



Gilboa Historical Society

Learning about, sharing, and preserving our history

SUMMER 2011, VOLUME 13.2

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Flat Creek Community 4th of July KIDS' PARADE

This parade is for Big Kids as well as Little Kids. Decorate your bike, wagon, stroller, or drive a vehicle, farm equipment, motorcycle etc. of your choice.

SPECTATORS AND PARTICIPANTS NEEDED—SPREAD THE WORD!

Parade entrees line up at the Flat Creek Baptist Church at 1:00 PM on July 4th, parade around the 'block,' and end with a potluck picnic at 843 Flat Creek Road.

- Hot dogs, hamburgers, and lemonade provided.
- Be sure to bring your own lawn chairs and a dish to pass.
- Donations accepted for the Conesville Fire Department.

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**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, on Columbus Day weekend,
and by appointment (607 588-9413). <http://www.gilboafossils.org>

The **Tourism Map, Newsletters**, and other items of general interest
are available online at <http://www.gilboahome.com>.

Send feedback or suggestions on the Newsletter to
gerrys@gilboahome.com
Gerry Stoner, 152 Starheim Road, Stamford, NY 12167

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THE GILBOA DAM AND THE SCHOHARIE RESERVOIR

Howard R. Bartholomew

The Schoharie Creek begins at Acra in Greene County and drains 314 square miles. It flows 29 miles to the Schoharie Reservoir. From Acra (elevation 2,500 feet), the Schoharie Creek drops 550 feet over the first mile; an average of 36.5 feet per mile for the next 14 miles; 24.5 feet per mile for the next 10 miles; and 14.5 feet per mile for the final 4.5 miles to the reservoir, which begins just north of the bridge at Prattsville (elevation 1,130 feet).¹

The Gilboa Dam and Schoharie Reservoir are actually one part of the Catskill water system; other related components are the Shandaken Tunnel (which can supply over 500 million gallons of water a day from the Schoharie Reservoir to the Ashokan Reservoir in Ulster County) and the Ashokan Reservoir (which then sends its waters to the Croton and Kensico Reservoirs in Westchester County via the Catskill Aqueduct and from there on to New York City). A remarkable fact of this system is that 95% of the water from the west-of-Hudson flows to the city only by gravity.²

While the Schoharie Reservoir is the smallest of the six west-of-Hudson reservoirs, it has the most productive watershed. This is due in part to the presence of 3 high peaks in its drainage basin: Hunter Mountain (elevation 4,040 feet), Westkill Mountain (elevation 3,880 feet), and Windham High Peak (elevation 3,524 feet).³ Copious amounts of precipitation fall annually within the watershed due to the close proximity of these mountains to the Hudson River (elevation sea level); Hunter Mountain is but 12 miles from the Hudson. As warm, humid air flows north along the east coast of the United States, it rises and cools over the high peaks of the Catskills. Air loses its ability to hold moisture as it cools, giving the Catskill Mountains a “cloud raking” ability. Without water from the Catskills, New York City would be hard pressed to exist.

History

The Gilboa Dam is located on the site of the former village of Gilboa. The dam bisected the village at right angles to the Schoharie Creek. A total of 430 buildings were burned to a distance of six miles upstream of the dam. The village was a progressive community for its time, with a hydroelectric plant, movie theater, numerous stores, professional offices, and its own newspaper, *The Gilboa Monitor*. All this was lost when the dam and reservoir were built. Even the dead within the reservoir boundaries were affected, with seven cemeteries having been

relocated.⁴ This destruction of what has been termed “a perfect rural village”—and the construction of a new dam and reservoir—was made possible by the passage of three laws by the New York State Legislature in 1904 and 1905. These laws gave the newly created New York City Board of Water Supply (NYCBWS), precursor to the present NYCDEP, the right to condemn suitable properties in upstate New York for the building of drinking water reservoirs under the purview of eminent domain, the basic concept of which is the greatest good for the greatest number.⁵

Condemning property and eradicating a community had a great human impact, best put into words by the pioneering folk historian Emelyn Gardner:

For a number of summers the village of Gilboa, a leafy settlement on a shallow, rocky stream, served as a center for my work. But there came a time when its destiny foreshadowed by its Biblical name, which signifies “many springs,” was fulfilled. And on the former site of the charming little village, with its white houses peeping through the trees and the steeples of its churches rising above them, there was constructed a reservoir that daily sends thousands of gallons of pure water into the mains of New York City, one hundred and fifty miles away. While the project of the dam was in the discussion stage the unhappy villagers clung to the hope that “they couldn’t make a dam work at Gilboa.” But, when the inferno created by automobile trucks, commissary wagons, dynamite, pneumatic drills, concrete mixers, fire, steam, electricity, barracks, mess halls, stables, hundreds of special police, and thousands of workmen convinced Gilboans that the doom of their beloved village was sealed, they first dug up their dead who were sleeping in the little graveyard in the heart of the village and moved them far back of the water line of the reservoir. Next they began to consider their own future. And it is estimated that more than one third of the population died of heartbreak. The remainder dazedly scattered to the four winds to seek abiding places until death should release them from a cruel world, which, they said, seemed to have no place for them. Thus vanished one little village. . . . Others like it are fearfully waiting for the time when they, too, will be sacrificed to the modern gods of greed and prosperity, which have already claimed eleven hamlets in the Catskill Mountains.⁶

Actual construction of the Gilboa Dam, Shandaken Tunnel, and the Schoharie Reservoir was done between 1919 and 1927. With the completion of the Shandaken Tunnel, a temporary diversion dam was placed just north of the intake chamber and water was shunted into the tunnel “killing two birds with one stone”: supplying water to the Ashokan Reservoir, and allowing remaining work on the reservoir and dam to be done more easily by lowering water levels

of the Schoharie Creek, permitting the closing of the outlet works under the masonry spillway.⁷

Geology

The bedrock beneath the Gilboa Dam consists of 350 million-years-old Middle-Devonian sandstones and shales that were deposited in marginal-marine to non-marine environments. These rocks are world famous in geological circles for preserving the remains of the world's oldest fossil forest, known as the Gilboa Forest.

Five separate levels of in situ trees have been found, the first having been exposed as a result of a flood in 1869. In the process of obtaining facing stones for the construction of the dam, the fossil trees were rediscovered at an elevation of 1120 feet as well as at 960 feet. In each case, the fossil trees were found rooted in layers of blocky, green mudstone with the lower portions of the trees encased in massively cross-bedded sandstone up to 5 feet thick. It is interpreted that the trees were living on a delta plain near the shore of a vast inland sea. During times of sea level rise, the streams on the delta experienced dramatic floods with occasional, catastrophic breaches in the natural levees along the streams.⁸ Immediately following the breach in the levee, the sediment-laden water of the stream flowed out onto the delta plain, entombing the bases of the trees. Evidence for this hypothesis includes the steep cross-beds of the sandstone encasing the trees and the presence of Devonian-aged river-dwelling animals smashed up against the bases of the trees. Hundreds of fossil stumps from Gilboa have found their way to museums in many parts of the world.

The site selected for the dam had a deeply buried inner gorge cut down into bedrock on the western side of the reservoir by a preglacial or interglacial stream, bedrock on the eastern side of the reservoir, and glacial drift deposits above the rock. The bedrock beneath the dam is described in the 1921 Board of Water Supply *Annual Report*:

The general level of the foundation for the dam in the old creek bed is about 6 feet below the original surface of the rock and displayed some of the characteristics that have been noted in certain portions of the Shandaken tunnel, in that the rock seems to be under stress; this was first observed in connection with the use of channelers in the cut-off trench. When the channelers cut had been made and the machine had passed on and later returned it was found that the channeler bit could not be inserted in the old slot and that apparently the rock was off-set. Off-sets in the rock were also noticed at other points. . . . This same peculiar behavior of the rock was noted when tightening up the bottom by barring and wedging as ordinarily in sandstone rocks when a wedge is driven in a seam a flat slab can be moved, but in this rock, which is exceedingly brittle, it breaks with a concave breakage and

frequently loose pieces are bound in, something as a marble might be when embedded in clay and the clay had subsequently shrunk. Vertical seams are frequent, extending in all directions, being in general continuous only for short distances, and the blocks between these seams overly and underly adjoining blocks, binding the whole mass together; also, in barring and wedging, small chips sometimes break off with a report, flying to a considerable distance.

Another interesting condition in the foundation is an artesian flow. . . . This flow totaled at least 100 gallons per minute and was intercepted at different depths below the floor of the cut-off trench. . . . It was also observed that when the artesian flow began from a hole, the leaks from the side-walls in the vicinity ceased and at the end of the year practically no leakage occurred in the side-walls where formerly it had been considerable.⁹

In the 1923 report of the NYCBWS is another interesting note:

A horizontal mud seam at el. 1038 feet at a thickness of 1-3 inches encountered near section/monolith 8 which continued at approximately the same level to the present easterly limits of the work.¹⁰

These observations made when the dam was being constructed have a direct bearing on the safety issues that faced the dam in the early twenty-first century.

Statistics Relating to the Reservoir, Dam, and Tunnel

Schoharie Reservoir

Length	5.8 miles	Total volume	22 billion gallons
Maximum width	.7 mile	Volume above intake chamber	
Average width	.5 mile	at 1065' elev.	19.5 billion gallons
Shoreline	16.5 miles	Volume at 1124.5' elev.	
Maximum depth	150 feet	(notch level)	17.5 billion gallons
Average depth	57 feet	Watershed drainage above	
Area at 1130' elev.	1142 acres	Schoharie Reservoir	314 sq. mi.

Gilboa Dam

Length	2000'	Outlet works	nonfunctioning
Length of spillway	1324'		at present
Notch at 1130' elev.	220' long x 5.5'	Diameter of 2 blow-off valves	
(cut on western side of spillway in winter 2006 to lower water levels)		and discharge pipes	30"
Length of earthen dam portion with concrete core wall at 1150' elev.	674'	(Valves are "frozen" and access to them is hazardous.)	

Shandaken Tunnel

Length	18.1 miles	Max. discharge volume	900 ft ³ /sec
Tunnel dimensions: horseshoe shaped	11'6" high × 10'3" wide		(577 million gal/day)
Intake level at Gilboa	1065' elev.	Esopus Creek to Ashokan	
Discharge level at Allaben	985' elev.	Reservoir	11.9 miles

1. Francis M. Austin, *Catskill Rivers* (New York: Nick Lyons, 1983), p. 210.
2. Diane Galusha, *Liquid Assets: A History of New York City's Water Supply* (Fleischmanns, NY: Purple Mountain Press, 1999), p. 265.
3. Alf Evers, *The Catskills: From Wilderness to Woodstock* (Woodstock, NY: Overlook Press, 1982), endpaper.
4. Alexander R. Thomas, *Gilboa, New York City's Quest for Water and the Destruction of a Small Town* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2005), p. 170.
5. Thomas, pp. 86–101.
6. Emelyn Elizabeth Gardner, *Folklore of the Schoharie Hills* (University of Michigan Press, 1937), pp. 7–8.
7. Thaddes Merriman, Board of Water Supply, City of New York, *Annual Report*, 1923, p. 93, plate 6.
8. Alexander J. Bartholomew, "Stratigraphic Determination of the World's Oldest Fossil Forest, Gilboa, NY," Master's Thesis, University of Cincinnati, 2002, 79 pp.
9. Merriman, *Annual Report*, 1921, p. xx.
10. Merriman, *Annual Report*, 1923, p. xx.

Howard Bartholomew is a director of Dam Concerned Citizens. For more information on matters relating to the Gilboa Dam and Schoharie Reservoir, visit www.dccinc.org or contact Dam Concerned Citizens, Inc., P.O. Box 310, Middleburgh, NY 12122-0310, 518 827-9558.

There will be additional articles in forthcoming GHS Newsletters, starting with the construction of the Shandaken Tunnel, in the fall issue of the Newsletter.

Hop Farming

Albert Bullard's training, vocation, and avocation is rural folklife, and his passion has been the science, tools, pictures, artifacts, and the economic, social, and political ramifications of hops and hop growing.

He'll discuss hop history in our state and county at our June meeting, and cover social traditions such as the kissing loop and harvest dances; economic relationships of hops to banks and railroads; and business intricacies of hops and hop farming. He also invites us to bring our own artifacts to discuss.

Wednesday, June 15, 2011 at 7:00 PM
Gilboa Town Hall

A LOCAL MYSTERY

Found in Our Gould's History

Bill Adams

I found a handwritten note in our copy of Jay Gould's *History of Delaware County*. The following is typed exactly as written, including the words that the writer had marked through (rather than erased).

We don't know the writer, whether guy or gal, and the note was in pencil on something like old tablet paper, except that it was whitish rather than yellow.

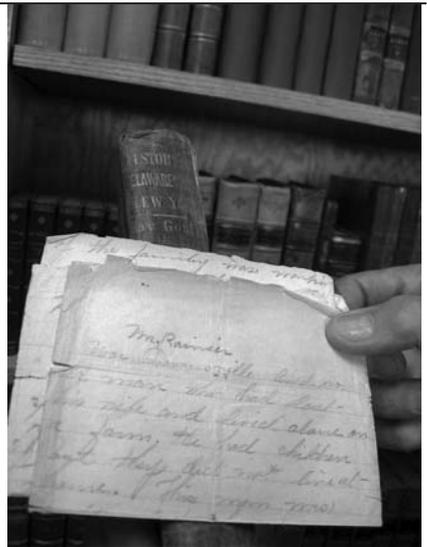
Mr. Rainier

Near Downs ville lived an old man who had lost his wife and lived alone on a farm. He had children but they did not live at home. This man was supposed to have quite a little money. ~~One~~

One morning he was found dead on the floor of his kitchen. he had just come in from milking and had strained his milk. At first it was thought that he had a shock ~~and~~ but later bruises were found on his head and neck that showed he had been struck dead with a stick or club. A roll of home-spun cloth was taken from the house.

Several people were suspected of the murder supposing to done it for his money. A certain family ~~living~~ of boys living up the river were suspected but nothing proved against them. But this suspision hung over them and even the children were afraid of them in years after. Perhaps 20 yrs after the murder one of the family was working with some other men on the road. Some trouble came up and taunting things said on both sides. The angry fellow worker said to Mr. [Z?]. "Well who killed — — — Rainer?" Showing how the suspision hung about this family.

20 or 30 years after the murder, a son of Mr. Rainer was very sick. ~~The only~~ at Greene. He asked the Dr. if he could live, the Dr. said no. Then the dying man said he had a confession to make, then he told him that that he was the murderer of his father. He had gone home the evening his father was killed. He



went home over the hill and after dark so no one saw him. He said he and his father had a few words about something and in a passion he struck his father. ~~She~~ He saw to his horror that he had killed him instantly. He took the roll of cloth with him and went back that night through the woods. So the family upon to whom the suspicion so long rested was entirely innocent.



Bill and Diana Adams own Adams Antiquarian Bookstore, 602 Main Street in Hobart, NY, a.k.a. the BookVillage of the Catskills. Not all of our books are antiquarian, but most of them were printed prior to 1850 or are about events that occurred prior to 1850. We carry books in a wide range of categories including, Greece, Rome, Middle Ages, Renaissance, art, architecture, religion, Judaica, biography, poetry and literature. We also carry books and sponsor talks reflecting local interests—history, horticulture and wildlife. We have three floors overlooking the Delaware River, and are a Wi-Fi hub. 607-538-9080, www.whabooks.com/, whabooks@whabooks.com

BENJAMIN S. MAYHAM MILL

(Brewster's Mill), South Gilboa, N. Y.

Katharine S. Harrington
Historian, Town of Gilboa

John Brewster (in Child's *Gazetteer* called John Breaster) was a New Englander, a descendent of the famed Elder Brewster who came over on the *Mayflower*. After the Revolution he moved to South Gilboa, then a part of the Town of Blenheim, where some of his descendents still live, and is said to have built a mill and mill-pond, which powered the machinery. This mill later came into the possession of Benjamin S. Mayham, and the large pond, which still exists, became known as Mayham's Pond. This lies just above the road on the Stamford side, which road leads from South Gilboa to Route 30. So far as I know, no trace of the mill site now remains.



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.

CIVIL WAR

Gilboa and Conesville Go to War

Beatrice Mattice

A very sad but interesting part of our history took place from 1861 to 1865 when the United States was torn apart by the Civil War. This war had a tremendous impact on our area.

An incomplete list shows 100 Gilboa men served in this war. I do not have a list of Gilboa men who died; but 95 men from Conesville families fought in the war, 30 lost their lives, and 26 were wounded or captured. These figures seem unbelievable for such a small town.

There was heartbreak and tragedy with the loss of more than one in many families. In Conesville, five Layman men were in the war: Francis, Livingston, and Thaddeus died; 16-year-old Benjamin was wounded; and only brother Jeremiah was not harmed. James and John Murphy died, both in their late 30s and married, and their nephew James W. Porter also died. Out of five VanLoans, DeWitt, George W., and James died; Alexander was wounded; and Orrin D., the only one married, survived without injury. Brothers Hiram and Philip C. Wilber volunteered together, fought side by side, and were killed at the Battle of Gettysburg. Another heartbreaking story is that of 15-year-old Amos Rogers who ran away to join the Army, then died of starvation in a rebel prison.

The Town of Gilboa supported Abraham Lincoln in the presidential elections of 1860 and 1864. However, Conesville did not favor Lincoln in either election as it was a Democratic stronghold at the time. The majority of voters in Schoharie County did not support Lincoln. However, the people here were very patriotic and the call for volunteers met with prompt response—excitement ran high. Many men responded to the popular song of the day, “Take Your Gun and Go!”

Many soldiers claimed they had enlisted for 3 months but the recruiting officers had signed them up for two or three years. Several men from here enlisted in neighboring Greene or Delaware Counties. The years went by and the uselessness of the war, the very poor living conditions, and scanty food left the troops gloomy and despondent. They wanted to be home tending their own fields and taking care of their wives and children. The 1865 local census tells that the weather in 1864 had not been favorable to crops. It had been a wet spring followed by a very dry summer. Oats was the main crop and yielded about 10% of the usual crop. Buckwheat yielded about half of the usual crop. Potatoes

were better than they had been for five years, but most of the crops suffered from the drought.

Diphtheria prevailed to some extent and “carried off a few children,” and 12 to 15 cases of small pox were reported. All in all, the wives and children left at home had a hard time on their small hill farms. It was quite common to have men just disappear from camp—some started for home and others headed west. I have been told the stories of at least three men from this area who deserted.

Many families have personal stories about the war. John Haskin wrote a heart-moving poem about his experiences. The Bailey family lived on the Gilboa-Conesville town line, near Clark’s Restaurant, and James Lewis Bailey kept a diary during the war and while a prisoner in the Salisbury, NC, rebel prison where he died of starvation in January 1864.

On Palm Sunday, April 9, 1865, Generals Grant and Lee arranged the terms of surrender at the Appomattox Court House, a crossroads village in the mountains of Virginia. The veterans returned to peacetime occupations, but they never forgot. They refofought every battle around the pot-bellied stoves in the village stores on winter evenings, and proudly attended the annual reunions of the GAR—the Grand Army of the Republic.



Beatrice Mattice is the prolific historian for the Town of Conesville who has contributed to the New York Roots Web site, is the author of They Walked These Hills Before Me: An Early History of the Town of Conesville, and has written a number of articles and treatises. She loves music and plays the organ at Gilboa’s Methodist Church.

MILITARY RECORDS FROM THE CIVIL WAR

Beatrice Mattice

S*choharie County Veterans of Four Wars* was compiled by George H. Warner in 1891, and printed by Weed, Parsons, & Co., Albany, New York.

The following is a list of men from southern Schoharie County who served. Please note that this is not a complete listing, and I have personally found many errors in this book. For instance, I had been reading the Civil War letters of the Reed family in the *Newsletter*, but the Reeds are not all included in my lists. Looking further, I found them elsewhere—Jeremiah III, Ellis, and David H. Reed were brothers, lived on Dr. Leonard Mountain on the town line between

Broome and Gilboa, and are listed in the Town of Broome; only William L. Reed appears on the Town of Gilboa list.

Schoharie County Veterans of Four Wars is a wonderful book that also includes a paragraph on each man, telling about his family, enlistment, and the battles he took part in. It also gives details of injuries, for instance, “gunshot entering the forehead,” “gunshot in right arm and with the loss of right thumb,” and one poor man “had the measles, and then a gunshot to both hips, and a few minutes later lost his right leg below the knee by a solid shot.”

The entries for the Reeds follow:

Jeremiah Reed, Town of Broome, farmer; single; age 28; enlisted August 1, 1862; wounded by gunshot in left leg at Totopotomoy Creek, May 31, 1864; sent to David’s Island; died August 15, 1864.

William L. Reed, Gilboa, farmer, age 18; enlisted August 10, 1862; served regularly until wounded at Gettysburg, July 1, by two gunshots through right knee joint; treated at Fort Schuyler, David’s Island, and Albany; transferred to Veteran Reserve Corps; joined his company at Nashville in August 1864, and after two days sent to Emory Hospital, Washington; discharged in January 1865.

Ellis Reed, Broome, farmer, age 26; enlisted August 19, 1862; contracted chills and fever; treated at Fort Schuyler Hospital; discharged June 25, 1863; Broome Centre.

David Reed, Broome, farmer; single; age 18; enlisted August 19, 1862; served on full duty until wounded at Gettysburg, July 1, by gunshot to right leg; treated in hospital at Philadelphia; discharged for disability, April 30, 1864; died of consumption, August 6, 1870.

Town of Conesville (1865 Population was 1,392) from 1865 Census and Veterans of Four Wars

Adams, William D.	Brown, Albert	Dibble, Henry
Andrus, Henry	Buckbee, Arthur	Dibble, William G.
Andrus, Oliver	Cammer, John H.	Dingman, Reuban
Barlow, Joseph	Chichester, Wm. E.	Duncan, Charles
Bates, DeWitt C.	Chapin, Montrose	Earl, Wilbur N.
Bates, Resolved P.	Crane, Charles H.	Fancher, George H.
Bear, Ralph	Craw, George	Fancher, John
Brand, Andrew L.	Dean, Reuben C.	Hall, William
Brink, Charles A.	DeWitt, Orlean	Ham, John J.

Hay, James D.	Morehouse, John	Slocum, Joseph
Hay, Walter S.	Mosier, Alanson E.	Small, Samuel
Hay, William H.	Murphey, James	Smith, Andrew
Hitchcock, Vernon	Murphey, John N.	Smith, George W.
Hulbert, John P.	Pearsall, Wm. A.	Stryker, George M.
Hunter, Charles J.	Porter, James W.	Thomas, A. Sidney
Johnson, Wm. H.	Porter, Robert S.	Thorn, Charles M.
Layman, Benjamin	Reed, William L.	VanLoan, Alex
Layman, Francis	Richards, Wm. E.	VanLoan, Dewitt
Layman, Jeremia	Richtmyer, Marcus	VanLoan, George W.
Layman, Livingston	Richtmyer, Martin	VanLoan, Jas. L.
Layman, Thaddeus	Robinson, Franklin	VanLoan, Orrin D.
Lee, Peter	Rogers, Amos	Weed, David
Maby, William F.	Rogers, Henry	Weed, James M.
Makely, Jacob	Roe, Caleb	Wilber, Hiram
Maybee, Isaac	Schermerhorn, William	Wilber, Philip C.
Mead, Ranson S.	Schoomaker, ?Wheeler	Youngs, Grovener
	Sloat, Sylvanus	

Town of Gilboa (1865 Population was 2,329) from Veterans of Four Wars

Ackley, Oscar	Creighton, Henry	Gavit, Leander
Ames, Francis C.	Dayman, Charles	Goodfellow, Martin
Andrews, George L.	Desylvia, Andrew	Gordon, Seth E.
Bailey, James L.	Desylvia, Henry A.	Harris, Roscoe
Barlow, John	Desylvia, Homer	Hartwell, Charles
Barlow, Joseph	Disbro, Charles A.	Hay, Alden M.
Beach, Willard O.	Driggs, Charles	Hay, Jefferson
Becker, William M.	Duncan, Orra M.	Holdridge, Orlando
Beltman, John	Eggnor, Nathan	Houghtaling, Edward
Bevens, Dennis	Eggnor, Winslow	Houghtaling, Samuel
Borthwick, Alex	Ellerson, Charles	Hubble, Solomon D.
Brewster, J.L.	Face, Erastus	Jackson, David
Brines (O'Brien), Harvey J.	Fanning, Benjamin	Jackson, Jeremiah
Brewster, Otis	Farqher, Arthur H.	Jenkins, John L.
Cain, William	Finch, Stephen	Lafferty, Peter
Champlin, Omer	Finch, William A.	Lake, Martin
Chichester, George	Fox, Elmer	Lawyer, Francis
Clark, James	Fries, George	Layman, Wallace
Cook, Timothy P.	Friest, Wesley	Lemily, Winslow P.
	Gardner, Charles	Mackay, James A.

Mattice, Alonzo	Saxe, Charles	Vroman, William
Mattice, Paul	Schermerhorn, Hiram	Warner, Milo
McGinnes, Barney	Schermerhorn, Willard	Waters, John
McIntyre, Archibald	Selleck, Whited	Welch, Michael
Monroe, Joseph	Shafer, Thomas L.	Wiesmar, Malbone
Monroe, Henry	Shoemaker, Abram	Williams, George
Moon, Luman D.	Smith, Hiram	Wright, George H.
More, Timothy	Smith, Sylvester, J.	Wright, John
Newcomb, Sylvester	Southwick, Calvin	Wood, Charles E.
Peek, Alvah	Sowles, Lorenzo	Wood, Joseph D.
Proper, John R.	Stilwell, Hiram	Wood, Charles N.
Reed, William L.	Tibbets, James	Yeomans, George
Roe, Daniel S.	Vroman, Albert L.	Yeomans, Charles
Roe, Jinks P.		Yeomans, Horace A.



Beatrice Mattice is the prolific historian for the Town of Conesville who has contributed to the New York Roots Web site, is the author of They Walked These Hills Before Me: An Early History of the Town of Conesville, and has written a number of articles and treatises. She loves music and plays the organ at Gilboa's Methodist Church.

Three Sources for Warner's Book

Military Records of Schoharie County Veterans of Four Wars, compiled by George H. Warner, Late Co. C, 134th N. Y. Vol. Inf., Albany, N. Y.; Weed, Parsons and Company, Printers, 1891

- If you would like information from this book, contact Beatrice Mattice, 1154 South Gilboa Road, Gilboa NY 12076; 607 588-9487 or email beatricemattice@hotmail.com.
- Scott Reed, a contributor to the *Newsletter*: "I have 10 photocopies of this book with a plastic comb binding and heavy cardstock covers. The price is \$60 each. If there is anyone or any organization that would be interested in selling some of them, I would donate \$10 of the sale price to that organization for selling a book." Scott Reed, 22 Columbia Street, Mohawk, NY 13407, 315 866-2172, scotthreed62@yahoo.com.
- A searchable .pdf of this book is also available at no cost at northerncatskillshistory.com/Writing_History/200_Documents.

WALKING TOURS & VILLAGE HISTORIES

The Who, What, When, Where, and Why of Your Neighborhood

Trish and Chuck D'Imperio

For a couple of years now, I have spoken at the Gilboa Historical Society meetings, first on the graves of upstate New York and then on the historical events that have occurred in the upstate area. In one of those topics I must have mentioned that my wife, Trish, and I conduct walking tours in Cooperstown. At the last meeting, Gerry Stoner asked if I might write an article on developing walking tours.

I hadn't really thought of such an article, and *Cooperstown Walks!* evolved as a joint venture with my wife that grew in unpredictable ways. As a result of Gerry's question, however, I started to realize that the walking tours and my books flow in much the same manner. Both of them focus on a physical reality—a building, landscape, tomb, or whatever. In a book, I would have pictures and diagrams; on a walk, I would have the reality and we could walk through it.

Then I try to discover and include as much information about the reality as I can. What is the story behind the edifice? Who designed or built it? What is unusual about it, and what facts would most people like to know?

This type of information is interesting in itself, but I try to identify one most important item—one that I call the “WOW” moment. You want to reserve this detail, so that when you toss it in at the end, the audience can't help but to say “wow.” It is all in the delivery. Many of you've heard me speak, so this should make sense to you. A walking tour or a book must be a series of actual, and sometimes dry, information followed by the dessert of a “wow” moment.

In Cooperstown, for example: I start at Lakeside Park. I describe the scene, the history, the landmarks. It is a perfect place to “set the stage” for a walk around Cooperstown. The “wow” moment is just as we are leaving: I point out the old band gazebo way up from the water. I then tell them that this band gazebo was under water during the devastating flood of 2006. You can hear them say “wow.”





Again, “wow.”

We go inside the oldest church in Cooperstown. I describe the history of the church (and its founder, Judge William Cooper) and the architecture. Just before we leave, I point out the priceless signed Tiffany stain glass window. I show them where the artists put the wrong birth date on the window (the birth date of the person to whom the window is inscribed). I tell them that Tiffany had to take the window down and return to their studio in New York to put in the correct date.



Yes, this wedding gift was signed in stone! “Wow!”

I show them the beautiful stone house of George Pomeroy and Ann Clark on Main Street. I tell the group that Pomeroy was the town pharmacist, Ann was James Fenimore Cooper’s sister, and the house was a wedding gift from James to Ann. And at the end, I draw the group’s eyes way up to the top of the roof line and point out the hand-laid stone initials: GAPC . . . George Ann Pomeroy Cooper.



once saved millionaire Steven Clark’s life. In return, he built her a hospital and named it after her.

Mary died just days before the opening of the hospital and I point up to the cupola on the roof and tell them that in Mary’s honor, the light in the cupola is on 24/7 and has never been turned off.

“Wow!”

We stand in front of Bassett Hospital. I describe the nature of the place, the awards it has won (*Time* magazine once called it the finest rural hospital in the nation), the breakthroughs seen here (first bone marrow transplant research), etc.

Then I tell them who Mary Imogene Bassett was—a cloth-bag country doctor who

I don't want to give you a complete tour of Cooperstown (at least, not in the GHS *Newsletter*), but I hope that you understand how you might go about documenting the local history of *your* town. At least at the initial stages, take as many pictures as you can of the old buildings and the areas of interest around you. Scour the archives in your museum or the attic of your house for photographs.

Then, make a series of photocopies of these individual pictures on individual pieces of paper, and record on these photocopies the location of each of the original photographs (or digital copies of them).

Now, try to add as much information as you can: the location, architectural style, and personal history of the land or building. Don't be afraid to put down unanswered questions: the fact that you're missing information may remind you to ask further questions, and if you are lucky, you'll also find the answer.

Not every piece of land or building in your neighborhood has—so far—a “wow” piece of information. Again, leave a space for the “wow” statement even though you don't know what the “wow” information is yet. In this way, you will always be looking for these grabbers.

History, after all, is just history . . . but making it come alive is in the delivery.



Trish is from a long line of family members born and raised in Cooperstown and is an avid reader and history buff. Trish's husband, Chuck, is a radio personality, has written articles on local history and life in small-town America, and is the author of Great Graves of Upstate New York and Upstate New York: History Happened Here. Together, they are the proud parents of Frances, Katie, Abby, and Joey and owners of CooperstownWalks. They can be contacted at cooperstownwalks@aol.com.

WELCOME TO A LOCAL BREWERY

As the Museum exhibit this summer is “Old Time Music” with emphasis on hop production as seen in the New Deal's “Dance of the Hop Pickers,” we welcome a new brewery right here in Gilboa. As we started research on the hops industry of over a century ago, Mark VanGlad, the son of our town supervisor, has started Tundra Brewery—bringing this historic industry back to Schoharie County.

Mark will have beer tasting and demonstrations at the Museum opening on July 10, 1:00 PM. Please come and support Mark in his new endeavor and welcome the hop industry—coming back full circle!

Old Time Music in the Northern Catskills Gilboa Museum 2011 Season

The museum will be open weekends starting in July, and the formal opening will be on Sunday, July 10, 2011 from 1:00 to 3:00. Entertainment starting at 1:00 will be provided by Hilton Kelly and the Sidekicks. Hilton is in the New York State Old Tyme Fiddlers' Association Hall of Fame, and is the third generation of Kellys playing traditional folk music.

We have been very fortunate this year to have received the loan of Marv Simonsen's set of drums and musical instruments. We're doing some research on them, but there's a possibility that one of the drums is a veteran from the Civil War.

The society's Rena Kosersky is a professional musicologist and researcher (most recently on the music for PBS's *Freedom Riders*). We expect to have a lot of information for you about music in the Catskills and naturally about the dances that occurred in the evening after a day of picking hops.

The area has been blessed by a piece of New Deal Post Office art: the Middleburgh Post Office is proud to display Mary Earley's *Dance of the Hop Pickers*. In keeping with this summer's theme, the historical society has created a large-format photograph of this mural for display in the museum this summer.

As we exhibit our Old Time Music this summer and combine the theme with the *Dance of the Hop Pickers*, we welcome a new brewery right here in Gilboa. Coincidental with our research on the hops industry of over a century ago, Mark VanGlad has opened Tundra Brewery, bringing this historic industry back to Schoharie County. Mark will have beer tasting and demonstrations at the Museum opening. The hop industry—coming full circle!

We will also be dedicating four new fossils that have been donated to the historical society by the NYC DEP. This dedication will be at 2, so please come out to the opening—July 10, 2011 with music from 1–3 and the dedication in the 2 PM intermission—and show your appreciation of our legacy—Gilboa fossils, beer, and musical traditions.

Kristen Wyckoff

Gilboa Historical Society Museum
Web Site OPEN 24/7
www.gilboafossils.org

Reprinted Courtesy of the Walton Reporter, July 29, 1971

MARVIN SIMONSON AT 77

Rube Rustic

Rock festival enthusiasts think their music is “way out.” When electric guitars start banging they shut their eyes and jerk their spines like zombies. “Groovy,” is the way they describe it.

The trouble is, these people never heard a good “bones” player. There used to be one or two in every town, but they’re almost extinct now. When they started to rattle the bones, people woke up. Eyes popped. Feet started tapping. In no time at all the joint was jumping.

A few years ago THE HORN [Rube Rustic’s editorial logo] heard about a man near Stamford who could play the bones. We took a drive over there to see him. He turned out to be Marvin Simonson, 77, and was sunning himself out on the lawn when we arrived. A retired farmer, his picture can be seen down below.

“Sit down,” Marvin invited, offering us a lawn chair. We told him what we had come for. “That’s funny,” he said. “Two fellers from the Ford Foundation just left here. They was two days makin’ records of my playin’. I still got the bones right here in my overalls.”

Marv took the bones out and showed them to us. “The best ones,” he said, “are made out of cows’ ribs, like these. I made ’em myself.” Marv needed no invitation to start playing. Holding the bones in one hand and pressing a harmonica to his lips with the other, he sailed into the music. “Prettiest gal I ever seen. Came from down in Abilene.” The bones clicked like castanets. Although my feet are size 13, my toes were tapping on the green. (He had me doing it too!)

Next, Marv played “Mary of the Wild Moor.” If you can remember this one, you must be over 200 years old. It was a ballad, but the bones accompaniment was perfect. Then came “Farewell to Cold Weather,” an excellent idea in its own right. Marv was just beginning to warm up.

“Wheel out the buck-board. Hitch up the mare. Ma’s got the measles, but I don’t care.” The bones flailed away. “Drive up the bell-cow. Grab ’er by the



tail. Hold 'er by the horns while I milk 'er in the pail." Faster and faster it went. For 10 minutes I listened, completely enthralled.

Then reluctantly I started to tear myself away. If I stayed there another minute I'd be there the rest of my life, I knew. "Wait!" cried Marv. "I ain't played Mawkin' Bird yet!" But it was no use. I was thinking of my future and had to go.

As I got into the car and drove off, the strains of "Walk-jaw Bones" followed me down the road. For a moment I could have sworn the car was dancing. (Or was it my foot keeping time on the accelerator?) Marvin Simonson isn't around any more. But it's little wonder that he drew the biggest crowd in the history of the Stamford theater when he gave a one-man concert there in 1954.



Rube Rustic's July 29, 1971 article on Marv Simonson reprinted courtesy of Rube Rustic and the Walton Reporter.

Ice Cream Social

Starting as Esperance's Volunteer Fire Department Band in 1946, members came from all over. Andrew Quick was the band's director and was succeeded by Peter Holmes in 1997. The size of the band varied for the venue and scheduling, but it regularly visited the Broome Center Chapel for 25 years at an annual ice cream social. At that event: hot dogs, burgers, sausage and onions, and other traditional fare, followed by seven flavors of homemade ice cream and pies. An all-day celebration!

Shirley Kutzscher has written an article on these events in the fall 2008 *Newsletter* 10.3, and the ice cream recipes are there and online at gilboahome.com. One of the favorites is Maude Haskin's chocolate, and we have given you this recipe again on page 38 (right next to the membership form should you not be a member and want to join).

The Esperance Band and the Gilboa Historical Society have maintained the music and ice cream tradition. Always a great drawing card, this year the band will again play as the sun is setting at the museum (weather permitting, otherwise at the Gilboa-Conesville Central School).

Ice cream and toppings are free, courtesy of Stewart's.

Wednesday, July 20, 7–8:30 PM

**Gilboa Museum
122 Stryker Road**

**Gilboa-Conesville Central School
132 Wyckoff Road**

Schenectady UNION-STAR, Wed., June 14, 1961

SCHOHARIE COUNTY REPORT

Post Office Mural Recalls an Era

Ray Byrne

Summer visitors to the Schoharie Valley area, when stopping at the Middleburgh Post Office, often inquire as to why a mural on a lobby wall depicts a square-dancing scene. It was installed in the new building in 1941, a year after the post office was dedicated by the then Acting Postmaster General Smith W. Purdum of Maryland, and was suggested by Frank B. Rickard, Middleburgh postmaster since 1936. Miss Mary Earley of New York City executed the mural.

Inasmuch as the hops industry had figured so prominently in the early development of Middleburgh and yet had received very little, if any, consideration of a commemorative nature, the government deemed it advisable to place emphasis on a scene closely associated with the agriculture of hops, but in a lighter vein. The design of the mural was accepted from several submitted to the fine arts division of the government, and portrays a "hop dance" as performed about 1850-1865. Considerable research was required: every detail of dress, instruments used, type of bale used in those days in the baling of hops, was carefully worked out.

Well-known artists and judges in the field of art were loud in their praise, both of the uniqueness of the subject and of the craftsmanship displayed. So far as is known, this production is the first and only mural installed in a public building in Schoharie County.

Henry and William Pindar of Middleburgh, whose grandfather, Henry V. Pindar, and father, William Pindar Sr., were the largest hop growers in New York State for many years, and whose yards ranked among the largest and finest in the eastern seaboard states, assisted Miss Earley with authentic details of the "hop dance," which was a nightly occurrence in the days when hundreds of workers were brought into the valley to pick hops. These on occasion would last through the night and some dancers would go direct to the yards to begin the day's work. One wonders if the modern reference to a dance as a "hop" might not be a carryover from these affairs.

The growing of hops disappeared from the Schoharie Valley in 1953, at which time there were about 30 acres in production. Two main reasons are given for the discontinuance of hops, whose dried cones are used in brewing beer and ale: lack of market due to some breweries using fewer hops (as much as one-third less per keg, because a sweeter beer sold better) and the breweries'



Most Post Office works of art were not funded by the WPA, but rather by commissions under the Treasury Department's Section of Painting and Sculpture. This department, established in 1934 and administered by Edward Bruce, was to select art of high quality to decorate public buildings if the funding was available. ("Articles from EnRoute: Off The Wall: New Deal Post Office Murals" by Patricia Raynor). This 1941 New Deal oil and tempura mural, entitled "Dance of the Hop Pickers" was painted by Mary Earley in the Post Office at Middleburgh, New York. Photo courtesy of the United States Postal System.



demand for seedless hops. These combined to create a surplus with resulting low prices. Seedless hops were made possible by eliminating the male or “he” vine and they are much smaller and lighter than the seeded hops. It required more cones per bale and reduced the normal yield per yard considerably. Pickers complained more hops were necessary to fill a box, on which their pay was based.

In 1879, the peak year, hops were raised on 5,871 acres in Schoharie County and had a value of more than \$1.5 million. Hops were just about the major

source of income, and practically every farm had at least an acre of them. Those who did not care to raise them found hop growers eager to rent their land. It was big business not only to the growers, but whole families looked forward to picking hops each year and earning enough money to buy food staples, boots, and clothing to see them through the winter. “Box of hops” was a familiar cry in the yards—meaning a box was filled. The cones were laid gently in the box so it would fill faster.

It was not uncommon for parents and their children, regardless of age or size, as long as they could help, to spend whole days in the yards. Payment for the work usually was made at the end of the picking season, which began in late August and continued for several weeks. Many pickers were imported from nearby cities and boarded by their employers. It was a time when there was work for anyone who wanted to work.

The Pindar yards at Middleburgh were in existence for about 93 years, except for a five-year lapse toward the end of the 13 years of prohibition, which caused cessation of most yards in the county. The yards were reestablished in 1933 with eight acres and gradually increased to 20. By 1938, the value of hops in the county was below \$10,000, compared to millions in the boom years. In 1943, the Pindars raised about 150 bales and received a record \$1.37 per pound. This yield represented about one-fourth of the total amount of hops raised in the state in that year. Pickers received top prices, also—\$2 per box. In its heyday, the Pindar yards covered 200 acres. Most of this acreage now produces corn.

So, the post office mural brings back memories of a once-great industry in the Schoharie Valley, where there are few “oldtimers” who have not picked hops at some time.



Ray Byrne's June 14, 1961 article on the Earley mural reprinted courtesy of Ray Byrne and the Schenectady Union-Star. "Dance of the Hop Pickers" by Mary Earley reprinted courtesy of the United States Postal System.

The Best House Museum

1568 Clauverwie, Middleburgh, NY 12122
(Just to the east of the Middleburgh School)

518-827-4239 — 518-827-5142

Now Open Thursdays, 10:00 AM–3:00 PM

Utica Herald-Dispatch, October 1, 1914

In the town of Middleburgh, Schoharie County, the 1914 hop crop is figured at 19,000 boxes. Of these, K. V. Pinder of Cobleskill has about 6300 boxes, 3500 early and 3000 late. These will probably weigh 110,000 pounds and at the prevailing prices bring nearly \$55,000. In addition to this, Mr. Pinder has 550 bales of last year's crop still on hand that will weigh about 90,000 pounds. The crop of last year is of fine quality and will command as much in the present market as the 1914 yield and is easily worth \$45,000.

[Note: Pinder's field in Middleburgh was the largest hop field in the county, complete with the double hop house. The combined value of the 1913 and 1914 crop—\$100,000—could have been worth as much as \$5 million in today's currency.] Reprinted from the *Weathervane* for September-October 2010, published by

Schoharie County Historical Society.

Gilboa Historical Society Publications
www.gilboahome.com

Rediscover Woodchuck Lodge John Burroughs' Catskills Retreat

Woodchuck Lodge is a weather-beaten cottage overlooking a landscape as bucolic and tranquil today as it did when the elderly John Burroughs (1837–1921) left it in the autumn of 1920.

Henry James called Burroughs “a more humorous, more available and more sociable Thoreau,” and around 30 books and hundreds of essays have established Burroughs' claim as the literary heir to the New England Transcendentalists. Burroughs wrote of Emersonian self-reliance and urged simple living in sympathy with nature; critiqued the insidiousness of cities and machine-culture; and was a protégé of Walt Whitman, Theodore Roosevelt, W. H. Harriman, and John Muir.

This is the target of our 2011 field trip. Plan to meet at the Gilboa Town Hall at 6 PM, and we will carpool south to Roxbury's Woodchuck Lodge.

Wednesday, August 17, 2011 at 6 PM
Gilboa Town Hall

OLD TIME FIDDLIN' OF HILTON KELLY

Hilton Kelly seemed destined for a particular calling: his grandfather, Ward Kelly (1868–1964), was a fiddle player and dance caller all during his long life; and Hilton's father, Carson Kelly (1897–1943), followed in those footsteps until an aneurysm prematurely stopped the music.

Hilton was born on July 18, 1925, and this third-generation Kelly accompanied his father to dances and parties, was fascinated by the mechanics and sound of fiddle playing. In 1930, his father gave the five-year-old a small tin fiddle. The boy tuned the strings and was turning out music. A year later, Hilton's granduncle gave him a wooden three-quarter fiddle that he started to play in earnest.

In the sixth grade, the Fleischman High School asked Hilton to play music for his peers in the gymnasium and teach them how to square dance.

A 15-year-old Hilton Kelly had a very exciting year: he was asked to stand in as a fiddle player/caller, and he bought a used full-size fiddle. From that point on, Hilton Kelly was a "professional."

The *Binghamton Press* had news of Hilton on May 4, 1945: he was summoned for a physical and would be called up for occupation duty in Germany.

He returned from the Army in December 1946, and resumed playing music nights and working during the day on the farm. A year later, a dancing-buddy brought her sister, Stella, to a party in the Halcott Center Grange Hall, and a year later Stella and Hilt were married. Hilton introduced Stella to his grandmother's organ and a piano soon appeared on the shopping list. Stella became one of the band.

By 1953, the stress of jobs both during the day and the night caught up with them and Hilton was forced to cut back on the music—they never completely quit, but they did not work in a band and only filled in when needed.

In 1978, Kelly was invited to a fiddle frolic in Cooperstown sponsored by the New York State Council on the Arts. He found that grant money was available to start new, old-style bands so he set up Hilton Kelly and the Sidekicks and has been playing since on the fiddle inherited from his dad.

In 1994, the Roxbury Arts group dedicated their Performance Center as "Hilt Kelly Hall," and in 1997 he was inducted into the New York State Old Tyme Fiddlers Association Hall of Fame.

The 21st century sees Hilton playing dances and benefits as he always has,



Hilton Kelly at home with his first violin, a small yet playable tin instrument. Photo by Gerry Stoner.

but he cuts back on the geography that he covers. Also, the venues are changing slightly as well, spending more time teaching traditional music to youngsters both in Roxbury Central School and Manhattan's Country School Farm (the Farm is a Roxbury-based extension of the E. 96th Street school).

What's on the horizon? Well, his granddaughter Heather is using his three-quarter fiddle now, there are always a lot of kids out there who want to learn old-time fiddle playing, and there are always the adults who want to be introduced to their roots.



Hilton and Stella Kelly will be celebrating their 63rd anniversary in October.



Zadock Pratt Museum

P.O. Box 333, Main Street, Prattsville NY 12468

Sat. & Sun. 11 AM—4 PM

(last tour through the museum at 4 PM)

large groups by appointment—518-299-3395

MINE HILL

What we now call Bald Mountain, Mount Jefferson, and Mine Hill (to the West of Lake Utsayantha) provide watershed for three rivers: the Delaware, the Hudson, and the Susquehanna.

Mildred Bailey reports in her *History of the Town of Jefferson* that the original explorers found large variations of the compass in one of these mountains and thought it contained copper. "So impressed was the surveying party that they came back later and dug a square opening which probably extended into the mountain for a depth of a few feet." While nothing of any consequence was found, this is how that hill came to be named Mine Hill, and the stream that has its source there is the Mine Kill. In days gone by, the summit was farmed and was the highest cultivated land in New York State.

MUSIC IN THE HOPS ERA

Rena Kosersky

In our region of Schoharie County hops growing started mid-nineteenth century and came to an end about 1919. Three factors contributed to the demise of this lucrative crop, which was needed for brewing beer: the contagion of the Blue Mold Blight in 1913, the westward expansion where crop yields were much greater, and the passage of the Eighteenth Amendment of 1919, the Prohibition Act. The temperance movement, popular in New York State and particularly popular in Schoharie County, gained its crowning achievement with the Prohibition Act, also called “The Noble Experiment.” That experiment failed, and the Act was repealed in 1933.

To harvest hops, farmers needed extra help, and workers came from towns and cities. Some folks earned money, but many worked for their board and the healthy country air. Sometimes whole families came, but also single people who were, perhaps, more interested in the social aspects of their stay. Some say that the pickers worked all day and danced all night.

The fiddle tunes and square dance calls that Hilton Kelly learned from his father who, in turn, learned them from *his* father (in Red Kill Valley of nearby Delaware County) were part of the entertainment offered after hops picking. Mr. Kelly will perform for us at the opening of the Hops exhibit at the Gilboa Museum. Some of these hops songs continue to be familiar today, such as *Turkey in the Straw* (once called *Old Zip Coon*), *Pop Goes the Weasel*, and *Darling Nelly Grey*. They were often played, sung, and danced to in grange halls, dinner halls, barns, or homes.

Other types of songs were sung and enjoyed, as documented in a songster or ballad book that the young woman Ida Finkell kept from 1879 to 1883, while she lived in Argusville, Schoharie. The songs she noted can be generally placed in four categories. There were Civil War songs such as *Marching Through Georgia* and *Battle Cry of Freedom*; sentimental ballads, such as *Grandfather's Clock*; songs that tell of murder and tragedy, and temperance songs. The song *Father a Drunkard and Mother Is Dead* (also known as *The Drunkard's Lone Child*) fits both the categories of tragedy and temperance. Temperance songs were often based on popular known melodies of the time, but with added new words that promoted limiting the use of alcoholic beverages. The sentimental song *Home Sweet Home* was used as a parody for a temperance song. All of these songs and tunes will be heard as background music to the Hops exhibit at the Gilboa Museum.

By the mid-1800s most American cities and towns had at least one brass band to perform for a variety of events, including dances, concerts, picnics,

parades, and patriotic as well as political rallies. Prior to the advent of electrically amplified sound of the twentieth century, mainly brass instruments were played for outside performances. The bands often performed in gazebos in town parks and squares, such as we can see today on the Jefferson Green. Both brass bands and fife and drum corps were used for marching. The Gilboa Museum will be exhibiting some early instruments including a large marching drum and fifes from South Gilboa.

Before cylinders and records were available for recording music, a great deal of sheet music was published and purchased. Often in homes there was a musical instrument or two used to accompany family and friends' singing. Fiddles and small organs were particularly popular in our region. Sheet music of popular songs of the period, with their historical covers, as well as an organ from a local home and a fiddle, will also be displayed at the museum.

The exhibit will open Sunday, July 10, 2011. We look forward to your Museum visit. Enjoy!

GHS Calendar for Fall Meetings

September 21, 2011: Traditional Music of Southern Schoharie County

October 19, 2011: Black Bears of Southern Schoharie County

November 16, 2011: Animal Rescue Facilities in Southern Schoharie County

December 21, 2011: The Gilboa Historical Society Annual Bottle Auction

MUSIC IN OUR PAST

Gerry Stoner

Music pervades our society. This is as true in the time of iPods as it was for previous generations. In the 19th and 20th centuries, our hills were alive with the sound of music—at dances, parties, church choirs, and marching bands.

Our newsletters have included articles on music played in the home, at parties and dances, and church music. However, marching and martial music also were instrumental (pardon the pun) in Schoharie County.

Marching Bands

Brass bands were so wide-spread that most Schoharie County towns had marching bands. These bands played for their own municipal events and as ambassadors to neighboring towns. The *Mirror-Recorder* noted, on August 29,

1956, that an award was won by the South Gilboa Fife and Drum band in Jefferson; such awards were gratefully given and enthusiastically received.



Summit Cornet Band, 1894–95. Schoharie County Historical Review, Fall 1959. Copyright © 1959 Schoharie Count Historical Society. Photo courtesy of Schoharie County Historical Review.



The Middleburgh Cornet Band, 1886. Schoharie County Historical Review, Winter 1957. Copyright © 1957 Schoharie County Historical Society. Photo courtesy of Schoharie County Historical Review.



Ashland Cornet Band. Photo courtesy of the Zadock Pratt Museum, Prattville, NY.



Prattville Cornet Band. Photo courtesy of the Zadock Pratt Museum, Prattville, NY.

Martial Music

We think of martial music being played at patriotic parades and celebrations, but at the start of the Civil War it also became an integral recruitment method:

And my good old brother John, although in his forty-third year, could not resist the temptation and the sound of the recruiting martial music, and had enlisted in the ninety-seventh New York stationed in Boonville. (Conklin: *Through "Poverty's Vale" A Hardscrabble Boyhood in Upstate New York, 1832–1862*. Syracuse University Press, 1974. Courtesy Syracuse University Press.)

Throughout history, military commanders recognized that units with high morale going into battle were more likely to win, while units with low morale most often lost on first meeting the enemy. During the Civil War, commanders used music to improve the morale of the troops:

[Serving in a unit being transported to the front, Conklin wrote:] It was a pleasant day and we remained on deck most all day enjoying the scenery on both sides of the Potomac, and to make it more pleasant the band was playing as we passed down. About noon we passed Fort Washington on the Maryland side where we were greeted with three hearty cheers and music from the band in the fort and in response our band struck up “Hail Columbia.” (From Conklin)

Elsewhere in his autobiography, Conklin observed that bands were also effective in battle by drowning out the cries of the wounded.

Military commanders knew that music was effective in keeping the troops under control—while music could be heard, the troops thought officers were doing their jobs and therefore the soldiers weren’t in danger.

Civil War commander Samuel Heintzelman stopped a Union rout (a disorderly retreat) by ordering the band to play louder. Over the roar of the Confederate guns came the sound of “Yankee Doodle” and then “Three Cheers for the Red, White, and Blue.” The men stopped running, were able to be turned around, and rejoined the fight. General Hooker in charge of that flank said those two songs were worth a thousand men and “saved the battle.”



To focus the music at troops behind them, a new style of brass, “over-the-shoulder” instrument was developed (note the three over-the-shoulder horns on the right). Over-the-shoulder horns, also known as “back’ard blasters,” were invented and patented by Alan Dodworth in 1838. They were designed primarily for military use. When a band marched at the head of a column of soldiers, the rear-facing bells made it easier for the music to be heard. Photo courtesy of Olde Towne Brass (otbrass.com).



Gerry Stoner is a member of local historical societies and the webmaster for both gilboahome.com (home for the Gilboa Historical Society Newsletter) and northerncatskillshistory.com (a reference site for local history in Schoharie, Delaware, and Greene counties).

GILBOA'S NEW FOSSIL DISCOVERY

The majority of the 40 fossils discovered almost a century ago had been found in the River Bank Quarry just downstream from the reservoir. This quarry was reopened last year to be used in the Schoharie Reservoir reconstruction project—the forest floor was again unveiled, and 30 more fossil tree stumps were found in their natural positions.

We are appreciative to NYC DEP for the donation of four of these “new” fossil stumps to the Gilboa Museum. One of them is a 9-foot piece with a beautiful stump as part of the actual forest floor. These 380-million-years-old artifacts will be educational highlights for the students who annually visit the museum. Thank you, NYC DEP! Thanks also to the men of the Gilboa highway crew for making the bed to display these fossils; and the people at Thall Construction for bringing them to their permanent home.

State paleontological technician Linda Hernick, University of Binghamton paleontologist Bill Stein, and Welsh paleobotanist, Christopher Berry, worked on the project with New York City staff and Thall Construction. The stumps—sandstone casts of the *Eospermatopteris* (tree stump)—date back 380 million years to the middle Devonian period.

Six years ago, Linda and Bill worked on the crown found in Conesville that was attached to a tree stump. Their work fundamentally reclassified all the stumps of the Gilboa Forest, and they have now finalized the thesis of their 2010–2011 research on the additional fossils. It is exciting for any scientist to so fundamentally impact 130 years of theory. But for the public (us), it is monumental to so closely witness science in action as Bill and Linda will help dedicate these fossils at the Museum opening, July 10th at 1 PM.

Please check your address on this newsletter and let us have corrections. Going south? Let us know—we'll send your newsletter wherever you are. Asterisk(s) next to your name indicate that your membership is paid up. No asterisks? Please join (application on page 39) and earn *your* star.

Gilboa Historical Society Museum
Web Site OPEN 24/7
www.gilboafossils.org

RADIOGRAM FROM VERA

Barn Burned Again—Asking Your Discharge Here— Dad and Mother Prostrated.

Nick Juried

At 2:30 AM on the morning of July 31, 1953, a pink glow in the sky gave terrifying evidence that our new dairy barn was burning. Less than a year earlier, an older barn on the same site had burned, to be replaced by this one.

I was serving with the Air Force at AF Base K-16 in Korea when I received Vera's Radiogram on August 2, 1953. My first thoughts—Was this just a tragic coincidence? How could this happen twice within a year? How can I get home to help my parents recover?

Request for Emergency Leave

On Sunday, 2 August 1953, I received a wiregram from my sister, (Incl 1.) Said wire indicated that both my parents were prostrated from fire on the home farm. I initiated a request through the American Red Cross for further verification on the incident and submitted a request for emergency leave.

On Saturday, 8 August 1953, I received by phone from the local Field Director of the American Red Cross, Mr. Snell, the wiregram attached as Incl 2.

I hereby submit to your headquarters an appeal for reconsideration of my emergency leave request, based on the following additional information.

My father, mother and I are co-equal partners in the dairy farm on which the barn burned.

I have been working on the farm for 12 years with every expectation on operating the farm when my parents retire. As such, I have an equal voice in all phases of the farm operation.

The dairy farm consists of 20–22 dairy cows, 12–15 head of young stock and a flock of poultry. The farm has 116 acres, of which 40 are tillable. By all standards of farm management, a farm of this size requires two (2) men to operate it.

On 12 October 1952 a fire occurred on our farm which destroyed a 44 x 77 foot dairy barn which had been completed in the summer of 1951. In addition, a 20 x 30 foot chicken and machinery storage barn and milk house were destroyed. All farm equipment with the exception of the tractor was destroyed. Three head of young stock and 200 poultry perished. As a direct result of the fire, my father injured his back helping to

release trapped animals from the barn, and has been under care of a physician since that time.

At that time, I received 15 days emergency leave from Lake Charles AFB, Louisiana, and in spite of the tremendous financial and personal loss of 12 years effort, we decided to rebuild a new barn. During my leave, I was able to arrange for all materials, labor, and make financial arrangements to this effect.

With the kind and unselfish help of many neighbors, we were able to complete a new barn, 34 x 60 feet to house the cattle over winter. The barn cost \$8000 to build and equip and we are at present over \$4000 in debt.

My father and mother have been operating the farm under great personal risk to their health during this period. Their ages are 63 and 61 respectively. They are holding onto the farm tenaciously awaiting my return.

Now, on or about 1 August 1953, this new barn has burned, and with it again rises the responsibility on my part to arrange the affairs of the family with the view in mind of rebuilding the farm.

This double, tragic blow in one year to my parents leaves them entirely unable to handle the necessary affairs of construction and operation of the farm. Inclosure 2 from the American Red Cross will verify the fact that I am the only one able to help in this emergency situation.

I hereby submit a request for 30 days emergency leave based on the above facts. I hope to accomplish the following:

1. Strengthen and encourage the morale of my parents during the present crisis. On the basis of my experience during the first fire, the immediate physical and mental health of my parents assumes tremendous importance.

2. Take over immediate operation of the farm until interim measures can be made. Cows do not recognize human problems: they must be milked regularly twice daily. Crops still have to be harvested during this season or else further financial loss will occur. The entire income of the family is at stake if the farm operation ceases.

3. Settle immediate problems connected with the fire. Insurance claims will have to be settled. Creditors will have to be satisfied due to the loss of an important income-making tool of the farm. If a farm auction becomes necessary I must be present to handle all of its complicated requirements.

4. Initiate an immediate reconstruction program. Plans have to be made, labor hired, materials purchased and the entire operation supervised by me. Time is of the essence here. The barn must be completed before cold weather arrives. Crops have to be stored and animals sheltered for the winter.

5. Initiate action to obtain a hardship discharge from the

service. I believe conditions warrant a hardship discharge under AFR 36-22, Change I. I will endeavor to obtain necessary affidavits from the family doctor, Red Cross, neighbors, and other responsible individuals in the community to warrant my discharge under hardship conditions. Here again, time is of the essence. These affidavits can be obtained by me in a much shorter time than would be possible through correspondence from this theater. My parents will not be able to obtain these affidavits due to their extremely poor health and shock.

I certify that the above statement is true to the best of my knowledge.

Nicholas J. Juried 2/Lt. USAF

As you can imagine, letters went flying back-and-forth between Gilboa and Korea from August 2 until September 25 when I arrived at home. These letters tell an incredible story of courage, determination, family cohesiveness and unbelievable acts of goodness and generosity from neighbors and strangers alike.

These letters have been collected and published by the Gilboa Historical Society, and are available through the gift shop at the Gilboa Museum. Letters are always a window into history, and I hope you will enjoy this glimpse of our tragedy and resurrection.



Nick Juried attended Gilboa-Conesville Central School and graduated as Valedictorian in 1947 and post-graduate in 1948. He graduated from Cornell University in 1952, served in the Korean War, and followed a business career in advertising and marketing. He is married to a native Texan, Dorothy Cox, has one daughter, Amy, and resides in Austin, Texas. In retirement, he is a stamp collector and has written several articles of postal history for philatelic journals.

Family Letters: The 1953 Burning of the Barn at the Juried Farm, published by the Gilboa Historical Society, is available.

- at the gift shop of the Gilboa Museum
- at the historical society meetings
- via the membership form on page 39
- priced at \$7.00 plus tax and shipping

THEY LIVED IN THESE HILLS

These articles were submitted by folks who are familiar with the families and personalities described. These short essays are not meant to be an inclusive history of a person or time. Instead, they remind us of some of the personalities and events that occurred in Gilboa and Conesville over the past 200 years.

Please email, write, or phone with your comments and contributions to this effort: gerrys@gilboahome.com; GHS Newsletter, 152 Starheim Road, Stamford, NY 12167; or phone 607 652-2665/866 652-2665.

The Clappers of Mackey

Franklin Clapper (1863–1929) owned a farm in Mackey and was a Gilboa Town Supervisor. In 1897, he married Harriet Wyckoff (1875–1969), and they had three children: a daughter Eleanor (1899–1994), and two sons: Franklin W. (1902–1992) and Philip (1904–1934). In 1902, the Clappers bought the general store in Mackey from Judge Bliss's family, and while he continued farming, Frank was most often thought of as a merchant.

The Clappers' daughter, Eleanor, married James Youmans and was a school-teacher in Roxbury and later Middleburgh. At one point, Eleanor introduced her brother Franklin to Vashti Smith, a friend from Fly Creek, and they in turn married and had two children: Geraldine and Franklin C.

The younger son, Philip, owned a garage in Mackey from the time he was 19. He apparently conducted a very successful business repairing the newfangled automobiles until his untimely death.

With the death of his father in 1929, Franklin W. started to run the store full time and used hired help to maintain farm production. During this time, the general store became truly general—it not only sold household goods (groceries, clothing, shoes, and staples), but also had a full range of horse-drawn farm machinery from Massey Harris, hardware, cattle feed, and seeds for home and farm. People came from all around the area—Gilboa, Guinea, Flat Creek, Potter Hollow, and Conesville—to shop in the store. Occasionally Frank taxied people in his 1935 Oldsmobile to help them get their purchases home.



Frederick W. Clapper in 1933 with children Geraldine and Franklin C. (on Daisy); and cousin Pat VanValkenberg

The store was lit by a Delco battery system and had a large icebox as well as a Servel Electrolux refrigerator. Frank was anxious for electricity to come to the area, and worked with Franklin Hess, a cattle dealer in Broome Center, to promote electrification in northern Gilboa. They were successful in 1934, and with an endless supply of cold drinks, the store became even more of a social venue for the area. Franklin Hess moved down to Gilboa and continued the cattle business. He later became an officer at the Stamford Bank.

The Depression presented problems to retailing, but Clapper's General Store survived on the strength of a very personal credit and system, and a full line of goods (for instance, Vashti had wallpaper that she sold right up to the end. However, the death knell for the store was only delayed—gasoline restrictions finally forced the closing of Clapper's General Store in 1943 due to interrupted deliveries of goods to the store.

With the closing of the store, Franklin W. got a job at the army depot in Rotterdam and his son took over the management of the farm, enlarged the dairy herd, and in 1948 enlarged the barn. After the war, Franklin W. returned to the farm on Mace Road and then moved into the larger house in 1953 and remained there until he retired at the age of 70. After his retirement, David Hallock harvested the fields.

With the return of his father, Franklin C. took over a general store in Preston Hollow for a few years, and then moved to Middleburgh as an agent for New York Life Insurance company. The original homestead is now owned by Franklin C., and two of his children are building homes on the Clapper homestead so a new generation will be living on the land.

The Girls of Broome Center

I am writing to send a suggestion for "They Lived in These Hills." Though the land is beautiful, it's the people of the area that are the real treasures: hardy, long living, hard working, and happy. They work the land and enjoy its fruits. Specifically the women of Gilboa—the Gilboa Broome Center Girls.

In my short time in the area, there are a few standouts. While I name a few, I am sure there are more I have not mentioned. Please excuse my lack of knowledge of the history and need to get the stories straight, but I think some pictorial memoirs of these special ladies would be great.

Flora Del Hubbard, whose mom worked a summer boarding home to supplement farm income with city people vacationing in the Catskills in little cottages and big homes. I didn't know that's how Grossinger's started out!

Grandma Polly Hallock makes elderberry jelly (NOT "jam"), who was watching the grand boys and running a tag sale. She has such a great attitude. I told her

the cows were out, and she said “maybe we’ll have hamburger for supper tonight.” That’s the attitude of most ladies I meet—when life throws you lemons, make lemonade. Only you guys would make lemon bars. It was like a bake off at the Flat Creek tag sales. Everyone had some sort of mini loaves of zucchini bread. I was afraid to try pineapple, but was told anything a certain baker made was delicious so I went back and got one. There was some jam and jelly makers in the competition also.

Maude Haskins is another. What is her secret to longevity in peace and her jam jars? “Variety is the spice of life,” and she has it.

Alice Wyckoff Hinman’s arm is pretty shot from hard farm work in her years, yet she has beautiful onions, corn, and vegetables. She volunteers at the Historical Society building, and creates beautiful stained glass pieces.

These are just a few ladies I have met in my short time in the area—they are the real gems, the fruit of the land. Get the kids to find a song called “Ladies of the Canyon” by Joni Mitchell. That’s what they remind me of—one crochets, one bakes, one makes jewelry. So in the spirit of the land, I hope there is lots of snow so they can get writing their stories so that they won’t be lost.

Please excuse my handwriting and forgive me for not mentioning or leaving out any names of people I don’t know but would like to.

**Maude Haskin
Chocolate**

5 gallons

15 quarts milk

2 cups cornstarch

15 cups sugar

6 cups cocoa

2 teaspoons salt

30 eggs

Heat milk. Mix all the rest ’till smooth. If too thick to pour well, add a little warm milk. Pour into hot milk and cook, stirring, until creamy. Do not burn, and cool overnight if possible.

Go to the ice house, uncover the ice and brush the sawdust off it. Use ice tongs and take a block [about 1 cubit foot] down and wash it off. Put it in a feed bag and use the flat of the ax to crush the block. Put ice cream in freezer and pack salt and ice around it. Crank ’till done.

Broome Center Chapel Favorite Ice Cream Recipes

www.gilboahome.com/ghspublications/Newsletters/GHS10.3.pdf

The name and address that we have for you appears on the reverse of this application. Please check to make sure that the information is correct, and let us know of alterations or scheduled alternative addresses.

Our membership year is the calendar year. One asterisk next to your name indicates that your individual membership is paid up for the current year; two asterisks signifies a couples/family membership; three asterisks indicates a lifetime membership.

Membership Application Form

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City: _____

State: _____ Zip Code: _____

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* Please specify temporary addresses in effect for our mailings in early March, June, September, and December.

† 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.

- () Lifetime membership (\$100.00) \$ _____
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 - () Gilboa Historical Society Museum \$ _____
 - () *Old Gilboa* DVD (\$19.70 total) \$ _____
 - () *Family Letters* by N. Juried (\$8.40 total) \$ _____
 - () General fund \$ _____
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