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Gilboa Vacationers

Flora Del Hubbard

Shortly after the Depression and WW II, many families living in New York City and surrounding areas began to financially prosper and could afford to spare the expense of a vacation. Summer camps and second homes in upstate areas were purchased. Many city dwellers began seeking spacious places in the rural areas where the fresh air was cool, where children were away from unsafe, crowded streets and could freely romp around, and where the food was home grown in local gardens and produced on local farms. Boarding houses became the desirable vacation spots.

There was little need for an automobile in the city so tourists depended on public transportation to reach their destinations. Growing up in my parents' boarding house in Flat Creek, Gilboa, I often rode with my father to pick up our guests arriving by various modes of transportation to the area.

Traveling to Catskill to wait for the Day Liner ship to dock was a spectacular thrill. Once the guests and their luggage were loaded into my dad's '47 Chevrolet, we headed up 145 to Livingstonville Mountain and eventually to the Meadows Farm.

Usually New Yorkers chose to arrive on the Ulster and Delaware (aka the Useless and Dangerous) train, which stopped at the Grand Gorge depot adjacent to Becker Tire Shop. This train hauled freight as well as passengers from New York to Roundout, Roxbury, and on. My brother and I would carefully place a penny on the track and anxiously wait for our free, flattened souvenir.

Two bus services provided means to get to the country. The Trailways bus from the Port Authority had frequent scheduled stops in Grand Gorge. Other guests arrived on Kelsey's Bus line that ended at Lossee's Gas Station in Livingstonville.

During Memorial Day and Labor Day weekends and deer hunting season, many avid hunters from the New York area lodged at the boarding houses along Flat Creek Road. They drove their own automobiles up the Taconic to East Durham, Cooksburg, and on.

Access to the country benefitted many upstaters and allowed the boarding house business to flourish during the mid-forties and into the mid-sixties.

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