



Gilboa Historical Society

Dedicated to learning about, sharing, and preserving our history

Fall 2008

Volume 10, Issue 3

LIMB POWER IN GILBOA

Gerry Stoner

At the start of the twentieth century, power in rural New York was found in limbs—the legs of horses, the arms of humans, or the wood of trees. Overwhelmingly, labor came from animate effort despite the fact that water continued to be used for mill power and coal started to flow into the area.

This issue of the *Newsletter* is devoted to the changes that occurred in the first half of the century: Richard Lewis writes on the development of commercial electric power in the village of Gilboa and Tim Brainerd describes some of the mechanical devices that were used on farms of the area. We also have Betty Matalavage's recollection of battery-powered light on a Shew Hollow farm and Thelma Turrell's description of gaslight on a farm in Broome Center.

New York Governor Franklin Roosevelt had been a driving force behind rural electrification in the state, culminating in a 1931 law creating the New York Power Authority. Before the impact of NYPA could take effect, he also signed a *presidential* executive order on May 11, 1935 creating a rural electrification initiative, and this was made into law with the passage of the Rural Electrification Act of May 20, 1936. With this act, electric power started to come to Gilboa, as Betty Matalavage recalls the problems of obtaining right-of-ways for REA lines into South Gilboa. Electricity could be switched on by Vern Pickett on Flat Creek in 1938, Stewart Mace in Mackey in 1939, Betty Matalavage on Shew Hollow in 1940, and Shirley Kutzscher in Broome Center in 1943.

COMMERCIAL ELECTRICITY IN GILBOA

Richard Lewis

In past years, light was as important to our well-being as it is today. As there was no electricity, kerosene was the most common fuel used to produce light. The village of Gilboa had street lights—kerosene lamps mounted on poles and serviced by the “old lamplighter from long ago.” His name was Willard Schermerhorn (although I don't know how old he was). He pushed a wheelbarrow to carry his oil and supplies, and he made daily rounds to tend the lamps.

Then came 1909 and the “Gilboa Electric Light Heat & Power Company” (the Articles of Incorporation are on page 6 of this Newsletter). In 1912, Judge John K. Grant of Stamford purchased the gristmill on the east side of the village, the cotton mill on the other side of the creek, and the water rights of the creek passing the land surrounding these businesses. He located the power house on the east side of Schoharie Creek in the village of Gilboa.

I can't find an exact date for the start of this construction, but the result was an approximately 5 to 6 foot high dam of concrete, 175 feet long, which created a reservoir for hydro-

Please turn to Electric Power, page 7



The east end of the dam, the connecting penstock, and the power plant in Gilboa. The gristmill towers over the power plant.

Fall Schedule

September 17, 7:00 P.M.

Robert Titus with the latest information on, and interpretation of, the Gilboa fossils (see page 3).

October 15, 7:00 P.M.

Dick Hinman will discuss the history of diamonds (see page 11).

November 19, 7:00 P.M.

Charlie Slater will recount the Civil War Battle of Stones River (see page 10).

December 17, 7:00 P.M.

The Gilboa Historical Society's annual Bottle Auction with auctioneer Tony VanGlad and elf Al.

MUSEUM THANK YOUs

Kristen Wyckoff

Thank you all for the support on my Open House. It was a lovely day and the response was very appreciated.

Dale Story from Middleburgh, whose mother owns Turtle Rock Cafe, gave me a "turtle rock" for our museum! I am thrilled because I have never found one. A turtle rock is a pseudofossil, which means it's not a real fossilized turtle or anything organic, but formed by mud cracks. It looks very much like a turtle, though, and I love having it in the museum.

George Clark donated an old plow he found in the Shew Hollow area—we have it enhancing the landscaping under the new sign. Thank you, George!

George Birdsall from Bund Road donated a nice ice saw. We will be finding a spot in the museum for that piece. Thank you, George!

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Gerry Stoner, Linda Stratigos, and
Kristin Wyckoff, Directors

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

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

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

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

THANKS FOR THE FIRST TWO YEARS

Gerry Stoner

We have now been publishing the *Newsletter* in this format for two years, and it has been a personal delight—we have increased the frequency of publication from two to three issues per year; significantly increased the historical content with issues running 12 pages; and have nearly doubled the mailing list and readership. As a result, costs have also increased from \$800 per year to nearly \$3000.

We thank the A. Lindsay & Olive B. O'Connor Foundation that initiated this expansion with a 3-year grant covering some of these costs. Without this foundation, living in the Catskills would not be nearly as wonderful as it is.

In addition, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has provided support and demonstrated a willingness to provide information regarding DEP Water Supply activities of major concern to our neighborhood.

The New York Power Authority, always a good neighbor, supports our publication and will be providing short historical pieces on Lansing Manor and the Minekill. These three organizations have enabled the Gilboa Historical Society to continue publishing the *Newsletter* in this format.

Another absolutely unbeatable resource is the people who have stepped up to supply information, articles, and ideas for the content of the *Newsletter*. Members of the Society and its board are notable for being regular contributors to the *Newsletter*, but equally gratifying are the individual articles that have been supplied by Chuck Brainerd, Terry Bradshaw, Carol Clement, Hope Hager, Flora Del Hubbard, Stewart and Clyda Mace, Richard Makse, Betty Matalavage, Bee Mattice, Joan Hess Mullen, Linda Newerla, Jeanne Power, Allen Rybicky, Paul Schlotthauer, Riana Starheim, Bob Stetson, Art Van Aken, Kira Weaver, Catherine White, Amy Wilson, and the New York State Department of Transportation (all in addition to the contributors to this volume). Look through this list—the contributors have included elementary school students through octogenarians, and even state agencies.

The nature of the articles that our readers have contributed are as varied and diverse as the people themselves. Contributions have included truly creative writing, collections of photographs and artifacts, verbal anecdotes, personal history, and original research. The motivation behind these articles has come from life experience, buildings in the neighborhood, hobbies, or family legends.

The breadth of talent and interests of the people who live in, and care about, our community are absolutely amazing, and this diversity of submissions proves that anyone with interest in local history can indeed contribute to the *Newsletter*. It also proves that each and every one of us can do so without feeling anxiety about the reception that our work will receive.

That brings us to the most important contribution to the *Newsletter*—you, our readers. You cannot know how much it means to receive positive feedback. But this is not a plea for kudos—not at all! Rather, your feedback means most when you let the Society know that the effort is well spent by joining the Gilboa Historical Society; by letting the organizations and people mentioned above know that you appreciate their contributions; by forwarding the *Newsletter* to distant friends and interested parties (*Newsletters* are available free at www.gilboahome.com/ghspublications/); by suggesting new ideas, resources, and materials; and by continuing to volunteer articles.

Thank you.

THE GILBOA FOREST Today and in the Past

Bob Titus

Over the past 150 years, paleontologists have made a series of important discoveries in the Devonian Catskill Delta deposits of our region. The centerpiece is the world famous Gilboa Forest. It is the oldest known fossil forest ecology and that makes it a great deal more important than any dinosaur hunting site.

The Gilboa Forest was composed of many of the most primitive land plants that are known. It offers us a keyhole look at an ancient, very ancient forested landscape. This fossil ecology preserves not only the trees of the forest but many of the “creepy crawlers” that lived within it.

Curiously, many of the most primitive plants and animals of Gilboa are still alive today and can be recognized in a walk through the modern forest. Thus, it will be a survey of both the fossil forest as well as of modern descendants. The talk will be the highlight of the September 17th meeting of the society at the Gilboa Town Hall at 7:00.

Genealogical Corner

Sylvia Van Houten, Janette Reynolds,
and Shirley Kutzscher

With David Ellerson (Timothy Murphy's sidekick) getting his start in a log cabin on Parsonage Hill, the Genealogy Committee of the Gilboa Historical Society decided to uncover as much information on David as possible.

On Tuesday, July 29, we met at Sylvia's home to speak with Richard J. Sharp, a descendant of David Ellerson. Richard and his wife brought a metal box containing communications, artifacts, and a CD that they had received from Richard's natal family, which he has kindly donated to the Historical Society.

HIT & MISS IN RURAL GILBOA

Tim Brainerd

Early Gilboa farms were dependent on large farm animals to do field work, and water- and steam-power was used for stationary work in area gristmills and sawmills. The majority of other work on the farm, however, was manual work accomplished by the farmer family.

In 1863, the Otto & Langen Atmospheric Engine caused a revolution around the farm. This early engine was complicated, with slide valves and a “hot tube” heated with natural gas to provide ignition. Over time, improvements were introduced and by the late 1800s “hit & miss” engines were common on Gilboa farms. The term “hit & miss” refers to the way that the engine governs speed (measured in revolutions per minute [RPMs]). When up to speed, an adjustable governor would hold the exhaust valve open so there would be no compression and heavy flywheels would keep the engine “free wheeling.” When the engine speed dropped off, however, the governor would release the exhaust valve and this would cause air, fuel, and spark to be sent to the cylinder and then a power stroke would return the engine to full, free wheeling speed.

The hit & miss engine runs much slower than modern engines (which runs at about 450–500 RPMs) and this speed and firing/free wheeling rhythm creates a unique, low *whomp, thump, thump, thump, whomp, thump, thump, thump*. (Yes, by adjusting the load, you can two-step to the beat).

Standard ignition came from a battery and a coil, but magnetos were available at extra cost. The mufflers on these engines were little more than spark arrestors. Hit & miss engines did not have an oil-filled crank case, but used oil cups to release about 6 drops of oil per minute on the piston and bearings of the rod and shaft. Most engines were cooled by water in a hopper above the cylinder that acted as a heat sink, and under a full load this water could come to a boil. Some engines were air cooled.

Locally, Edward Burgett in Middleburgh made two air-cooled hit & miss engines (½ horsepower and 3 horsepower). Equivalent and larger engines were available from companies like International, McCormick-Deering, John

Deere, Detroit, Rockwell, Hillsdale (Tecumseh), and Waterloo.

The power from these machines was generally transferred by a flat belt driven on a slightly barrel-shaped cylinder that was attached to the flywheel. Counterintuitively, the belt does not slide off the edges of the cylinder, but rather is centrifugally drawn to the largest-diameter (fastest moving) portion of the cylinder in the middle. A farmer could also buy an engine with a vacuum pump that could generate several inches of vacuum.

Hit & miss engines came bolted to a skid so that two people could move them as if they were carrying a stretcher. Most farmers added wheels to the skid for mobility, and added a



An oil cup is used to lubricate the moving parts of hit & miss engines



This water pump from the Maybie farm has been adapted to run by belt and could easily water the 125-head dairy herd.

Please turn to Hit & Miss on page 7

ICE CREAM SOCIAL

Shirley Kutzscher

The members of the Gilboa Historical Society would like to thank two organizations that contributed so much to our July 16 Ice Cream Social: Peter Holmes and the Esperance Band for providing the music, and Stewart's Ice Cream Stores for donating the ice cream and sundae sauces.

We should also thank Mother Nature for her calm and balmy evening.

The community's support, fine desserts, great music, and the beautiful weather combined to make Wednesday a grand evening that we will repeat next year.

Bonnie Mace

Vanilla 20 quarts

12 quarts milk 12 cups sugar
24 level t. cornstarch 24 eggs
8t. vanilla heavy cream

Heat milk, add sugar. Mix cornstarch with water to make a paste. Add to milk. Beat eggs, add a small amount of hot milk mixture to the eggs. Put egg mixture in the milk mixture and stir. Remove from heat, add vanilla and cream before freez-

Shirley Kutzscher

Chocolate 6 quarts

3 cups milk 4 cups sugar
8 t. cornstarch 6 t. cocoa
4 tsp. vanilla 12 eggs

2 pints heavy cream
Place milk in double boiler to heat. Add sugar and stir well. Mix cornstarch and cocoa with small amount cold water to make a paste. Mix chocolate mixture into warm milk and stir until thick. Add vanilla, beat eggs well, and add to them one cup of the hot chocolate mixture. Mix well. Put egg mixture into chocolate mixture and stir. Cool custard until ready to put in ice cream freezer. Add cream and freeze according to directions on the freezer.

1971 MOUNTAINTOP ICE CREAM SOCIAL

Shirley Kutzscher

It is the spring of 1971 and most of the snow has melted. The peepers are making their usual music and the Broome Center Chapel's ladies guild meets to plan the summer fund raiser.

Without much fanfare, we agreed to add homemade ice cream to the menu of the day while people were visiting the white elephant crafts booths. The ladies of the mountaintop, pros at baking pies and cakes, can surely make ice cream too!

One of our church members tells us of a band from nearby Esperance that her father, Andrew Quick, directs. We invite them to join us and for many years, ice cream and the Esperance Band are the drawing card. People came from many miles around, bringing lawn chairs so they can be comfortable as they socialize, eat, listen, and sing along with the band. Over time, friendships were made and continued at the Broome Center Chapel during this festival, and people saw friends they hadn't seen since the last ice cream social.

Generally, the ladies made seven kinds of ice cream: standards like vanilla, chocolate, and strawberry were joined by lemon, banana, maple walnut, and chocolate chip. The contributors of the ice creams varied over time, including Bonnie Mace, Joan Hallock, Mark Haskin, Carolyn Brown, Clyda Mace, Irene Brown, Bonnie Chichester, Clara Kingsley, Ruth Hallock, Kristina Higgins, Linda Brown, Nina Farsell, and Shirley Kutzscher. And behind each of these people were at least two strong men and some children to crank the freezers. With a brine of 3 cups of rock salt and 25 pounds of crushed ice for a 6 quart freezer, all available hands were kept busy for several hours making up to 167 quarts of the cold, delicious treat.

Add a slice of homemade pie or cake and listen to the band as the sun lowers to the horizon.

Linda Brown

Ice Cream 4 quarts

3 qt. milk 1½ c. sugar
7 tbsp. flour 1 tsp. salt
6 eggs, beaten flavoring(s)

Scald milk in double boiler. Combine sugar, flour, salt, add sugar mixture to scalded milk, cook until thickened. Add 2 c. hot cream to beaten eggs, then add this back to the mixture.

Cook 5 minutes, remove from heat.

Vanilla Add 2+ tbsp. vanilla

Chocolate Add 3-4 squares melted chocolate

Chocolate chips Add 1-2 c. chopped sweet chocolate

Strawberry Add 1-2 qt. smashed strawberries + 1 c. sugar

Raspberry Add 1 qt. raspberries smashed + 1 c. sugar

Peach Add 4-6 smashed peaches + ½ c. sugar.

Freeze in ice cream freezer using 1 part salt to 8 parts ice (crushed).

Peach

2 quarts

1 cup milk 2 cups pureed peaches
1 cup sugar 2 tablespoons flour
2 tablespoons lemon juice
1 cup heavy cream

Combine sugar and flour, add milk and cook until thick, stirring occasionally, Cool. Add peach pulp and lemon juice. Fold in lightly whipped cream. Chill 20 minutes. Churn freeze according to directions.

Lemon sherbet

2 tablespoons gelatin 1½ cups milk
⅓ cup lemon juice ¼ cup cold water
½ cup half and half ⅛ teaspoon salt
⅓ cup sugar ⅓ cup light corn syrup
Soften gelatin in water and dissolve over hot water. Combine lemon juice, milk, half and half, salt, sugar, and corn syrup. Add dissolved gelatin. Chill 70 minutes. Churn freeze according to directions.

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.

Maple walnut

1 quart

2 large eggs 1 cup milk
 2 cups heavy cream $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of sugar
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped walnuts
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of dark amber maple syrup
 Beat the eggs in a mixing bowl until light and fluffy, 1 to 2 minutes. Blend in sugar a little at a time, until all is completely blended, about one more minute. Pour in the cream and milk to blend. Add maple syrup and stir until blended. Transfer the mixture into an ice cream maker and freeze. After ice cream stiffens (about 2 minutes before it is done) add walnuts and continue to freeze.

Joan Hallock

Strawberry 6 quarts

$4\frac{1}{2}$ cups sugar 10 eggs
 4 quarts milk 1 can evap milk
 7 t. cornstarch 4 t. flour
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ quarts strawberries vanilla
 Beat eggs, a few at a time with sugar, cornstarch and flour. Add milk and cook in large double boiler until thick. Add a little vanilla, strawberries. Freeze in ice cream freezer.

Clyda Mace

Vanilla 20 quarts

12 quarts milk 24 level Ts cornstarch
 24 eggs 12 c. sugar
 8 T. vanilla
 Heat milk. Beat eggs. Add sugar mixed with cornstarch; add to hot milk and cook up well. Cool well. Add vanilla just before freezing.
 NOTE: Heat milk in kettle set in pan of hot water!

SNOWBIRDS

We save money by using bulk mail to distribute your *Newsletter*—but this means that it will *not* be automatically forwarded by the Post Office.

To avoid missing it, please notify us if you have a temporary address for any of our mailings (the first of the month in March, June, and September). Please remember that deliveries beyond zip codes 12000–12999 may arrive up to a month later—this spring's newsletter sent to Florida or California may arrive around April 1.

IF YOU GO SOUTH FOR THE WINTER,
 PLEASE LET US KNOW YOUR WINTER
 ADDRESS SO THAT YOUR MARCH ISSUE
 CAN BE DELIVERED CORRECTLY.
 607 652-5988
 GHS@GILBOAHOME.COM

Electronic Delivery

Please let us know if you want to receive the PDF version of the *Newsletter*. We will automatically email you the Gilboa Historical Society address for each Newsletter, and you will be saving money for your Society.

Let us know the particulars for your distant friends or relatives so they can also receive the *Newsletter* electronically.

Electronic files are available at <http://www.gilboahome.com/ghspublications>

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

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

Sunday, September 27, 10:00–4:00

Annual Wildlife Festival &
 Energy Expo

Saturday, October 25—phone for time

Spooky Halloween Event

Sunday, November 2, 9, 16, 2:00—

Sunday Movies

Saturday, December 13—phone for times

Photos with Santa

Saturday, December 1–January 4—

Festival of Trees

Lansing Manor has a wraparound porch on the first floor. In the house, you can go to the porch through one of three doors. This is fine for family living but insufficient for large social gatherings.

For a large assembly, all of the windows facing the porch are actually cleverly concealed Dutch doors. The inside faces of the lower panels are painted to look like the inside walls, while the outside faces are finished with exterior clapboard. From inside or out, the lower panels appear to be a continuation of the house set below stylish, tall, double-hung windows. For parties or on soft summer nights, both panels can be opened, making the porch an integral part of the house's interior.

Manor House: Admission free, guided tours available 10:00–4:00, from May 1–October 31. Closed on Tuesday.

Blenheim-Gilboa Power Project Visitor's Center: Admission is free, 10:00–5:00 seven days per week, year around.

1378 State Route 30, North Blenheim, NY 12131

800-724-0309

GILBOA ELECTRIC LIGHT HEAT & POWER COMPANY

Articles of Incorporation

We, the undersigned, all being persons of full age, and all of us residents of the United States and the state of New York, desiring to become a corporation for the purposes herein specified, pursuant, to the provisions of the Transportation Corporation Law Article 7, do hereby certify:

First.

The name of the corporation is to be the Gilboa Electric Light Heat & Power Company

Second.

Its objects to be manufacturing & using electric for producing light, heat, or power, & in lighting streets, avenues, public park & places & public & private & village & towns within this state as follows—the unincorporated village of Gilboa, Schoharie County N. Y.; the unincorporated village of Grand Gorge, Delaware County N. Y.; & the unincorporated village of Prattsville, Green County N. Y.; also the private buildings on the road leading from the said village of Gilboa to the said village of Grand Gorge, and on the road leading from the said village of Gilboa to the said village of Prattsville, and for public and private buildings and highways within one and one-half miles from either of said villages of Gilboa, Grand Gorge, and Prattsville.

(b) To generate and produce electricity, steam or other power for the purpose of operating factories and mills and for lighting and heating purposes.

(c) To acquire by purchase, by manufacture or otherwise, all material, supplies, machinery, and other articles necessary or convenient for use in connection with and in carrying on the business aforesaid.

(d) To acquire by grant, demise, purchase, exchange or lease or otherwise, lands, tenements, and hereditaments and any interest therein that may be required or conducive to the business of said corporation, and to sell mortgage, convey, lease, let, sub-let, and dispose of the property or estate so acquired.

(e) To enter into, make, perform and carry out contracts of every kind with any person, firm, association, or corporation engaged in any business similar to that referred to in subdivision (a), or with any person, corporation or association pertaining to the company's business.

(f) To do all and everything necessary suitable, or proper for the accomplishment of any of the purposes or attainment any of the objects hereinbefore enumerated either alone or in association with other corporations, firms, or individuals, as principals, agents, contractors, or otherwise and in general to engage in any and all lawful business that may be necessary or convenient in carrying on the business of said corporation, and for the purposes appertaining thereto, and to do any and every other act or acts, thing or things, incidental to, growing out of, or connected with said business or any part or parts thereof.

Third.

The amount of the capital stock is to be \$25,000.

Fourth.

The term of its existence is to be fifty years.

Fifth.

The number of shares of which the stock shall consist is to be two hundred fifty.

Sixth.

The number of directors is to be nine.

Seventh.

The names and places of residence of the directors who are to serve for the first year are as follows, viz:

Names	Places of Residence
Ernest E. Billings,	Gilboa, N. Y.
Eli S. Persons,	Gilboa, N. Y.
Sidney Rivenburgh,	Gilboa, N. Y.
James M. Case,	Gilboa, N. Y.
George M. Wyckoff,	Gilboa, N. Y.
Edgar Hulbert,	Gilboa, N. Y.
Nathan C. Wyckoff,	Gilboa, N. Y.
Frank S. Lewis,	Gilboa, N. Y.
John M. Crank,	Grand Gorge, N. Y.

Eighth.

The name of the towns and counties in which the operations of the corporation are to be carried out are Gilboa, Schoharie Co., N. Y., Grand Gorge, town of Roxbury, Delaware Co., N. Y., Prattsville, Greene Co., N. Y.

In Witness whereof, we have made, signed and acknowledged this certificate in duplicate this 3rd day of June, 1909.
 James M. Case Ernest E. Billings
 Eli S. Persons Nathan C. Wyckoff
 Ward P. Crosswell Sidney Rivenburgh
 Edgar Jackson

State of New York,
 County of Schoharie, SS:
 On this 3d day of June, 1909, before me personally came Ward P. Crosswell, Edgar Jackson, Ernest E. Billings, Eli S. Persons, Sidney Rivenburgh, James M. Case, and Nathan C. Wyckoff to me severally known to be the persons described in and who made and signed the foregoing certificate and severally duly acknowledged to me that they made, signed, and executed the same for the uses and purposes therein stated.
 Elmer Baker,
 Notary Public
 Filed and Entered,
 July 21, 1909 at 8 A.M.
 Clarke Shaule, Clerk.

Electric Power, continued from page 1
electric power. The water was sent downstream through a 6-foot diameter pipe called a penstock. The penstock was about 150 feet long, made of boiler plate riveted together, and enclosed in concrete.

The power house was small (about 10' x 12'), built over the penstock, and on a 7 to 8 foot high concrete foundation that was supposed to be above the high-water mark. It was a wood frame building with a painted metal roof and sealed on the inside. Years of floods and battering by driftwood and other debris have removed much evidence of its exist-

tence. The concrete dam and the foundation of the power house can still be seen downriver from the dam forming Gilboa Reservoir.

The cost of the generation plant and equipment (excluding transmission lines and distribution) was \$42,141. This included all of the work that was done for the generation of electricity: excavation, concrete work, building of the dam and power house, waterwheels, and generators, plus other items needed to deliver power to the bus bars.

Within the power house, there were three 250-horsepower generators that

created the power that was then distributed to the villages of Gilboa, Stamford, Prattsville, and Grand Gorge.

The distribution system in the villages consisted of poles, cross-arms, insulators, wire, and various other equipment.

Richard Lewis is the Town of Gilboa Historian, and adds "I haven't found any information concerning the fate of the power plant while dam construction was going on. It would seem logical that it was used by the contractors. There was also a piece of information that mentioned a power line running to the top of Clay Hill and of a line connecting to a steam plant in Stamford where Demerest's used to be."

Hit and Miss, continued from page 3

handle or harness for pulling. The engines would be moved around and attached to different machines for different purposes. And, just like today, some engines ran easily and well while others could be cantankerous. The best solution when dealing with a cranky machine would be to walk away, let the machine (and yourself) cool down, and later, come back and start afresh (reboot) after referring to the extensive manuals that came with each engine.

Our collection includes many engines that were used on the farms in the area. For instance, one engine has a vacuum pump that Emmet Souer used on his Shew Hollow farm for milking the cows.

Of equal interest, however, are some of the local machines that were driven by these hit & miss engines. There is a house just east of the firehouse off 990V in West Conesville that in the early part of the last century was a barrel maker's shop. The building housed a hit & miss engine, shapers for staves, and a barrel top maker that we are now restoring. Other area business used machines to separate cream and churn butter in the creameries; to turn blades and

stones in mills; and generally to turn the wheels of many area businesses.

Pictured here are machines that determined the fate of many corn cobs: the corn would be shucked and stored in a corn crib for drying; sent through a sheller to strip the kernels from the cob; and the kernels then would be passed through a grinder for use as animal feed. Controlling the fineness of the resulting feed, you can make coarse cow and horse feed or very fine meal (as we use it now) for chickens, finches, and chickadees.



This milk can lifter from the Raymond Maybie Farm can easily heft 100-pound milk cans.



Tim Brainerd maintains heavy machinery for Schoharie County while also scratching the antique machinery bug he caught from his grandfather.



Ears of dried corn are fed into this corn sheller by my father, and the individual kernels are removed from the ears.



This corn grinder takes the individual kernels of shelled corn from the machine pictured above, and crushes it to make cracked corn for livestock.

BELLE TRAVER MOORE, MY MOTHER, THE TEACHER

Thelma Serrie-Turrell

Having recently reached the distinguished age of ninety, I am celebrating life and celebrating the many teachers in my family. I honor them all, most especially my mother. I know they join me in my praise of education and the one-room school of the early twentieth century as a good educational foundation.

Belle Traver Moore was born February 7, 1897 in the Livingstonville Hotel. Not the usual birthing room unless, of course, you are the daughter and granddaughter of the hotel proprietors. William and David Traver came from Albany to Schoharie County to operate hotels in several small towns: Roxbury, Broome Center, and Middleburgh to name a few. The White House was on the corner of River Street and Main in Middleburgh, and was the Traver home in my mother's growing-up years.

My mother was educated in the Middleburgh School from grades 1-12, where she was an honor graduate in 1914. There were 8 students in her high school graduating class. In high school, Belle Traver pursued a college entrance course: four years of Latin (Caesar, Cicero, & Virgil), four years of math, and four years of science including physics. In her senior year, she studied English with an intensive reading program emphasizing poetry. She memorized Shakespeare, Browning, Whittier, Longfellow, and James Whitcombe Riley, which she in turn taught to her daughters. They are still in the forefront of my mind and a tremendous help when watching *Jeopardy*.

In September 1914, a Teacher's Training Class was offered in Schoharie. It was a year-long program, inexpensive, and five miles down the road. Teaching was one of the few professions offered to women at the turn of the century and wanting to continue her education, she signed up, graduated at the top of her class, and was offered a teaching position in Patria, a remote area above Cobleskill and West Fulton, really on top of the world. Her beginning salary was less than \$1,000 a year. The Steinovers, a family the Travers knew, welcomed her into their home. Sometimes teachers of one-room schools "boarded around" (i.e., they lived a week with one family in the district and the next week with another family). This was part of the plan to save expense and yet provide education for the children. When Mama taught in Patria, she had a pupil, Julia Rose, who became a famous missionary to India and was supported for years by the Breakabeen Presbyterian Church. Teaching in Patria required transportation from Middleburgh after enjoying weekends at home. Grandpa David Traver, Mama's favorite, would drive the horse and wagon to Patria on Sunday night, deliver Mama for the upcoming week of teaching, and then pick her up again on Friday. The roads to Patria were dirt and gravel, "not the best," so Grandpa David would say, "If you went one way, you'd wish to Hell you'd gone the other."

My mother taught in one-room schools for 25 years until I finished college and was teaching vocal music at Middleburgh Central. All that

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Commencement Exercises	
TUESDAY EVENING, JUNE 23, 1914.	
Invocation.....	REV. B. L. CRAPO
Orchestra.....	
Salutatory.....	WAYLAND ELSBREE
Commencement Song.....	
Oration—"The Activities of the American Woman".....	NAOMI GOODRICH
Oration—"The Passing of the Monroe Doctrine".....	CLARENCE E. MILLER
Oration—"The Greatness of Little Things".....	GERTRUDE TATOR
Solo.....	GERTRUDE CRAPO
Oration—"Social Discontent".....	GRACE E. VROMAN
Oration—"The United States Navy".....	CLARENCE BARBER
Orchestra.....	
Oration—"Fighting the Forest Fires".....	PEARL VANBUREN
Oration—"The United States, a World Power".....	LYNDEN A. HULBERT
Duet.....	(KATHERINE MANN GERTRUDE SHAFER)
Oration—"The Customs and People of Japan".....	BELLE L. TRAVER
Oration—"The Voyage".....	WILLIAM ARMLIN
Chorus.....	
Valedictory.....	NAOMI GOODRICH
Presentation of Diplomas.....	
Orchestra.....	
Benediction.....	REV. B. L. CRAPO

During the high school graduation program, Mama gave a presentation on "The Children of Japan."



Graduation picture of the Schoharie Training Class, 1915. Left to right, back row: Hattie Conklin, Rose Westfall, Olive Martin, Miss Stout, Belle Traver Moore, Theresa Vroman, Mildred Laraway Barber, and Ruth Dietz; sitting: Ida Young, Edith Bellinger, Jane Lawyer, Kathryn Parslow, Gertrude Lloyds, and Clarence Barber.

ELECTRICITY COMES TO SHEW HOLLOW

Betty Matalavage

My early childhood was spent on a dairy farm in Shew Hollow. We didn't have electricity, but we had a small sawmill powered by the water in the Little Minekill River. Aside from this, any machinery we had was powered by gasoline engines. There was an engine in the barn that ran the milking machines, and this is now in the collection of Tim Brainerd. We also had a smaller engine in the wood shed under the big farmhouse. This engine charged twenty

EARLY POWER IN GILBOA AND MIDDLEBURGH

Thelma Serrie-Turrell

In thinking about power and light early in my life, I was reminded of two stories my mother told about life in Middleburgh and Gilboa during the first quarter of the twentieth century.

The first dealt with Middleburgh. Like Gilboa, the center of Middleburgh had a community electrical system to serve the village. However, in the 1900–1920 period, there were few appliances that needed electric power—the major use of electricity was for the new electric lightbulbs. Therefore, the generator was only used from dusk to about 10 P.M., at which time the electricity was cut off.

While the sidewalks weren't rolled up at curfew, they certainly were not illuminated throughout the night by the electric bulbs of that time.

The second concerned lighting on area farms: Many houses at that time were outfitted with gaslights, and the fuel was acetylene gas supplied by a carbide gas generator placed in the basement, a separate outbuilding, or a hole in the ground near the house (the location was based on the farmer's thoughts on the safety of gas lights).

The generator had two tanks: a water tank on top with a stopcock that controlled the dripping of water onto a block of calcium chloride in the lower, airtight tank. The resulting chemical reaction created a relatively large amount of acetylene gas that escaped through the pipe network to the various gas jets of lights throughout the house. At that time, there was also a small version of the carbide gas generator used to power headlights on early Model T Fords.

My grandfather, Andrew Moore, was a very well respected figure in the area and he was also very aware of the benefits of gas lights and energy. In our house, we used the gas not only for lighting, but we also used gas for ironing clothes and cooking food. Because of this commitment to his product, the salesman for the generator company, Mr. Ogsbury, had my grandfather take him to see the area farmers. Gramp got \$10 for each sale, a princely price at that time.

glass Delco batteries that were mounted on the side of the farmhouse and that operated lights in the house, but the lights grew dimmer during the long winter nights and so bedtime came early in December and January.

In the 1930s, a commercial electric power company ran lines on Route 30; my grandfather, John Souer, contacted them about running lines up Shew Hollow Road to our farm. They agreed to do it at a cost of \$100 a pole, which he felt was too expensive.

When he heard about the rural electrification effort in Delhi [later, it became the Delaware County Electrical Cooperative (DCEC)], he and my mother, Jessie Hamilton, went down to talk with them about expanding their lines into our area. They agreed to do it if they could get *free* right-of-ways for their lines.

My grandfather agreed to furnish my mother with a car, and my mother agreed to get authorization for their lines. For the next few weeks, she and Ray Meehan (our neighbor who also wanted the electricity) called on all the property owners along the proposed right-of-way to get their consent to let the line go through their property freely. Most of the time they went together, leaving early in the morning and staying out until late afternoon. My mother did the driving and encountered badly maintained roads, unfriendly dogs and billy goats, and aggressive geese and roosters.

Most owners were at first very interested and therefore very cooperative, but there were a number who had to be persuaded and this sometimes involved several visits with reinforcements from their neighbors on each side of their property. I remember my mother being at times quite discouraged by some of these hesitant owners—but neither she nor Ray gave up. As soon as she had a number of contracts signed, she would take them to the office in Delhi and give them to Arthur Kludis, the man in charge of obtaining the right-of-ways. He would always encourage her to continue with the last holdouts.

After gathering the permissions, she also agreed to room and board the linemen in our home for several weeks as they put in the lines and rewired the farm buildings. Some of them had worked on the Tennessee Valley Authority and all were out-of-staters—they were our guests seven days a week, with Mother giving them a hearty breakfast, packing their lunches, and making dinner for them at night.

As well as I can recall, this was sometime between 1939 and 1940. We enjoyed the workmen's stories and they became very

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time, she worked almost entirely in the Gilboa district. Orlando J. Ives of Jefferson was the Superintendent of Schools along with William F. Spencer. These educated men set up the requirements of New York State and the local district, recommending teachers with acceptable credentials. These requirements varied. My Aunt Emma Mattice taught with just a sixth grade education. Appointments were made on previous experience, ability to discipline, personality, and favoritism. Men were most often assigned to schools where strong discipline was needed.

One of Mama's school days might begin with Ernie sitting on the schoolhouse steps telling Mom that she could build her own "G-D" fire because the previous day Ernie had been disciplined for disobedience. Without a word, Mom would open the door, build the fire in the hop-picking stove, and send two strong, responsible students to the nearest farm for a pail of drinking water. She would then ring the old school bell that is now on my granddaughter Tonya's desk. Tonya is the third teacher in four generations, now principal in Central Park Middle School in Schenectady. Big and little children would come running, slide into their assigned desks, faces turned toward Mrs. Moore. Mama always began the school day with a reading from the bible, a psalm or familiar scripture, followed by the "Lord's Prayer" and the "Pledge of Allegiance" to the U.S. flag. Once these preliminaries were finished, the reading classes began. Sometimes Mom had as many as 20 pupils in her one-room school. The younger ones would come to the recitation bench and read from their *New Educational Reader*. It was green with a red geranium. My book said:

Fanny can fan Dan.
Can Fanny fan Dan?
Yes, Fanny can fan Dan.

Mama's eyes searched the room. Everyone knew how to keep busy, to read, to practice the Palmer method of writing, to study multiplication tables, even to color, to review the Arm & Hammer bird chart, to look at maps, and to help another student. We had been instructed what to do and we did it. There was lots of math and geography from a big green book with Columbus on the cover.

Lunchtime was good. We toasted our sandwiches in the wire rack over the bright red coals of the wood fire. At our home, there was pie or cake made every day and cookies too for the lunch pails. Oranges were only for Christmas and apples for apple pie or applesauce. My friend Fran told me she liked to trade her roast pork sandwich for her friend's salmon. The salmon was different and from the store. Fran's was from the farm, a little different from today's PB&J.

In winter, at noon time we would ride down hill and Mrs. Becker would put a bell in the window when it was time to come back to study. Teachers always had a good story book that they read to us daily. Many times in the afternoon we would play a game or "act out" a story. I re-

STONES RIVER, DECEMBER 1862

Charles Slater

As a historian and a member of the Sons of the Union, I will tell you about the Battle of Stones River. This battle had a profound effect on my family—my great grandfather and (later-to-be) great grand uncle both were there. I will recount the dramatic story of this battle using a documentary video at the November 19th meeting of the Historical Society in the Town Hall at 7:00.

By late 1862, the Union army was still not at parity with Confederate forces. However, Antietam proved that the Federals might compete with Lee's army; Union naval activity at Galveston, New Orleans, and Hampton Roads indicated that the Confederacy had strategic problems outside the Virginia theater, and the Emancipation Proclamation changed the moral basis of the war. The Battle of Stones River, in the midsection of the Confederacy, could maintain this Union momentum or negate Union optimism at year's end.

The forces involved in the fighting at Stones River had battled at Perryville, Kentucky, in the fall. After Confederate General Braxton Bragg's defeat on October 9, 1862, the Confederate Army of the Mississippi retreated, reorganized, and was redesignated as the Army of Tennessee. This Confederate army then advanced to Murfreesboro, Tennessee, and prepared to go into winter quarters.

Maj. Gen. William S. Rosecrans's Union Army of the Cumberland did not settle down for the winter after Perryville, however, but followed Bragg from Kentucky into the Nashville area and found Bragg's army on December 29. The crucial battle was joined on the last day of the year, and the tide seasawed back and forth until the Confederate army was forced to retire to their original position. Bragg left the field on January 4-5, retreating deeper into Tennessee and allowing the Union forces to claim victory. Stones River boosted Union morale and clearly showed that Union forces were equal to Confederate armies in the midsection of the Confederacy. The following year would see the fall of Vicksburg to Grant in the west, the stopping of Lee at Gettysburg in the east, and the pairing off of Grant and Lee for the finale of the war.

member one time when I was Jack-in-the-Beanstalk's mother. I had little pieces of chalk for beans. With great gusto I threw the beans all over. Mom scolded me because we had to spend time picking up. I liked to sing. Mama could not carry a tune in a bucket. My father played piano and violin. When Mom sang "My Bonnie" to my daughter, Lin said, "Grandma, that's not quite right. I'll sing it to you." So she did.

One day on the way home from school, Louie, Gerry,

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MEMORIES OF THE VILLAGE OF OLD GILBOA

Ivan J. Hallock

Gilboa once was a thriving little town. It had a large creamery, a large feed store operated by Lewis Bros., two blacksmith shops, and later, as automobiles came, two garages (one owned and run by I. C. Wyckoff and son Clinton, the other by Frank Lewis). There were also the Davis and Palmer and G. I. Wyckoff general stores, a clothing store run by Bulson Bros. (a branch of their Middleburgh store), a meat market run by Luther (Lute) Ellis, "Pete" Shutts' music store, a hardware and plumbing store first operated by Sidney Thomas and later by Charles Clark, who now lives on Grandview Drive, Cobleskill.

There were two large hotels. The one in the lower part of the village was owned and operated by "Pop" Peters who came from New York City; the other, in the upper village, was run by Lou O'Brien and his son, Charles. I forgot to mention another store run by George in the upper part of town.

In the horse and buggy days, Gilboa had two livery stables—one run by I. C. Wyckoff and later by Marsell Aldrich, and the other by Pratt Selleck. There was a school, of course; three churches (Presbyterian, Methodist and Old School Baptist), a large Grange Hall in which yours truly played for dances with Moore's Orchestra of Guinea (they called us "The Guinea boys"). We played there every Friday night for some time, the hall would be full, and all seemed to have a good time.

Medical needs were supplied by two doctors—E. S. Persons and E. E. Billings. There were two barber shops, one owned by Hobart (Hob) Paulsey, the other by Fred Siebel.

The community also had a jewelry store, a watch and clock repair shop, a movie theater, photographer's studio, a funeral director, a weekly newspaper, "The Gilboa Monitor," owned and edited by George L. Fuller, and the central office of the Pierce and Peaslie Telephone line.

There was a large wood structure called the "old Arcade," which was used as a tenement to house several families. Way on the west end of town there was a gristmill, sawmill and stone quarry. Where these were located was called the Mill Pond.

Written in 1972, this piece recalls the village of Gilboa in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

DIAMONDS COME TO GILBOA

Dick Hinman

The history of diamonds will be discussed at the meeting of the Gilboa Historical Society at 7:00 on October 17th in the Gilboa Town Hall. We'll discuss the different types of diamonds and the history of their mining. We'll end this section of the talk with a description of diamond colors, and the rare canary yellow diamond that is off the color charts.

With this as a background, we can get into the history of selected major stones: how the 3,000+ carat Cullinan diamond was broken into 5 major and a dozen minor stones (including the centerpiece of the sceptre of the British royal family), the mysteries of the Koohinor and Great Mogul diamonds, and of course the allure of the Hope.

Membership Application Form

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State: _____ Zip: _____	() Family membership (\$25.00)	\$ _____
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Email: _____	() Gilboa Historical Society Museum	\$ _____
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	() <i>Old Gilboa</i> DVD (\$19.70 w/ shipping)	\$ _____
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* Our Newsletter uses bulk mail and will not be forwarded by the Post Office. Please notify us if you have a temporary address during our mailings in early March, June, and September (there is no winter issue).

† For memorial gifts: please provide an idea of what you would like to see purchased. We are developing a GHS wish list: please talk with a board member, and provide the wording of the dedication, your name and address, and the name and address of a next-of-kin who should be notified.

Total amount enclosed \$ _____

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Paul, and I had some excitement. Old Gerry's horse ran away. We were coming down the hill by Guinea School. I think Gerry was in a hurry to get home. He ran so fast, the one-horse wagon tipped over. Louie fell in the clothes basket we had just picked up at Mrs. Reed's. Mom and I sat in the road and Paul cut his forehead on a stone. Oh My! When Tilden, Paul's father, saw him, he was sure that Paul had a fractured skull. He kept saying "Paul has a fractured skull, Paul has a fractured skull." We all went home to supper and lived to go to school another day.

My story of my mother's one-room school teaching is dedicated to all teachers, especially her contemporaries: Helen Wyckoff Carson, Myrtle Hall, David Fancher, Vadna Buel, and my dear Belle Traver Moore. As you recall your school days, please add your favorite teacher to the list.

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comfortable in our home for the duration of their stay in our area. The numbers varied from week to week, depending on where they were working and what they were doing, but two or three were always there and sometimes as many as six or seven.

A brochure about DCEC was

published on the 50th anniversary of the organization. Many names were cited as being responsible for its success, but I was bothered by the omission of the names of my mother and Ray Meehan. It turns out that they had made their contribution before the cooperative was even formed in 1941.

MILLS AND MANUFACTORIES

Gerry Stoner

I was aware of small mills in the area, especially the sawmills on many early farms. I was aware of larger operations, such as gristmills in Gilboa and Blenheim and creameries throughout the farming areas. However, I learned from Tim Brainerd that there were also a number of small manufacturing operations throughout our community: for example, a West Conesville keg-making operation and a Todd Road maker of boxes to ship cauliflower to the city.

I'd like to make a complete catalog of the local businesses that existed in earlier times, from the eighteenth century right through the present. If you know of such businesses, please send as much information as you have (nature of operations, location, dates, people involved, etc.) to me at 150 Starheim Road, Stamford, NY 12167, gerrys@gilboahome.com, or 607 652-2665.

Thank you!

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