With the springs coming out of the interior of the hillside and an open area above of about a ½ square mile, surface water contamination was rare. Moxley's enhanced system captured more spring water and delivered it through larger pipes to significantly more villagers. He buried over 9,000 feet of cast iron pipe a minimum of 5' deep and extended the line ½ mile more in circumference than the previous system. Gilboa's natural resource and Moxley's remarkable gravity feed system sustained water pressure at 80 psi to the end of the line.<sup>6</sup>

The new fire and water districts encompassed areas over to and all down Main Street, up Church Hill to the Jason and Libby Cronk property and on to the Albert and Helen Layman, Frank and Alice Mattice and William and Frances Gilbert houses. Then it crossed under the Schoharie Creek and ran from the Creamery to H. Oscar and Agnes H. Lewis' home. These districts now defined the village boundaries.

What did this delicious pure spring water cost in water rents to the villagers? With no metering for water use, rates scales were set by a board of water commissioners. So, for example, while Imer C. Wyckoff's garage paid \$40 a year, Frank Lewis' smaller garage was billed \$16. Flush toilets cost you \$3 a year; \$2 for bathtubs; \$6 for a family of six and fifty cents for each additional person, \$1.50 for a horse, and 75 cents for a cow. Dogs and cats lapped free. Other revenue flowed to the company from a five-year village contract of \$225 per year for firefighting and other town uses.<sup>7</sup>

The advantages of the improved system were many: 14 hydrants provided fire safety for homes and businesses throughout the village and across the



## The Passing of the Bucket and Pen-stock to the Hydrant

Water, pure water, the essential of life,  
Was supplied by the bucket in our grand-father's day.  
There then was no thought of this hurry and strife  
And no companies controlled the good old way.

Our fore-fathers used it for washing and drinking,  
Then their thirst it did quench and their wants did supply;  
But the old tin dipper and the old well bucket  
That had faithfully served them was soon doomed to die.

And then came the pen-stock with stream ever-flowing  
From clear mountain springs to our father's back door;  
The water so pure ever dripping and glowing,  
But Oh! What a mess as it slopped o'er and o'er.

In winter time frozen, with long icy whiskers,  
And slipping and sliding, we reeled round its spout.  
Had to bank it with refuse of every description,  
To keep it from freezing clear up to its mouth.

But our big combinations have used so much water,  
The demand is so great that we now must supplant  
The old-fashioned methods of pen-stock and bucket,  
With up-to-date methods and bring out the hydrant.

It is useless to cling to these old-fashioned ways  
That have served us so well, and that came to our call,  
We can sketch those old scenes of our grand-fathers days  
And paint them in oil, to hang on the wall.

---

*After reading about the new water system, Charles D. Stevens sent this poem from Woodbine, Iowa to his older sister Hattie Stevens. It provides a delightful summary of the evolution of public water supply in Gilboa and was published in the Gilboa Monitor, January 16, 1902. The photo to right is of Hattie Stevens, passed to her grand-niece Susanna Robinson Elmore, and to her great grand-niece Bonnie Ross.*

Courtesy the library of Bonnie Ross



creek; improved health protections; a larger population served with more homes and farms on the line; lower insurance rates; higher property values; modern convenience of hot and cold water inside the house; and an expanded tourist business due to the modern improvements.

And to insure that Gilboa would never suffer the effects of a fire like that of 1890, Engineer Moxley tested the fire hydrants in late December, 1901. With some fire hose borrowed from Grand Gorge, he hooked it up to a new hydrant, and to the delight of villagers shot a solid stream of water ten feet over the highest point of the weather vane on the Methodist Episcopal Church.

### Notes

1. *Laws of NY*, 72nd Session, Chapter 433, pp. 603–607.
2. *Gilboa Monitor* (September 4, 1890 & May 8, 1890). Other accounts say 22 buildings destroyed.
3. *Gilboa Monitor* (September 5, 1901).
4. William Long, Supervisor, Colba Reed, Town Clerk, John Edwards, John Conro, J. B. Lacy and Andrew G. Baldwin, Justices of the Peace, and Abram Long, Commissioner of Highways executed the necessary permit required by law.
5. The Clarks bought the property from Emory and Emma Stevens in 1894. Water rights had been transferred to the Gilboa Aqueduct Company earlier in 1879 by the Stevens family and passed to the Gilboa Water Company. The Clarks did receive \$390 for land for the reservoir and catch basin (Board of Water Supply of the City of New York Civil Case Files, 1917–1932). Thanks to Bee Mattice and Jim Snyder.
6. Ezra Moxley describes his system in testimony before the Commission, Board of Water Supply of the City of New York Civil Case Files, 1917–1932, p. 11, 936.
7. Sidney Rivenburgh, Board of Water Supply of the City of New York Civil Case Files, 1917–1932, p. 12,012.



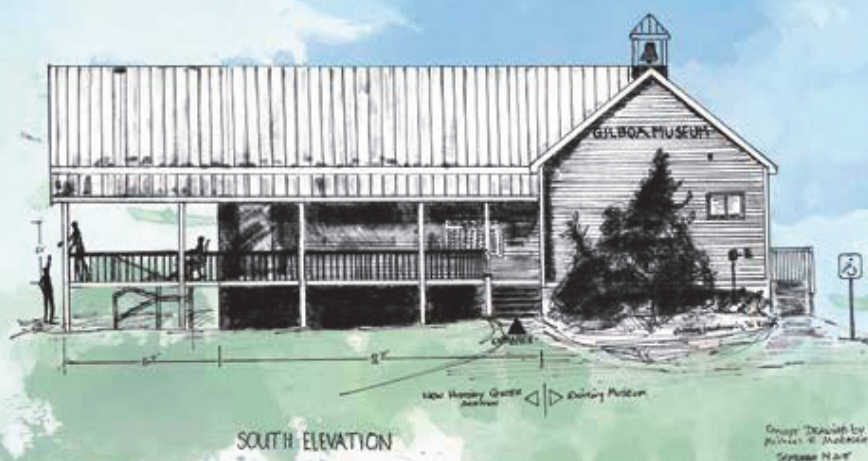
*Lee Hudson, a native New Yorker, lives on the old Vroman-Cornell property off Shew Hollow Road. She retired recently from previous careers in higher education and public service, is researching the amazing early village life in Gilboa, and shepherded the digitization project of the Monitors.*

The GHS *Quarterly* is available free at  
<http://www.gilboahome.com>  
 Email this address to friends, family, and others!

Pull out this centerfold, talk it over with your family, and please support the Gilboa History Center!

# THE GILBOA HISTORY CENTER

AN ADDITION TO THE GILBOA MUSEUM



## CAMPAIGN IS UNDER WAY!

## CAMPAIGN IS UNDER WAY

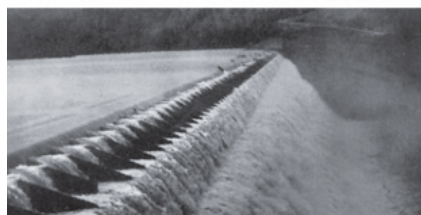
### THE GILBOA MUSEUM IS GROWING!

The Juried Family Foundation contributed seed funding to launch the construction of an addition to the Gilboa Museum. The addition will be called **The Gilboa History Center**.

### THE NEW CENTER WILL:

- Double the size of the current museum
- Increase historical displays and educational presentations
- Furnish space and resources for historical and genealogical research
- Provide a place for meetings
- Add outdoor covered space for visitors and community events.

## WHY SHOULD I GIVE?



### YOU CAN HELP SUPPORT OUR COMMUNITY PROJECT

Gilboa's history is unique—with paleontological, cultural, and environmental features:

- 380-million-year-old Devonian fossils revealing the first trees on Earth
- Old Gilboa Village and its township
- The Gilboa Dam/Schoharie Reservoir.

Help preserve Gilboa's history for future generations. The museum's impressive growing collection deserves our support—and this new addition is needed to display and care for those materials. Perhaps some of the collection came from your family—and with new acquisitions will fill in the story of Gilboa's history.

Your gift during this campaign supports a cultural, recreational, and educational treasure that benefits the community and local tourism.

*Thank you so much for your help!*

## BUILD A FUTURE FOR GILBOA'S PAST

**DONATE ONLINE** @ <http://northerncatskillshistory.com/ghs-membership-form/>  
**YOUR GIFT IS 100% TAX DEDUCTIBLE.** THE GILBOA HISTORICAL SOCIETY IS A NON-PROFIT 501 (C) 3 CORPORATION.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

Four plaques will be placed on the porch along the outside entrance honoring those who have supported the building of the Gilboa History Center—**Heritage Families, Memorials, Sponsors, and Business Supporters**. Visitors to the Center will be able to see these testaments at any time. Please select the option that is best for you. **All donations of \$25 and over will receive a one-year membership to the Gilboa Historical Society with our deepest appreciation for your tax-deductible gift.**

### HERITAGE FAMILIES

\$100    \$250    \$500    \$750    \$1,000    \$ .....

Are you descended from one of Gilboa's founding families who lived in the town from the 1700s to 1925? This plaque will recognize families from Gilboa's earliest history and honor your family's heritage.

FAMILY NAME .....

DONOR NAME(S) .....

### MEMORIALS

\$50    \$100    \$ .....

This plaque will celebrate "The Memory of" an individual you name.

ENTER NAMES: In Memory of .....

by .....

### SPONSORS

\$25    \$50    \$100    \$200    \$.....

This plaque will acknowledge your generosity as a supporter of the Gilboa History Center.

NAME .....

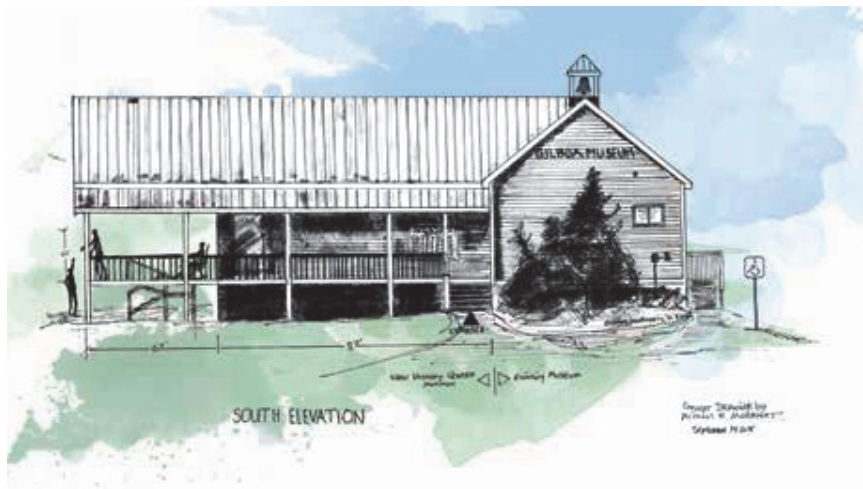
**YOU CAN DIRECT YOUR GIFT TO (CIRCLE CHOICE):** EXHIBITS, GENEALOGY, EVENTS, PRESERVATION OF MATERIALS, OR YOUTH AND SCHOOL ACTIVITIES.

### BUSINESS SUPPORTERS

\$100    \$250    \$500    \$1,000    \$.....

This plaque will serve as a tribute to businesses who contribute money or services.

BUSINESS NAME .....



South elevation concept drawing by Michael R. McKeat.

PLEASE COMPLETE YOUR DONOR FORM AND THE FORM BELOW AND RETURN TO:

Gilboa Historical Society  
P.O. Box 52  
Gilboa, NY 12076

Checks payable to: Gilboa Historical Society.

All gifts of \$25 and over receive a one-year membership to the Gilboa Historical Society.  
If you are currently a member, your membership will be extended.

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

CITY ..... STATE ..... ZIP .....

EMAIL .....

Seasonal address for mailings: ..... Mar. ..... Jun. ..... Sept. .... Dec.

ADDRESS .....

CITY ..... STATE ..... ZIP .....

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## GILBOA MUSEUM

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*Kristen Wyckoff*

These are exciting times for the Gilboa museum! Due to extraordinary funding from our donor Nicholas Juried, we have been able to plan, design and build an addition to our little museum which doubles our existing space. The addition has been completed to the point of an enclosed shell which is very impressive since we only broke ground in October. This was accomplished thanks to the weather being extremely cooperative and to Mike Morkaut our project manager, Rich Tait our builder working with Lester Parker of Parker Works, and the town of Gilboa. Everyone has worked together and is making this building a reality. We have so many to thank who have collaborated to make this a success.

We have more potential for telling the story of Gilboa starting in the Devonian era all the way up to the 20th century including the building of the Schoharie Reservoir. We are trying not to fill the entire space up so that we can have room for book signings, art exhibits, student workshops and special events indoors. The addition has added space outside. There's a wrap-around deck to the west side where a full deck has been built, allowing us to have outdoor events covered with a roof. We'll be able to sit and enjoy the view, music concerts, etc. The sky is the limit!

While the interior and the exterior are being finished these cold winter months, the museum committee of the Gilboa Historical Society will be hard at work planning the interior space. We have plans to replicate a one room schoolhouse. An area designated for our extensive genealogy records, exhibits on the early families that populated this area, more on the village of Gilboa and the building of the reservoir. Many of the donations we have received will have a home now and the town historian will have a space to work in.

In the existing museum the fossils will still remain on view and a hands on children's activity area is being designed. We will be working with the art teacher at Gilboa School, and some students that have volunteered to help with the museum are going to be creating backgrounds and helping with the designated areas. The focus is on the grades that teach local history. This will encourage school groups to come to our museum on field trips.

If anyone would like to be more involved in the setup of exhibits please contact Kristen Wyckoff at 607 588-9413 or [Kristen.wyckoff@yahoo.com](mailto:Kristen.wyckoff@yahoo.com)

# GILBOA CREAMERY

## *Sale of Equipment*

*Amy Sternstein*

While doing research, I came upon this ad from the Board of Water Supply selling the equipment from the Gilboa Creamery. It appeared in the December 8, 1920, issue of *New York Produce Review and American Creamery*, Vol. 51, No. 6, published by the Urner-Barry Company of New York City.

I thought perhaps our readers of the *Quarterly* would like this insight into the items used in the creamery.

### *Board of Water Supply Sale of Creamery Equipment*

Sealed bids will be received by the Board of Water Supply, Municipal Building, Borough of Manhattan, New York City, until 11 A.M. on Thursday, December 16, 1920.

For the sale of creamery equipment acquired from the Gilboa Creamery, Gilboa, N. Y., as follows:

Lot

- 1-1 40-H.P. horizontal boiler, "The Economic," James Beggs & Co.
- 2-1 4 in. x 8 in. Artesian well pump, American Steam Pump Co., Marsh engine.
- 3-1 10 in. x 12 in. Donegan & Swift horizontal steam engine, single cylinder.
- 4-3 De Laval separators, Alpha No. 1.
- 5-1 375-gallon sweet milk tank, copper lined, tin plated.
- 6-1 20-Century milk heater, 2 ft. x 2 ft. x 21 in.

### **BOARD OF WATER SUPPLY SALE OF CREAMERY EQUIPMENT**

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- 4-3 De Laval separators, Alpha No. 1.
- 5-1 375-gallon sweet milk tank, copper lined, tin plated.
- 6-1 20-Century milk heater, 2 ft. x 2 ft. x 21 in.
- 7-1 4 in. x 8 in. milk pump, American Steam Pump Co., Battle Creek, Mich.
- 8-2 300-gallon Wizard agitators.
- 9-1 Bristol recording thermometer.
- 10-1 24-gallon Starter Ripener, Creamery Package Mfg. Co.
- 11-1 can washer, 6 ft. 6 in. length, Manning Mfg. Co., Rutland, Vt.
- 12-3 900-gallon cheese tanks; 1 copper lined, 2 tin lined.
- 13-1 No. 8 500-lb. Perfection churn.
- 14-2 100-gallon wash tanks; 1 copper lined, 1 tin lined.
- 15-1 can steamer, 7 ft. long.
- 16-2 800-gallon wooden cax-in tanks.
- 17-1 Paraffine machine, 1.6 diameter.
- 18-2 Milk weighing cans, 2 ft. x 2 1/4 ft.
- 19-1 Cheese racks, 5.2 ft. x 3.3 ft. x 2.0 ft.
- 20-1 340-gallon galvanized iron buttermilk tank.
- 21-1 310-gallon copper lined buttermilk tank.
- 22-1 500-gallon wooden, tin lined, water tank.
- 23-1 400-gallon sheet iron, tinned, water tank.
- 24-1 300-gallon wooden water tank.
- 25-1 260-gallon wooden water tank.
- 26-1 1,350-gallon wooden whey tank.
- 27-Miscellaneous shafting, shaft brackets and 13 pulleys.

Bids are to be made on forms supplied by the Board of Water Supply. Each bid must be accompanied by a certified check in the amount of ten per cent of the bid. This material may be inspected upon application at the local office of the Board of Water Supply, Gilboa, Schoharie County, N. Y.

The Board of Water Supply reserves the right to accept bids for items or as a whole and to reject any or all bids.

Checks of the unsuccessful bidders will be returned within three days. The successful bidders shall remove the equipment awarded within thirty days of the date of notice informing them of the acceptance of their bids, and payment must be made by certified check before removal will be permitted. All checks should be made payable to the Board of Water Supply, New York City.

GEORGE J. GILLESPIE, President,

JAMES P. O'REILLY,

JAMES P. SINNOTT,

Commissioners, Board of Water Supply.

BENJ. F. EINBIGLER,

Secretary.



- 7-1 4 in. × 8 in. milk pump, American Steam Pump Co., Battle Creek, Mich.
- 8-2 300-gallon Wizard agitators.
- 9-1 Bristol recording thermometer.
- 10-1 24-gallon Starter Ripener, Creamery Package Mfg. Co.
- 11-1 can washer, 6 ft. 6 in. length, Manning Mfg. Co., Rutland, Vt.
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- 13-1 No. 8 500-lb. Perfection churn.
- 14-2 100-gallon wash tanks; 1 copper-lined, 1 tin-lined.
- 15-1 can steamer, 7 ft. long.
- 16-2 800-gallon wooden casein tanks.
- 17-1 Paraffine machine, 1.6 diameter.
- 18-2 Milk weighing cans, 2 ft. × 2 ¼ ft.
- 19-1 Cheese racks, 5.2 ft. × 3.3 ft. × 2.0 ft.
- 20-1 340-gallon galvanized iron buttermilk tank.
- 21-1 310-gallon copper-lined buttermilk tank.
- 22-1 500-gallon wooden, tin-lined, water tank.
- 23-1 400-gallon sheet iron, tinned, water tank.
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George J. Gillespie, President,  
L. J. O'Reilly,  
James P. Sinnott,  
Commissioners, Board of Water Supply.

Benj. F. Einbigler, Secretary.

## THE GILBOA DAM 1915–2006

*The Reservoir Leading Up To Its Hundredth Birthday*

*Gerry Stoner*

**T**wentieth-century Gilboa was shaped by the decisions and planning initiated at the end of 1915 and continuing through the next twelve years.

### The Creation of the Gilboa Reservoir—1915–1927

When, in 1914, permission was obtained from the State Conservation Commission to develop Schoharie creek, the necessary dam and reservoir had been tentatively located at Prattsville and the contributing area was counted upon to provide about 200 million gallons daily. This quantity was not sufficient for the full capacity of the aqueduct. In the course of surveys downstream from Prattsville, an excellent dam site was discovered at Gilboa, which would form a reservoir with a watershed of 314 square miles, capable of yielding enough, with Esopus water, to operate the Catskill aqueduct to its capacity. [On] December 22, 1915, this Board addressed a communication to the Board of Estimate and Apportionment asking the approval of the modified plan and authority to proceed with the work. After public hearings held January 14, 21, 28, and 31 of this year [1916] the Board of Estimate and Apportionment on the last-mentioned date granted the required authority and approved an issue of corporate stock, not to exceed \$22,175,400, for the uses and purposes of the Board of Water Supply. Approval of the modified scheme by the Conservation Commission was obtained June 6.

*Annual Report of the Board of Water Supply of the City of New York, December 31, 1916.*

Earlier issues of the *Quarterly*, available at <gilboahome.com>, tell the story of the construction of the dam between 1915 and 1927:

Selection, Preparation of Site (location, roads, bridges)	14.1, Spring 2012
The Gilboa Dam and the Schoharie Reservoir	13.2, Summer 2011
The Great Flood	12.1, Spring 2010
Shandaken Tunnel Gate-House	13.4, Winter 2011
Medallions on the Gate-House	14.4, Winter 2012
Additional Shandaken Tunnel pictures	14.1, Spring 2012
Shandaken Tunnel	13.3, Fall 2011
Gilboa Quarries	14.2, Summer 2012

Controlling the Schoharie Creek (coffer dams)	14.4, Winter 2012
Construction of the Reservoir Berm	14.3, Fall 2012
Construction of the Dam at Gilboa	15.1, Spring 2013
Recreational Access to the Schoharie Reservoir	14.3, Fall 2012

### The Impact of the Gilboa Dam on Gilboa—1927–2006

The annual reports published by NYC DEP are authoritative sources for information about physical work accomplished behind the fences around the reservoir, but thanks to <[nyshistoricnewspapers.org](http://nyshistoricnewspapers.org)>, <[fultonhistory.com](http://fultonhistory.com)>, and <[novelnewyork.org](http://novelnewyork.org)> (accessed using a local public library card number), we also have access to thousands of local and national newspapers to see what *social* events were occurring due to the Gilboa dam.

The beauty of these sites is that you can focus your search: using techniques described at the FAQ on <[fultonhistory.com](http://fultonhistory.com)> or using advanced tabs on other sites—you can limit your searches to “Gilboa Dam” between 1927 and 2006, and the only drawback is being able to call “stop exploring!”

One evening’s work provided a clear picture of the reservoir’s role in the social fabric of the town. An early example of the reservoir being an activity for the area was a newspaper article recording that Carrie Miller married Chauncey Dent on October 20, 1927, and that the bride and groom, wedding party, and guests celebrated down at the reservoir watching the water go over for the first time. Water going over the dam for the first time was truly a spectacle on that day, and continued to be into the future.

The majority of 750 clippings told of local people and others from as far away as Buffalo, Rochester, Saratoga, Utica, or Binghamton visiting in our area and seeing the Gilboa Dam. Many of these visitors mentioned having a wiener or hot dog roast at the reservoir (no mention if they brought their own grill or if grills were available at the overlook). From 1927 on, the reservoir drew people—tourists—to our area.

While folks were visiting the overlook and seeing the reservoir as a *social* adventure, a different group of people were seeing it as an *economic* resource. People worked maintaining the dam, intake house, and other buildings around the facilities, while others took care of the watershed lands and posting. Engineers operated the gates at the intake house, others worked in the Tannersville and Grand Gorge sewage plants, and precinct police provided security for the operations. In total, dozens of people worked there, brought home good paychecks, and contributed to the towns in the area.

There were numerous newspaper announcements of when the reservoir was full or when the drought allowed the map of the old village to be seen through the water. These seemed to be written as daily weather forecasts rather than a reason for concern—reporters knew the purpose of the dam

## The DEP Families Around Gilboa

*Wilma Jones*

In the 1920s, the City of New York took land and houses from the village of Gilboa for the reservoir, including the home of my great-grandfather, Isaac Cronk, and acres of land from the farm of my grandfather, Peter Conro. Because of this, New York City was considered an enemy by many of the older families, including my own.

Fast forward to the 1960s. My husband, Al Jones, and I were operating a dairy farm on the property of Peter Conro's homestead. Times were tough. We had 40 cows, plenty of debt, and low milk prices. We always had plenty of food on the table—all farmers do—but no cash. We heard of a job opening on the City (the phrase we used for jobs at the reservoir), Al applied for it, and he went to work on May 25, 1965.

What was the enemy in the '20s became a friend in the '60s.

Many of my husband's friends were on the City. Frank and Zana Marquit come to mind as Frank worked there, and three of their sons, Jim, Lyle, and Carlson (Butch), followed in their father's footsteps. The Banks family had two brothers, Richard and Emil, there as well. Other local people included Preston VanDeusen, Eddie Proper, and Gerry Meystanek. These men and their wives came to City retirements and Christmas parties at Thetford's in Windham, Waterfall House in Conesville, and other eateries of the area.

There were also people from out of the immediate area, like Tom and Billy Sickler, Joe Kessler, and others from Greene County.

Among Al's closest work mates were Justin (and Katherine) Marshall and Herb (and Ann) Gifford. Herb helped Lyle Marquit with most of the paperwork necessary for keeping the reservoir afloat, reporting to Reggie Cross, a supervisor who retired to the area. Another of Al's friends was Gary Koerner (and Melinda). As Justice of the Peace, Al married them at the home of Richard Banks.

Another close friend of Al's was Danny O'Brien. He came up from downstate, worked on the City, and with his wife Marion bought the Waterfall House. Marion's father, Pop Canale, managed that family venture. Their daughter, Maureen, married Ed Weidman and they owned and operated a restaurant and ice cream shop on Grand Gorge's Roxbury Road.

So, when I think about the reservoir, I also see an opportunity for the employment of local people and a tax base for the town.

was to store water to be sent to the city. The default was for water to go over the dam when it could not be routed south fast enough or to note when there was a shortage.

\* \* \*

There were few *earth-shaking* stories like the coverage of the 1928 fire that destroyed New Gilboa (where the current Town Hall is located). In the 1927–2006 period, the first really significant story was the 1996 storm that held the record for rainfall until Hurricane Irene.

That rainfall/snow melt of January 1996 was especially devastating in Delaware County. As the floodwaters started to recede and the extent of the devastation became known, New York State Gov. George Pataki and NYC DEP Commissioner Marilyn Gelber were touring Delaware County's Margaretville and Walton.

The *New York Times* of January 23, 1996 reported the devastation there, and tacked the following onto its coverage: "One measure of the upstate flooding's scale was the Schoharie Creek's velocity at the height of the flood on Friday evening. The New York Power Authority said the Schoharie was flowing into the Gilboa Reservoir at 83,229 cubic feet a second, an all-time record. To put it another way, that is more than a third of the flow (212,000 cubic feet a second) over Niagara Falls."

The 1996 rain was the record holder going into the new millennium, with 6.5 feet of water going over the top of the Gilboa dam.

One result of this storm was underestimated at the time: the vegetation and stone along the banks of the Schoharie and its tributaries upstream from the reservoir were severely eroded, turning the rushing water a reddish brown. This turbulence continues to be a problem despite governmental funding for restoration of the watershed.

Prior to the construction of the dam, the Schoharie had an international reputation as a fishing mecca. After Schoharie water was routed through the Shandaken Tunnel, however, the Esopus Creek assumed this reputation as one of the best trout-fishing streams in the Catskills with a healthy trout ecosystem and newly constructed fisheries.

Since the 1996 flood, the Esopus water is clear above the Shandaken outlet but reddish brown after the outlet due to the turbid waters from Gilboa. The *New York Times* of July 9, 2000 reported that this water was damaging the trout habitat by killing the aquatic insects trout feed on.

Another *New York Times* article early in 2006 had greater impact on the operations of the reservoir, and would be significant to the history of the reservoir from 2006 to 2015 and beyond. This article starts on the next page.

## Recycled Inspection Reports and Other Water System Irregularities Stir Concerns Upstate

*Anthony DePalma, ©New York Times, 12 Feb. 2006*

They are the front line of New York City's vast upstate water system, responsible for delivering the one billion gallons a day of fresh, clean water that keeps the city alive.

But since 2001, these 873 inspectors, engineers and supervisors, along with their employer, the City Department of Environmental Protection, have been under court-ordered supervision for violating, of all things, environmental laws.

The department has had five years to retrain its water supply employees and change old habits. Citing improvements by the agency, a federal judge decided last week to end court supervision over the watershed in August.

The ruling was a relief for the department, but it upset local officials and upstate residents who say the department cannot be trusted, especially after a recent spate of incidents revealed continuing problems in the watershed.

Some of the incidents involved criminal activities, like theft; others appeared to stem from brazen negligence, like an inspector's repeated photocopying of the same weekly report on dam safety.

But taken together, the problems have heightened tensions in the 2,000-square-mile watershed. They have also worked to raise concerns that if relations between the city and the upstate communities deteriorate further, local officials may stop cooperating with the city, potentially costing New York billions of dollars.

"The D.E.P. has a culture of malfeasance and arrogance that's pervasive," said State Senator John J. Bonacic, a Republican whose district in Sullivan, Ulster and Delaware Counties includes six of the city's largest reservoirs.

Mr. Bonacic said he thought it might be too soon to end court oversight. He wants to keep the pressure on the department to clean up its act and become more responsive. If it does not, Mr. Bonacic said, he will urge the federal Environmental Protection Agency not to renew a crucial permit next year. Without that permit, the city could be forced to build a water filtration plant costing more than \$8 billion.

Emily Lloyd, commissioner of the environmental department, said she was aware that upstate communities have concerns about the recent incidents and are worried about flooding. It is natural, she said, for such

issues to surface during the process of renewing the filtration avoidance permit.

“It’s their chance to get us to pay more attention to things they want us to respond to,” Ms. Lloyd said.

High on the list of concerns is the way the department takes care of its 22 dams, especially the one located where the city’s water supply is farthest from the city. Some people who live in Schoharie County—much closer to the State House in Albany than to City Hall in Manhattan—panicked last November when they were told that the 78-year-old Gilboa Dam on the Schoharie Reservoir no longer meets state safety standards and needs emergency repairs. When frightened local residents pressed city officials, they discovered that because of neglected maintenance, valves that might have been used to lower the reservoir’s water level were buried under 15 feet of silt and could not be opened.

Then, last month, a newspaper, *The Times Herald-Record* of Middletown, found that 70 percent of the weekly inspection reports for dams on two reservoirs in Sullivan County—the Neversink and the Roundout—were actually photocopies of earlier reports, with only the date and the weather conditions changed. City officials said the inspector in question had already been ordered to stop using photocopies. They asserted that the dams were safe and that the weekly reports were for internal use only.

But that was little comfort to critics.

“Dam safety is like riding in a Brink’s truck—you can never let your guard down,” said Howard R. Bartholomew, a resident of Middleburgh, in Schoharie County, who has been active in organizing local efforts to monitor the Gilboa Dam.

Mr. Bartholomew said he was distressed to learn that court supervision of the department’s upstate operations would end soon. “I hate to see the judge reduce the pressure on them,” Mr. Bartholomew said.

Department officials concede that it is difficult to supervise employees who work as far as 125 miles from the city.

“There’s no getting around the fact that this was a very different culture,” Ms. Lloyd said in an interview. “But it’s not just culture. It’s also history and habit.”

In part, she said, what occurs now is the legacy of the department’s predecessor, an autonomous agency created in 1905—long before the advent of environmental laws—to build the upstate reservoirs and pipelines. Conveying clean water to New York City was the priority, not complying with detailed federal regulations.

Although there have been improvements, the commissioner conceded that there was still work to be done to improve management of the watershed and the rest of the department.

Last September, the department's director of watershed programs, James D. Benson, was arrested, along with one of his associates, Lamberto S. Santos, and charged with possessing about \$10,000 in city property, including generators, snowblowers and computers.

And last November, a former city employee, Dieter Greenfeld, was sentenced to two years' probation after he pleaded guilty to falsifying water quality records at what is known as the Catskill Lower Effluent Chamber in Westchester County when he worked there.

If that sort of thing could take place while the department was on probation, local officials wonder, what will happen when court supervision ends as scheduled in August?

When Judge Charles L. Briant of the United States District Court in White Plains decided to end the watershed supervision, he did not terminate the court's oversight entirely.

Rather, he shifted it to the city, and the workers who operate 14 huge wastewater treatment plants.

In court last week, Ms. Lloyd acknowledged that workers had failed to repair backup generators at two wastewater treatment plants, causing millions of gallons of raw sewage to pour into New York waterways during the blackout of 2003.

The violations at the sewage plants, Anne C. Ryan, an assistant United States attorney, wrote in a report to the federal court, reflected "a mindset that persists in some components of D.E.P., namely, a failure to grasp that compliance is everyone's job."

"They suggest, at a minimum, that there is more work to be done to educate all D.E.P. employees about the requirements of environmental laws and the importance of complying with them," she wrote.

*Anthony DePalma: "Recycled Inspection Reports and Other Water System Irregularities Stir Concerns Upstate." New York Times 12 Feb. 2006.*

## Corrections On Your Addresses

Please check your address on this *Quarterly* and send us corrections. The Post Office will not forward or return bulk mail—and we don't want to lose contact with you. Please use the application on page 39.



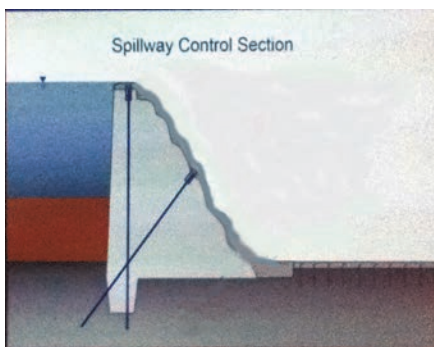
# RECONSTRUCTION AND IMPROVEMENTS

## *Preparing the Gilboa Dam for the 21st Century*

*Gerry Stoner*

Dam Concerned Citizens hosted four lectures at SUNY Cobleskill. The talk on October 21, 2015 was DEP West-of-Hudson Operations Head John Vickers' report on reconstruction activities at the Gilboa Reservoir. The content of this article and the art shown here are based on that talk, and an audio recording is available at [gilboahome.com/ghspublications/audiointerviews/VickersPresentation.mp3](http://gilboahome.com/ghspublications/audiointerviews/VickersPresentation.mp3).

By 2007, the 78-year-old Gilboa Dam no longer met safety standards and needed emergency repairs. One essential step was to install cables through the existing dam to anchor it in the bedrock below. When completed, 80 compound sets of cables were installed. Vertical cables acted as increased weight on the dam, while others were angled to keep the dam from sliding downstream.

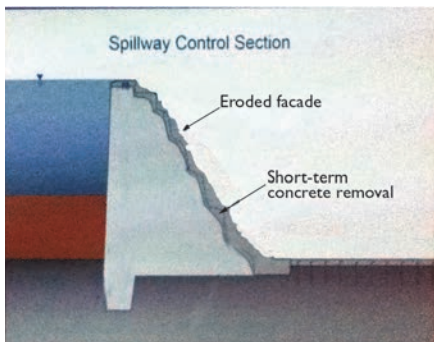


### Reconstruction and improvements 2007–2015

Dams work because the massive weight is great enough to resist the force of the water. The cables helped, but solid weight is the key to a secure dam.

Over the years, water seeped behind the original bluestone, froze, expanded during the winter, and popped many of the massive stones from the face of the dam. In the renovation, an improved, harder concrete dyed to match the original stone and with a rough texture, was used.

In the original dam without the protection of the stone, water eroded

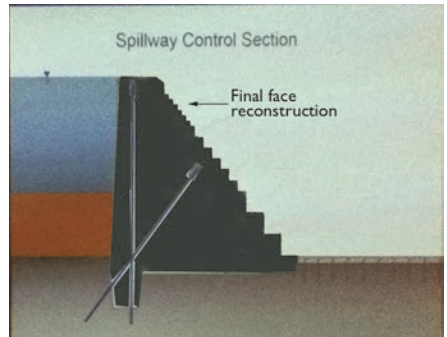


the concrete. After 80 years, the weight of the dam in 2007 had become significantly less than the designed weight of the dam when the construction was new. The reconstructed current dam was designed to use enough concrete to make up for this weight loss.

\* \* \*

John Vickers visited Utah State University's Water Resources Lab's full-scale model of the dam and cross sections of the spillway. The goal was to develop an optimum dam design that would replace the lost weight and efficiently dissipate the energy of the water as it tumbles down the face.

They found a graduated step size was best: water that was continually in contact with the step surface slowed down and dissipated the most energy into the structure. The final design was for six 3-foot × 3-foot steps, then six 6-foot × 6-foot steps, and finally three 12-foot × 12-foot steps. This design also added more concrete to the dam than it had before.



The anchors were tensioned and completed in 2009, adding 65,000 tons of weight. The step design added 100,000 tons of concrete.

*Solid weight is the key to a secure dam.*

Another design improvement was an inspection gallery that runs horizontally along the length of the dam, allowing internal visual inspections. There are 129 drains drilled from this gallery through the dam and down to the bedrock below: these drains relieve water pressure build-up underneath the dam, and allow engineers to monitor the environment underneath the dam.

The Water Resources Lab also redesigned the buttress (called a training wall) of the west end of the spillway, and anchored it to the bedrock below. Like the dam itself, holes were drilled through the concrete, the foundation, and on down to the bedrock below. After tensioning and capping, the bedrock itself became an anchor for the training wall.

The design of the spillway's floor was also changed: the slabs on the floor were larger than the original stones, laid down in a more secure hopscotch pattern and also anchored to the bedrock below.

\* \* \*

Four siphons had been installed to relieve pressure on the dam during the emergency work in 2007. DEP continued to use them to lower the water

level in the reservoir and keep it below the crest level so that workers could cut a notch in the top of the dam.

These siphons have been replaced by two streamlined siphons built into the spillway floor that can handle as much water as the original four tubes. They have a life expectancy of at least 10 years, and will continue to manage the reservoir water level until a low-level outlet becomes operational by June 2020. At that time, the above-the-dam siphons will be taken down and the portion under the spillway will be encased in concrete.



### The Gilboa Reservoir 2016–2020

#### *Flood mitigation*

*The notch and crest gates:* When first addressing the emergency work in 2007, the DEP cut a 220-foot-wide notch in the west end of the dam to relieve pressure on the dam and to provide a dry work area on top of the rest of the dam. This notch proved to be a convenient way to control the water level and has been incorporated into the final design of the dam. Along the top of the notch are eleven, 20-foot long aluminum slats hinged on the water-face of the dam. These slats look like a Venetian blind, are controlled pneumatically, and are called crest gates.

The crest gates will be generally lowered during rains, and then raised to increase the capacity of the reservoir during the summer when more water is wanted in the system and the risk of flooding is low. For an impending storm, the crest gates can be lowered to drop the water level, and then raised to delay the overflow of the dam. The contract for installation of the crest gates has been signed, and the work should be complete by 2022 at a final construction cost of \$7.1 million.

*Using the dam for flood control during major rain events:* The combination of the Shandaken Tunnel and projected low-water outlets together could theoretically lower the water given enough time, but the reservoir is so small compared to its watershed that any drop in the water level would quickly be replaced in major rainfalls like Irene. At the peak of Irene, water flowed into the reservoir at 137,000 cubic feet per second.

## Project of the Year Award for Gilboa Dam

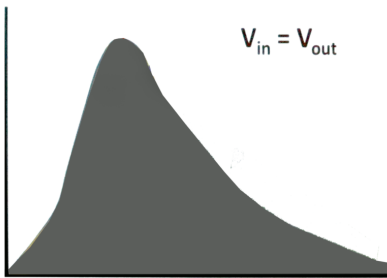
On Sept. 14, 2015 during its annual meeting, the Association of State Dam Safety Officials presented its 2015 **National Rehabilitation Project of the Year** award to the New York City Department of Environmental Protection's Gilboa Dam.

<http://www.hydroworld.com/articles/2015/09/asdso-awards-nycdep-s-gilboa-dam-its-2015-national-rehabilitation-project-of-the-year.html>

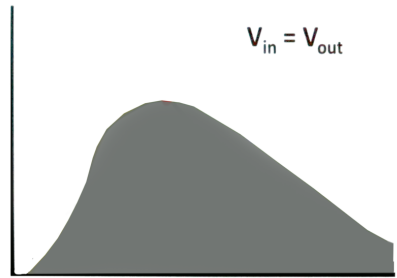
*Flood attenuation:* The reservoir can and does mitigate downstream damage due to flooding. Compare the effect of a hurricane like Irene with or without the Gilboa Dam—Irene with the dam was less destructive downstream than it would have been without the dam. At the peak of the flood in 2011, the rate of water flowing past Nickerson's Park was 19% less and had significantly less force that it would have had if the dam were not there.

When water enters the reservoir, the water level of the entire reservoir has to be raised to surmount the crest of the 182-foot dam *plus* (in the case of Irene) the height of the 8-foot flood pouring over the dam. This resistance to the rise in the level of the water takes energy away from the flood, slows the speed of the water moving through the reservoir, and spreads its release downstream over a greater a period of time. This effect is called *attenuation*.

Attenuation



Attenuation



**Water level in an Irene-like storm with or without a dam in place.**

The illustration on the left is water flow at today's 990v and the Schoharie Creek if the dam were not in place. The incoming water would start early, spike at a high elevation, and recede quickly. In 1915, this water flow would have destroyed the village, the creamery, and most of the farms on the west of the creek and similar devastation downstream. The right illustration shows the same scenario with the dam in place. There was a slight delay at the start due to lower water in the reservoir, a lower peak elevation, and post-peak water flow spread out over a longer time.

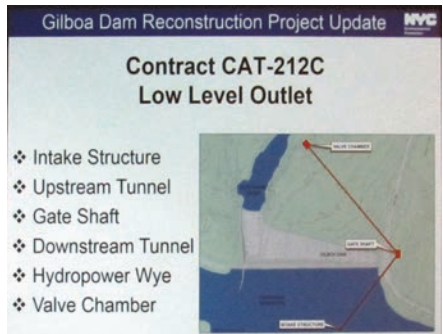
The 1927 dam mitigated a 2-year flood by 16%, and a 100-year flood by 10%. The new design of the dam including the crest notch will further improve attenuation: it will mitigate the 2-year floods by 30% and a 100-year flood by 21%.

**Low-Level Outlet: 2020 and on**

Gilboa’s reservoir is one of the smallest in the West-of-Hudson system, but it captures water from one of the largest watersheds. As there will be more major storms in the future, record storms of the past may become the norm for the future. The dam may also be called upon to release water downstream for agricultural or environmental reasons, or to generate electricity.

Because of these challenges, the DEP needs quick, flexible, and redundant ways to safely shift water through the reservoir. The planning is almost complete for a low-level outlet to release up to 2400 cubic feet per second for emergency response, and would alternately be able to support constant conservation release or the generation of hydroelectric power.

This plan calls for a tunnel 181 feet below ground level to carry water from the reservoir around the dam and release it into the Schoharie Creek below the spillway. The inlet chamber at the bottom of the reservoir will allow water into a tunnel heading east under the site of the overlook, the ugly steel fence, Route 990V, and to a valve chamber of the system.



Access to the valve chamber will be by a set of stairs up to a small building in the clearing to the east of the road. From the valve chamber the tunnel will then turn northwest and continue back to release water downstream of the spillway.

Plans for the low-level outlet have been drawn and are being reviewed, and the contract has been awarded. Construction will begin in 2017 with a completion date of June 26, 2020, and a projected cost of \$142,636,000.

As this work is being completed, a renovated overlook can be constructed and the “ugly steel wall” will come down.

\* \* \*

Currently, all Schoharie water (except flood water) is sent by the Shandaken Tunnel to the Esopus Creek on to the city via the Ashokan Reservoir. The ability to divert water to the Schoharie Creek has created a new opportunity.

Some environmentalists see hydro power as a way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while others dream of a constantly flowing Schoharie as a way to have a healthier creek and restore fishing opportunities; agriculturists see the opportunity to guarantee water for the crops in the Schoharie valley; and small business owners picture a bucolic country stream to attract tourists.

South on the other side of the mountains along the Esopus Creek, a major trout hatchery is an established source of jobs and revenue for the area, and the area has also created a reputation for trout fishing in the Esopus creek using the cold water from the Shandaken Tunnel.

As you can imagine, people on the other side of the mountains might also be on the other side of the question about diverting water into the Schoharie to flow north—any significant Schoharie release could be seen as a depletion of the reservoir's cold water reserves and water release might increase turbidity in the water going down to the city.

While the DEP (a New York *City* agency) is in charge of the reservoir, the DEC (a New York *State* agency) would be in charge of any release into the Schoharie Creek.

DEP needs ways to satisfy both sides of the mountains and have these recommendations approved by DEC.

### **Reservoir Boating Program and the Construction on Intake Road**

Four New York City reservoirs in the Catskill–Delaware Watersheds are open to recreational, non-mechanized boating. On the Schoharie Reservoir, such boats can be launched at Snyder's Cove on Intake Road and Devasego Falls on Route 23.

No promises, but there are two tentative plans pending:

1. DEP wants to resurface Intake Road for long-term use. Reservoir access at Snyder's Cove will be disrupted during the construction, but it will remain an access point after the roadwork is done.
2. There is also a plan to create a new boat access on the east of the reservoir at the Gilboa/Conesville town line. A gravelled resurface of the old Conesville Road will again bring Main Street of the village up to what is 990V just north of Manorkill Falls. There would be a waterside parking area at the end of this road.

DEP cannot provide details on either of these plans due to contract and environmental reviews. However, the new location would be a natural for a GHS kiosk picturing the old village from upper Main Street.



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