



Gilboa Historical Society

Learning about, sharing, and preserving our history

SPRING 2011, VOLUME 13.1

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Please check your address on this newsletter and let us know of any corrections. Asterisk(s) next to your name indicate that your membership is paid up. No asterisks? Please fill out the application on page 39 and earn *your* star.

Dominoes in Education, the Family, and Society

Early Schoharie families understood the benefit of having professional teachers for their children (a topic at a Jefferson town meeting in 1794!). 207 years later, the effect of recent and promised state aid reductions are causing this cascade of falling dominoes:

less school aid → less staff → teachers spread thinner → reduced electives → no time to concentrate on proven, effective lesson plans.

So, let's consider a new set of dominoes:

- **Parent?** Yes? → at the next teacher's conference, volunteer to work with your child on a locally relevant or historic topic for extra credit in a course;
- **Relative?** Yes? → volunteer to help your cousin, grandchild, etc. to work on that locally relevant or historic topic for extra credit in a course;
- **Nonparent?** Yes? → volunteer to the parents of a neighborhood student to work with their child on a locally relevant or historic topic.

That Jefferson town meeting in 1794 recognized that the education of the younger generation is vitally important to each and every one of them. In 1794, teachers came forward when the community needed them; the least we can do now is to help teachers while guaranteeing a better future for our society.

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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 through December

The **Gilboa Museum**, 122 Stryker Road, is open noon-4:30 on Saturdays and Sundays, from July through Labor Day, 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>.

Contact information for feedback or suggestions on the *Newsletter*
607 652-5988; gerrys@gilboahome.com; 152 Starheim Road, Stamford, NY 12167

GEORGE DECKER

Kevin Berner

Birth date: June 12, 1819

Birth location: Conesville, NY

1st Marriage date:

1st Marriage location:

1st Spouse: Phebe E. VanDeVoort

2nd Marriage date: October 15, 1879

2nd Marriage location: Methodist Episcopal
parsonage in Manorkill

2nd Spouse: Margaret "Maggie" Baker of
Blenheim

Death date: January 28, 1891

Burial location: Originally in Gilboa Cemetery,
moved to Evergreen Cemetery in Jefferson,

NY when the Schoharie Reservoir was built on top of the Gilboa town site.

These arrangements were made by his daughter Louie Decker Martin

Occupation: Dairyman

Father: Tunis Decker

Mother: Mary Ann Shew (b. 1777)



Records of the Gilboa Dutch Reformed Church indicate that George was born on June 12, 1819 and baptized on January 25, 1820. In the 1855 Gilboa census George (farmer) and Phebe Decker were listed as being 36 and 33 years old respectively. Also living with them were their children Alida C. (11), Tunis M. (9), Elmer D. (6), Georgianna (4), and Ellen (2). Other members of the household were George's mother Mary (78), and his sister Susan Decker (49). The agriculture part of that census listed his holdings as 150 ac. improved lands, 48 ac. unimproved land, with a farm cash value of \$3600, stock value \$900, and tools/implements worth \$200 in the preceding year. His land breakdown was 11 ac. plowed, 10 ac. fallow, 45 ac. pasture, and 80 ac. meadow. He produced 30 tons hay, 2 bushels oats, 100 bushels apples, 100 lb. maple sugar, 2 gal. molasses, 200 lb. honey, and 16 lb. wax from bees. He had 10 "neat cattle" under 1 year old and 3 greater than one year old. It also listed that he had 17 "cows," 12 cows milked, 2 horses, and 7 pigs. His farm produced 1300 lb. butter and 18 yards of flannel. The 1855 census also listed a George A. Decker (45) in Jefferson (who is buried in the Ploss Cemetery in Eminence) and George S. Decker (22) of



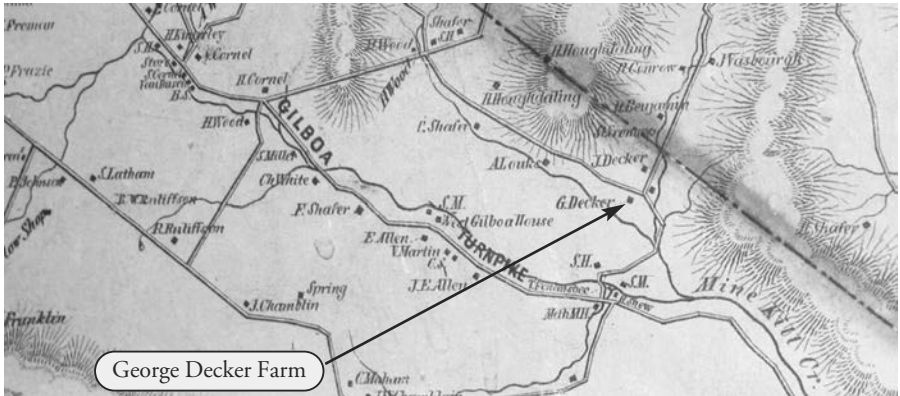
This house, shown as it appeared in 2005, belonged to George Decker. Frank Decker told me that the porch and fireplace in the front of the house were additions since he grew up at the neighboring farm. Below, George Decker farm site barn in 2005. Frank Decker says that these barns were built by William H. Decker after George's time on this farm.

Blenheim who appear to be unrelated to our family. According to Frank Decker, some of George's daughters went to Connecticut to work in a hat factory.

The 1865 state census of their farm documented agricultural production of 25 tons hay, 50 bushels oats, 50 bushels barley, 120 bushels buckwheat, 160 bushels of potatoes, 100 lb. of maple sugar, 2700 lb. butter, and 600 lb. pork.

The 1872–1873 Schoharie County Business Directory listed George W. Decker as a North Blenheim blacksmith. George A. Decker was listed in the *History of Jefferson* by Mildred Bailey as a blacksmith in the 1855 census. These are different individuals than our family's George Decker, who was listed as a dairyman with a 195 acre farm.





George Decker donated \$5 to support the building of a shed at the Brimstone Church at Blenheim Hill according to an article by Albert C. Mayham. He resided along the Gilboa and Blenheim town line. His home was near the intersection of what is now Starheim Rd (formerly Decker Rd.) and Curtis Rd. just south of Jacob Decker's property with the well-known multistoried dairy barn that straddles a road. George Decker Berner stated in a letter to Joyce Ashe that the family originated in Holland and that George Decker was a farmer in Shew Hollow.

I viewed the Gilboa and Blenheim Church records in the Middleburgh Public Library. George was listed as being very active with the Methodist Church in Shew Hollow between 1878 and 1881. He was a "Steward"; was on the Missions, Con Claims, and Sunday School Committees; and was a Trustee of the parsonage. He was often listed as attending business meetings of the North Blenheim Charge of the Methodist Church, which apparently included Shew Hollow. At one of the meetings, he was involved in trying to determine the compensation level for the preacher. Frank Decker believes that he was a Christian Science member. This seems to conflict with the records of the Methodist Church or possibly it is the other George Decker who they were documenting.



Methodist Church in Shew Hollow, where George Decker was an active member, as seen in 2010. It was originally opened as Dutch Reformed Church in 1835.

George's second marriage was reported in the October 23, 1879 issue of the *Gilboa Monitor* as being performed by Rev. George Martin. The 1880 federal census in Gilboa listed George (60) farmer, Maggie (39) keeping house, son Elmer (31) farmer,

daughter Sophia (23), daughter Louie (20), and Hielmer Clark (25) laborer.

In his will George left “in lieu of dower to my beloved wife Maggie” \$1,000 to be paid within two years of his death with interest or at her death, this was to be divided equally amongst his heirs. To his daughter Alida, he left \$100 above 1/5 of all his property. To his grandchildren Lena Reed, Edith Reed and Oley Reed, children of E. D. Reed, he left 1/5 of all his property less \$150. To his daughters Ella Parsons, Sophia Richtmyer, and Louie Martin he also left 1/5 each of his property. The executors of his will were A. Parsons of Gilboa and George E. Richtmyer. The will was signed June 14, 1889.

Eleven years after his death, the March 30, 1912 issue of the *Jefferson Courier* listed an advertisement for hay for sale on the George Decker farm through J. A. Martin. John Martin was married to George’s daughter Louie. The farm eventually came into the possession of Jacob Decker, George’s brother, who in turn gave it to his granddaughter Zanah Decker.



George’s overturned headstone in Evergreen Cemetery



Kevin Berner is a descendant of George Decker—actually a descendant of all of Southern Schoharie County—and is writing a book on his forebears. This article is from his manuscript on one of these people. Kevin has contributed another article documenting his sources and insights for genealogical research. He is a professor in the Fisheries and Wildlife Department at SUNY Cobleskill, welcomes any additional information or corrections to this work. Photos to be borrowed and scanned, or digital copies of any photos that could be added to the book would be greatly appreciated. He can be contacted at (518) 294-7196, by mail at 499 West Richmondville Road, Richmondville, NY 12149, or e-mail at BernerKL@cobleskill.edu.

**August 17, 2011—Field Trip
“Woodchuck Lodge” Home of John Burroughs in Roxbury**

**Meet at Gilboa Town Hall at 6:00 PM to car pool
FREE**

GENEALOGICAL NOTES

on the Life of George Decker

Kevin Berner

I have been asked to review my pages on George Decker and highlight some of the techniques that I used in researching this history.

1. I try to include packets of all basic information that I want even though I may not yet have all the information.

[birth date, location],

[marriage date, location, spouse (for each marriage)],

[death date, location, burial location],

[father, father's roots; mother, mother's roots],

[occupation(s)]

In the prior article, note how the missing information of George Decker's first marriage stands out. By including all of the headings, you will be reminded to search for this data.

2. When I find a relevant photograph, I scan it immediately and fill in the source and provenance of the picture. If I cannot find a vintage photo, I try to find the oldest I can and validate additions/changes from other sources:

"This is George Decker's house as it appeared in 2005. Frank Decker, who grew up at the neighboring farm, told me that the porch and fireplace in the front of the house were additions").

I also try to take current photos at all sites of significance to our family, and when possible try to duplicate the perspectives found in historic photos.

3. It is essential to keep data as true as possible. I try to highlight any conflicts (and there always are many):

"George was listed as being very active with the Methodist Church in Shew Hollow between 1878 and 1881" . . . "Frank Decker believes that he was a Christian Science member." The statement about Christian Science seems to conflict with the records of the Methodist Church.

4. The federal census occurs every 10 years (starting in 1790), and details of the census are sealed for 72 years. You can currently find details of the censuses through 1930, and the details of the 1940 census will become public on April 2, 2012.

The following site lists the questions that had been asked on the census for a particular year (change 1850 to year of interest):

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1850_United_States_Census

The complete set of federal censuses are accessible at the Schoharie County Clerk's office and the Old Stone Fort; CDs for purchase are available online at <http://www.census-online.com/>

5. New York State had an additional census conducted every 10 years from 1825 through 1875, and again in 1892, 1905, 1915, and 1925. These state censuses have a different set of information than is available anywhere else. For instance, the 1855 census gave me this information about George Decker:

The agriculture part of that census listed his holdings as 150 ac. improved lands, 48 ac. unimproved land, with a farm cash value of \$3600, stock value \$900, and tools/implements worth \$200 in the preceding year. His land breakdown was 11 ac. plowed, 10 ac. fallow, 45 ac. pasture, and 80 ac. meadow. He produced 30 tons hay, 2 bushels oats, 100 bushels apples, 100 lb. maple sugar, 2 gal. molasses, 200 lb. honey, and 16 lbs. wax from bees. He had 10 "neat cattle" under 1 year old and 3 greater than one year old. It also listed that he had 17 cows, 12 cows milked, 2 horses, and 7 pigs. His farm produced 1300 lb. butter and 18 yards of flannel.

These state censuses are available on microfiche or in books at the Schoharie County Clerk's office and on microfiche at the Old Stone Fort.

6. Church records can fill in important dates: the Old Stone Fort and Middleburgh Library have excellent collections.
7. Public records are available at the Schoharie County Clerk's office (deeds, mortgages, judgments, criminal cases, adoptions, maps, divorces, etc.) and the Surrogates Court in Schoharie (wills).
8. There is a wealth of books, directories, and other historical information available at the Old Stone Fort, Middleburgh Library, Schoharie Public Library, and the New York State Historical Society in Cooperstown. In regard to newspapers, the Old Stone Fort has a wonderful collection of microfilm and hard copies of old newspapers, and the Middleburgh Library has a complete set of *Middleburgh News*. I have found Cobleskill's Catnap Bookstore to provide valuable resources and enthusiastic support.



Kevin Berner is a descendant of George Decker—actually a descendant of all of Southern Schoharie County—and is writing a book on his forebears. This article is from his manuscript on one of these people. Kevin has contributed another article documenting his sources and insights for genealogical research. He is a professor in the Fisheries and Wildlife Department at SUNY Cobleskill, welcomes any additional information or corrections to this work. Photos to be borrowed and scanned, or digital copies of any photos that could be added to the book would be greatly appreciated. He can be contacted at (518) 294-7196, by mail at 499 West Richmondville Road, Richmondville, NY 12149, or e-mail at BernerkL@cobleskill.edu.

HISTORICAL RESEARCH

in the Middleburgh Public Library

Steve LaMont

There are two very good local sources for historical research or genealogical explorations readily available to the people of Gilboa and Conesville: the Old Stone Fort Library in Schoharie and the Middleburgh Library. This article focuses on the materials available in the Middleburgh Library Historical Room.

Frances Spencer was our first librarian in the late 1930s, and she was also an avid historian and genealogist. The Historical Room's collection of family histories and church records is largely her legacy. However, any resource can fall into disuse, and this would have happened to our collection were it not for later work by Marian Lynes Bouck, who has been in charge of the History Room for years and still manages the day-to-day operations. Volunteers Happy Brewster, June Baker, and Anne Deorge organized, indexed, and moved everything to new library—it is hard to describe the amount and extent of work these ladies did. Happy, June, and Anne D. are now most active working at the Best House.

In 2003, long-time historians Anne and Steve LaMont joined the volunteer staff and continued organizing, indexing and collecting materials, including master name and obituary files; valuable colonial and Schoharie County material; scrapbooks, maps, newspapers, and the Middleburgh *News*; and the Russell Begh collection of photos and negatives.

The collections are being brought into the 21st century by cataloging and digitizing materials, and while there is no professional genealogist on staff, the volunteers are available during the morning hours on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday. You can browse during any open hours, but the volunteer help in the Historical Room could be especially useful for newbies.

Middleburgh Library, P.O. Box 760, 323 Main St., Middleburgh, NY 12122.
518-827-5142, www.middleburghlibrary.org.

Federal Census

The Middleburgh Library has Arthur Kelly reprints of the federal censuses for 1790 covering both New York and New England and for 1800–1840 covering Schoharie County only. Federal censuses are also available for reference at the County Clerk's office in Schoharie.

State Census

The Middleburgh Library has the state census only for 1855 (Arthur Kelly reprint and also on 3 × 5" cards). The 1845 state census seems to be missing

throughout the county, but the others (for 1825, '35, '55, '65, '75, '92, 1905 '15, and, '25) might be available for reference at the County Clerk's.

Church Records

One of the unique features of our collection is an extensive collection of church records not only from Schoharie County, but also from Columbia and northern Dutchess County. Mrs. Spencer transcribed Schoharie's records and they are available for your reference in bound copies.

The churches whose records were transcribed include:

Blenheim

United Methodist Church
Dutch Reformed Church
Methodist Episcopal Church
Blenheim Hill Episcopal Methodist
Brimstone M.E. Church
North Blenheim United Methodist

Broome

Christian Church
Methodist Episcopal Church
Livingstonville Presbyterian Church

Carlisle

Presbyterian Church
Lutheran Church

Cobleskill

Union Reformed Dutch Church
Dutch Reformed Church
Lawyersville Dutch Reformed Church
Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church

Esperance

Methodist Church
Methodist Episcopal Church

Fulton

Dutch Reformed Church
St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran
Methodist Episcopal Church
Fultonham Union Church

Gilboa

Dutch Reformed Church
Flat Creek Baptist Church
Broome Center Church

Jefferson

East Jefferson Methodist Church

Middleburgh

Second Christian Church
Methodist Episcopal Church
Christian Church
Dutch Reformed Church
Reformed Church of Middleburgh
Faith of Our Fathers

St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran
United Methodist Church
St. Catherine's Roman Catholic
Methodist Church
The Reformed Dutch Church
St. Mark's Lutheran Church

Richmondville

Methodist Episcopal Church
Church in Beard's Hollow

Schoharie

Reformed Church
Methodism in Schoharie
St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran
Reformed Church
Red Brick Church Edifice
Old Stone Church and Fortress
Reformed Protestant High Dutch
Gallupville Evangelical Lutheran
High & Low Dutch Reformed

Seward

St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran
Dorloo Methodist Church
Hyndsville United Methodist
Lutheran Church

Sharon

Reformed Churches of Sharon
St. John's Evangelical Lutheran
St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran
True Reformed Dutch Church

Summit

Evangelical Lutheran Church
Methodist Episcopal Church
Summit Methodist Episcopal Church
Summit Evangelical Lutheran Church
Methodist Episcopal Church
Charlotteville Methodist Episcopal
Lutheran Church

Wright

Evangelical Lutheran Church
Reformed Dutch Church

Family Records, Bibles, Histories, and Biographies

The library has a complete set of cemetery records that had originally been compiled by the WPA during the Depression, and have subsequently been updated by the Schoharie County Historical Society.

The Historical Room also has received a number of annotated family bibles, genealogies, and histories of our families, and we are cross-referencing these into a master directory. We would love to receive copies of the genealogies and histories of *your* families; to date, our directory includes these families:

Early Schoharie Families	Dunkel Eckerson	McDowell Moak	Sluyter Smith
Ball to Zimmer	Edgerton/Ellis Flint	More Morehouse	Snyder Sperry
Ackerson/Eckerson	Foote	Morrell	Spickerman
Alexander	Fulton Genealogy	Morse	Staring
Borden	Gallup	Nethaway	Starr
Brownson	Goff	O'Brien	Starring/Starinks
Campbell	Grant (Bates)	O'Dell	Swart
Crampton	Guernsey/Garnsey	Palmatier	Stevenson
Ames-Caprio	Hallenbeck	Palmatier/McCoy	Thura-Truax-Hires
Ames, Benson	Hallock	Pickett	VanAlstyne
Hagadom, Suits	Hanna	Prout	VanAntwerp
Oliver, Eckerson	Haskins in the Hills	Richards	VanDerwerken
Pierce, Engle	Haverly	Richtmyer/ Rightmyer	VanDeusen
Barnes/Kling	Heron/Herron	Rickard	VanHome
Bartholomew	Hillman	Rivenburg/ Rifenburgh	VanSlyke
Becker	Barkman/ Barrackman	Rockefeller	Vermilly
Bergman	Burton	Rose	Vrooman
Bevens/Collins	Crippen	Schell	Wadsworth
Birdsall	Dunschmann	Schaeffer	Warner
Bloods	Hollister	Schoolcraft	Watson
Boels	House	Schoonmaker	Welsh/Welch
Boon	Jones	Scribner	Wentworth
Borst	Knight	Scutt	West
Borst/Kipp	Muller	Seibel	Westerwald
Borthwick	Redfern	Settle (Sittel)	Westinghouse
Bouck	Studley	Sherwood	Whately
Brodhead	Sweet	Stewart	Wheelers
Brown	Huntington	Spoor	White
Collins	Johnson	Stockwell	Wilcox
Conrad	Keyser	Titus	Williams
Coonradt	Kling	Shultes	Wilsey
Danforth	Kniskern	Shults	Wiltsee
Daring	Lawyer	Shultus	Wood
DePuy	Lincolln	Sidney	Wright
Devendorf	Loucks	Sitterly	Young
Dexter/Darling	Lyman	Slingerland	Zeah (Zeh)
Dibble	Manchester	Slughter	Zeiley (Zieley)
Dox	Mattice		Zimmer

Photographs

The library received Russell Begh's collection of nearly 1000 photographs and negatives, providing a unique visual look at Schoharie County in the first half of the twentieth century. In addition to the Begh photos, there are hundreds of photos, postcards, etc. from Ed Hagen, Helene Farrell, and many others.

Miscellaneous

The Middleburgh Library also has a collection of books useful for explorations in local history, including phonebooks, town histories for Schoharie County, county histories throughout New York State, and state, national, military, and presidential histories generally useful for local historians. The Historical Room also houses the papers of various local and county historians.

Other Sources of Local History

The Middleburgh Library also has a collection of books useful for explorations in local history, including phonebooks, town histories for Schoharie County, county histories throughout New York State, and state, national, military, and presidential histories generally useful for local historians.

The Middleburgh Library uses these resources for finding older books on local history

Hope Farm Press and Bookshop
15 Jane Street
Saugerties NY 12477
845 246-3522
www.hopefarmbooks.com
Richard Frisbie

Kinship
781 State Route 308
Rhinebeck, NY 12572
845 876-4592
kinshipbooks@cs.com
Arthur Kelly/Susan Kelly Fitzgerald

Catnap Books
574 Main St
Cobleskill, NY 12043
518 234-4514
<http://www.allroutes.to/catnapbooks/>
Roberta and Jim Brooks



Steve LaMont volunteers in the Historical Room of the Middleburgh Library.

FEDERAL CENSUS OF 1850

Summary of Professions in Gilboa and Conesville

Gerry Stoner

Prior to the Industrial Revolution, the most common occupation in the Catskills was farming—agricultural Conesville in 1850 is an excellent example: according to the 1850 federal census, 69% of the workforce were farmers. Industrialization was on its way, however, and Conesville had a number of laborers, tanners, carpenters, shoemakers, and smiths available for the coming growth.

Gilboa was also largely agricultural, but the village proper was more urban with a concentrated 80 properties and an estimated population of 450 people. The 1850 census showed the most common occupation in the Town of Gilboa to still be farming, at 55% of the workforce, but the village contributed many more specialized trades: attorney, cabinetmaker, clergy, clerk, cooper, furnace repairer, grocer, butcher, harness- and saddle maker, hotel keeper, jeweler, machinist, mail carrier, manufacturer, mason, merchant, millwright, peddler, physician, spinner, stage driver, stone cutter, tailor/clothier, teamster, toll collector, weaver, and wheelwright.

Professions in 1850	Gilboa	Conesville	Professions in 1850	Gilboa	Conesville
Attorney	3	0	Merchant/shopkeeper	9	3
Cabinetmaker	8	0	Miller, millwright, cotton mill	7	3
Carpenter	18	13	Peddler	4	0
Chair maker	0	1	Physician	4	2
Clergyman	2	1	Shoemaker	16	8
Clerk	2	2	Smith	20	7
Cooper	7	0	Spinner	1	0
Farmer	485	303	Stage driver	2	0
Furnace repairman	2	0	Stone cutter	1	0
Grocer/butcher	3	0	Student	3	3
Harness/saddle maker	4	0	Tailor, clothier	10	2
Hotel keeper	6	5	Tanner	33	15
Jeweler	1	0	Teacher	0	1
Laborer	197	67	Teamster	10	3
Machinist	4	0	Toll gatherer	4	1
Mail carrier	2	0	Weaver	1	0
Manufacturer	1	0	Wheelwright	4	1
Mason	5	3			
			Total	880	444

A note on the census

In 1850, a “farmer” had to be a jack-of-all-trades. The home he helped to support was considered a social center for the community and for travelers. It would be wonderful if these early records included some of these broader impacts that the farmer had on society.

More critically, however, the 1850 census also systematically overlooked half of the labor force. Women were working as teachers, midwives, home health aides, social workers, cooks, seamstresses, and—more often than not—were instrumental in field and barn work. Yet, the mores of the time completely overlooked women in the 1850 census (there was not a single “employed” woman in that census for the two towns). Yet every diary and first-hand account describes the central role of women in the success of the family and the community.

Critics of the 1960s decried the fact that women were having to go outside the home to help support the family. Looking at the 1850s, I’d say they were a century too late—a different federal tradition of providing full and complete census information would have shown that women have always helped both in and out of the home.



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).

The Palatines

The German Palatines were among the first Europeans to settle in the Schoharie Valley, and many of their descendants can still be found in the area. The first group of 55 souls arrived in America in 1708, followed in 1710 by a much larger contingent of 4,000. But just who were the Palatines? Where did they come from? What would drive such a huge number of people to leave their homeland and risk the unknown?

Carol Cassidy will tell the story of the trials and tribulations of these Palatines, from their Germanic origins to their adventures in the American Colonies.

Wednesday, March 16, 2011 at 7:00 PM
Gilboa Town Hall

SMITHS

Workers of Metals in Gilboa and Conesville

Gerry Stoner

Metalsmiths were the precursors of industrialization. The earliest smiths worked with gold, silver, and copper—metals that are found on the Earth’s surface and are malleable (easily shaped). However, these metals also are soft and unsuitable for use as tools or weapons.

One early solution for making tools was to heat copper and tin, and mix them as a liquid to form bronze. This liquid can be poured into earthen molds and cooled; then light hammering of the metal will both harden and shape the pieces into edged tools and weapons. Copper and tin might not be found together, however, and would have to be transported to meet for manufacture.

Iron from meteors is also found on the Earth’s surface, has a high nickel content, and can be used to make tools. Meteoric iron was used for arrowheads in Homer’s *Iliad* (700 B.C.E.) and for knives used by the Inuit of northern Greenland. From this experience, people learned that iron does not change quickly from a solid to its liquid form—instead, it starts to become malleable at around 900° and can be easily shaped at that temperature.

Iron ores of earthly origin have impurities that have to be removed by smelting the ore (locally using charcoal as a fuel). The resulting pig iron can be shaped like meteoric iron and hardened (tempered) by subsequent heating and cooling. This heating, shaping, and tempering of iron utensils is the work of the *blacksmith* (iron is called the “black” metal because of the fire scale that forms on the surface of the metal during heating).

The resulting utensil is much harder and lighter than bronze, so that iron weapons sliced through bronze defenses, and iron tools were far superior to their bronze antecedents.

According to the 1850 federal census, there were 27 blacksmiths in the towns of Conesville and Gilboa. The smiths of Conesville were William B. Hatch, John J. Murphy, Albert Brown, and Peter, Edgar, William and Franklin Aberty; the Gilboas were Lyman Waters, Melvin Sanford, William Grass, Rufus Coons, Morris Rose, Jacob Hunt, Nathan Hunt, Reed Palmer, James W. VanDusen, Christopher Simonson, Clark and Osmar Grant, Benjamin P. Davis, James McPhillips, Erastus Ingham, William Ramsay, Henry Face, and Peter L. Schermerhorn. Gilboa also had two tinsmiths: Reuben Shelmandine and George Thaler.

Every smith's business differed, but these men manufactured a variety of metal tools and implements from around 1850, as seen in the accompanying photographs by Paul Trotta on blacksmithing and John Smith on tinsmithing.

In 1851, the Bessemer process made available commercial, mass-produced steel from molten pig iron and the smith's role as a local manufacturer declined. Steel allowed home products, equipment, tools, and weapons to be manufactured at a distance by companies named Barstow [stoves], Garland [kitchen equipment], John Deere [farm equipment], Stanley [carpentry tools], and Winchester [rifles]. The word "blacksmith" now is synonymous with "farrier," a shoer of horses.

Today, the traditional work of smiths is performed locally by hobbyists working at backyard forges; craftspeople creating unique metal arts and crafts; and smiths at living museums like the Farmer's Museum and Hanford Mills.



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).

One of the symbiotic advantages to letting laying hens roam is that they like to hang out with the cattle. As the cattle rotate through the paddocks (we move them every day or so), they leave cow patties that will burn spots in the grass.

When the layers are free to roam, they seek out the several-day-old cow patties looking for the eggs that flies and other insects have laid there. They scratch apart the drying cow patties looking for the bugs—and help eliminate the burn spots!

These four Devons are lined up at the electrified polywire expecting me to move them (I did). They are trained to avoid touching the polywire and the portable posts are easy to set up and move around. Of course, we have an electrified, 7-strand, high-tensile fence surround them as a perimeter fence.



Courtesy of Heather Ridge Farm and Carol Clement, photo by Carol Clement
989 Broome Center Road, Preston Hollow, NY 12469.
518-239-6234 www.heather-ridge-farm.com

AMERICAN TOOLS OF 1850

*Created by American Smiths,
Illustrated by Eric Sloane*

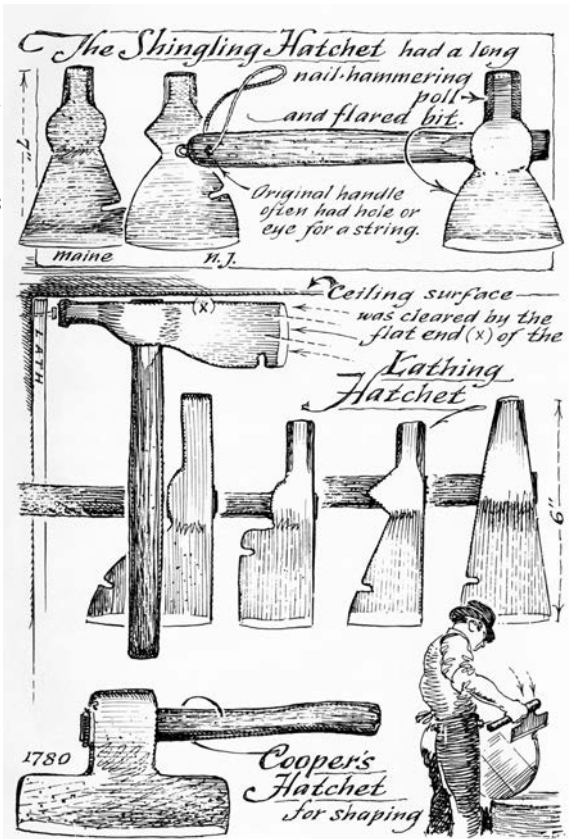
About Eric Sloane

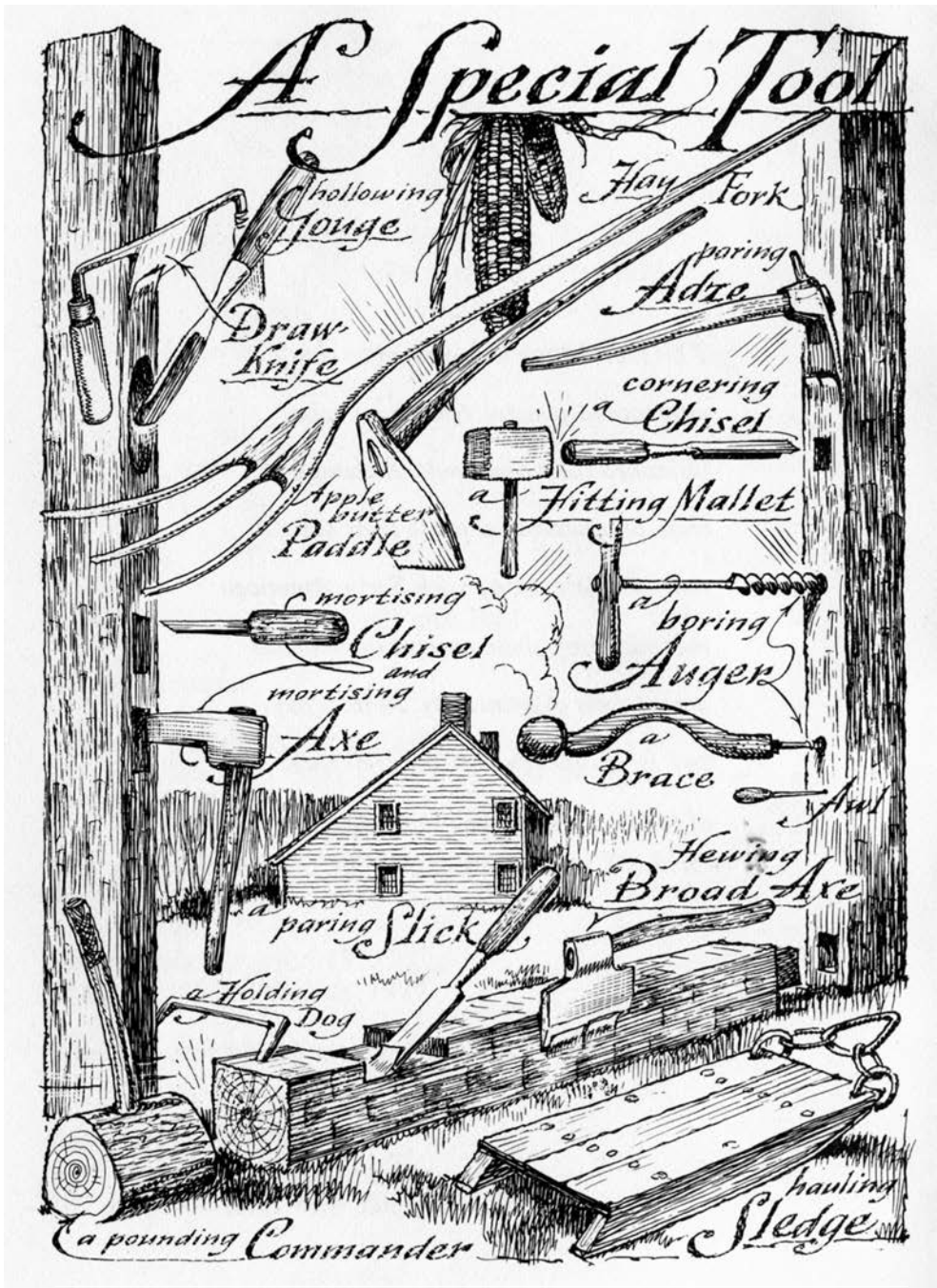
Eric Sloane (Everard Jean Hinrichs, 2/27/1905–3/5/1985), was a landscape painter and author of illustrated works of cultural history and folklore.

Considered a member of the Hudson River School of painting, Sloane had three separate and equally successful careers: painting rustic landscapes in the tradition of the Hudson River School; subsequently painting western scenes with luminous depictions of the desert sky and weather (leading to commissions to illustrate meteorology and weather forecasting for the U.S. Air Force); and as an author of illustrated books on tools, architecture, farming techniques, folklore, and rural wisdom of early American society.

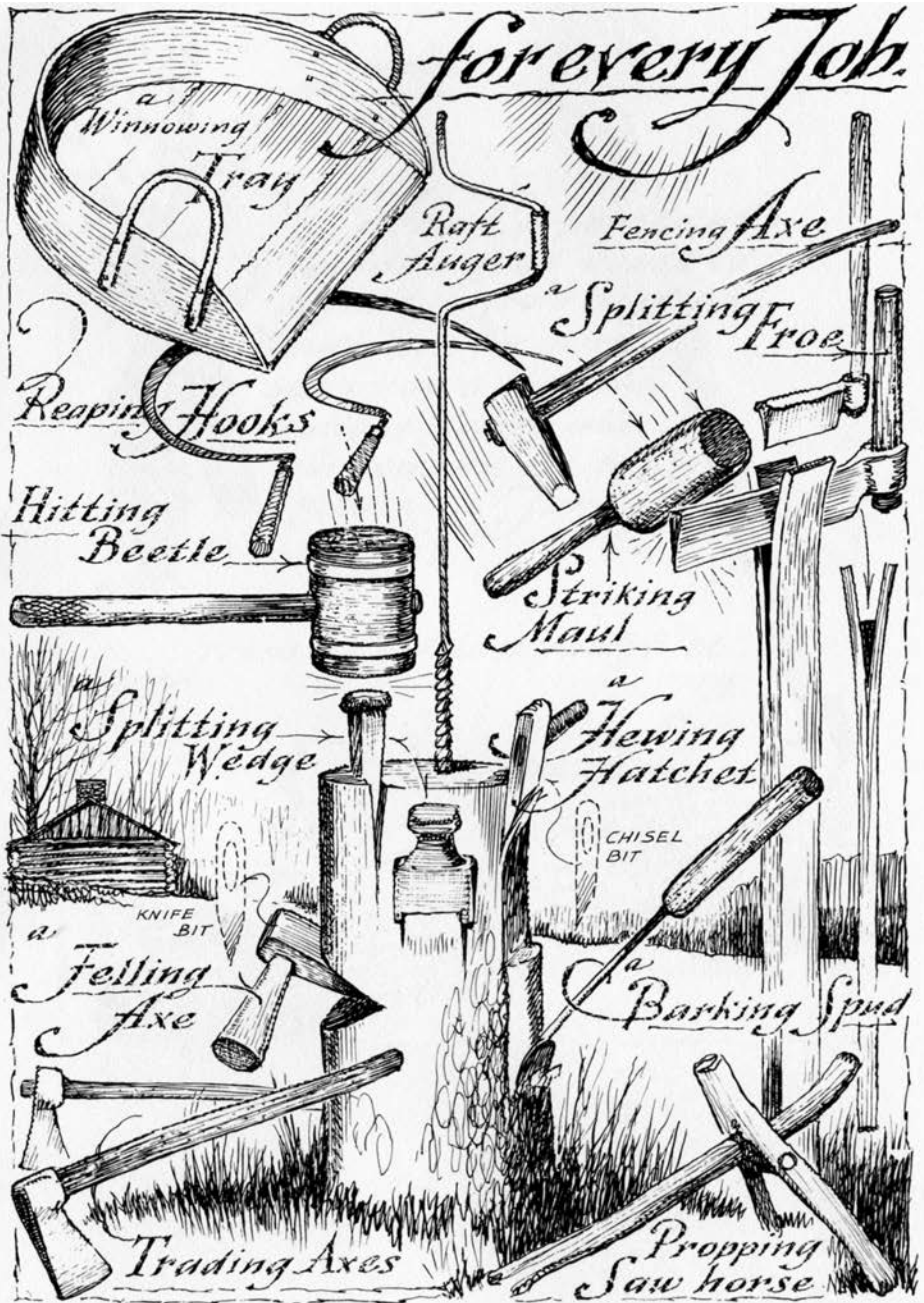
Prolific is too tame a word for Sloane: he is credited with thousands of paintings, creating the first televised weather reporting network, and scores of illustrated books.

This page from one of Sloane’s books shows the variations of the standard axe used on a farm in rural America in 1850 and also the charm of his descriptions. The next two pages show the number of tools that were needed on the farm, most of them fashioned by smiths in villages and hamlets. Illustrations are from *A Museum of Early American Tools* by Eric Sloane, Courtesy of Ballantine Books, and © 1964 by William Funk, Inc.





This frontis piece illustrates a number of tools fashioned by smiths needed on the farm. Illustrations are from *A Museum of Early American Tools* by Eric Sloane, Courtesy of Ballantine Books, and © 1964 by William Funk, Inc.



This frontis piece illustrates a number of tools fashioned by smiths needed on the farm. Illustrations are from *A Museum of Early American Tools* by Eric Sloane, Courtesy of Ballantine Books, and © 1964 by William Funk, Inc.

THEY LIVED IN THESE HILLS

Gerry Stoner

The following articles were submitted by folks who are familiar with the families and personalities described. These stories are short and 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 300 years.

The stories come from the oral history of families who are living here now and, like all oral history, the stories may be completely true only to the people with the same oral tradition—these reminiscences may conflict with the oral history of other families. Should this be the case, please do not point out the fallacy of the stories as they are written, but instead tell us the variant of the oral history that is true in your family. There is no right or wrong here, but an expression of the delight in our differences.

They Lived in These Hills will be continued in subsequent issues, but only if we have a continuing supply of anecdotes of local interest. I hope that readers will submit oral histories so that we can all enjoy our common tradition. If you are a newcomer to the community (as I am), please talk to your more established neighbors and ask them if you could collect their families' oral tradition for the newsletter.

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.

Mrs. Nickerson

Mrs. Nickerson was a school teacher at Gilboa—my second-grade teacher, and she also taught my siblings who were up to 20 years older than me. She was the kind of teacher who made “house calls” and delivered your homework when you were sick! Mrs. Nickerson wasn't just a teacher, she was part of your life.

She was also famous for being one of the original and most decorated Girl Scouts in New York. Always involved in Scouts, she hosted Scout jamborees at Nickerson Park. At my first one, I had the unwanted position of being the youngest Brownie, and therefore I had to give the opening welcome remarks. Of course, I saw the large crowd from all over the region, immediately forgot my lines, and, in front of all those people, said to Mrs. Nickerson “can I start again?” Mrs. Nickerson, being the school teacher she was, just laughed along with the crowd and said “go ahead honey.” All was well and I became a first-grade celebrity.

In the '60s when “spare the rod and spoil the child” was a common view, Mrs. Nickerson never hit one of us as I remember. If you were really out of place, she would escort you to Prof. Peckham, who, after a fine lecture, was known to bring out the paddle.

Teaching a section on the history of Gilboa, she could relate in great detail what happened to our town, but she really scared us when she related the moving of the cemetery with tales of caskets popping open! We all felt horrible about our families losing their homes and our town disappearing.

I didn't really know Mr. Nickerson—children didn't interact with adults unless it was through school or Sunday school—and “seen and not heard” was the rule. I do know that he invented a gutter cleaner for cow barns and that my dad would go see him over who knows what, and that he was a friend of my grandfather. Chauncey, Jr., hung out there with Mr. Nickerson's nephew tinkering with cars, and as we got old enough to work, the boys at school would get summer jobs at the park and they all said that he was a lot of fun. The boys also went to the swimming hole at Nickerson's if they had been bringing in hay.

I don't have as much to relate on Mr. Nickerson, but I would love to hear more because the stories I did hear were so positive. And, as Gilboa baby boomers say, “if you didn't know the Nickersons, you're not from Gilboa.”

Newell Miller

About 1919, my grandfather, Newell Miller (1888–1973), was living in the Gilboa/West Conesville area and was awarded a contract from the Board of Water Supply. The Hugh Nawn Company of Roxbury, Massachusetts was bringing a large number of workers into town to build the reservoir, and Miller was contracted to build bunk houses for them. This began his career as a carpenter for the next few years.

There had been a plan to connect the construction site in Gilboa to the railroad line out of Grand Gorge, and the abandonment of this project presented an opportunity for Newell in the 1920s. Grandpa became a land owner, acquiring the Route 30 land that previously was to be sold to the railroad.

If you go toward Grand Gorge on Route 30, you pass South Gilboa Road on the right, Road Seven on the left, and a huge field on the right. There is a long



driveway beginning on the right side of Route 30 just before the state road starts to go up the hill—the Miller farmhouse was at the end of this driveway in the valley at the foot of the mountain on the south side of that field. From the Miller house, you could look north across the field and see the farmhouse of Will and Jennie Snyder (now the home of Tony Robbin and Rena Kosersky) on South Gilboa Road.

The Snyder and Miller farms split the land between them in a crazy-quilt manner, and both worked land on either side of Route 30 and Road Seven. All in all, Grandpa owned upwards of 1,000 acres of land that was sold intact to the current owner. Starting in 1938, Grandpa became tax collector; and in 1943, he was elected town supervisor for Gilboa, a post he held until 1960.

Newell married Goldie Becker in 1910 and they had over 50 years together and six children. Their first grandchild was born in 1932, and the last was born in the early 1970s. That's a span of around 40 years, so the oldest grandkids knew a completely different set of grandparents than the younger ones.

My brother was the first grandchild and spent most of his childhood with a “younger” grandpa than I did. He loved Grandpa and the farm so much that one day he announced to our mother that he was moving “over to the farm” and didn't care what she thought—he started walking Route 30. I think Ma was dumbstruck, but the farm was just up the road, he really didn't go too far, and after all it was her parents!

He and my older siblings remember Grandpa the politician, farmer, and carpenter; the man who cut ice from the pond; the parent to 64 foster children over time; the man who would give a job and a home to someone out of work or with no place to stay. My oldest brother says “he fed everybody!” He has a better memory of *activity* on the farm—the summer boarders or hunters in the fall, helping to move the master bed to the horse barn to accommodate a late-comer, or making homemade ice cream with a 20 quart crank ice cream maker. My siblings' Grandpa worked *all* the time—and taught the oldest grandsons the art of living, work ethics, and how to be men. They worked with, and learned from, him.

My generation came in on the tail end of these activities. We think of Grandpa riding up Route 30 from Road Seven on his Silver King tractor, chewing his tongue and wearing his bibbed overalls with his cap cocked to the side. Not a care in the world. Just heading home from the field.

Grandpa took me to my first Republican event when I was about 6, a black Angus barbecue in Stamford on Route 10. I'd never seen a whole cow being barbecued before, and nothing else caught my attention besides that cow stretched

out over a huge pit! Other than that, the grandchildren of my generation didn't really think too much about Grandpa being the Town Supervisor (wasn't everybody's Grandfather one?). Didn't everybody's grandparents have big houses with lots of activity? That was what we were used to, and it was all fun.

Nevertheless, the Grandpa I knew was winding down, ending his political life, still farming and with lots of visitors and family milling about, but always with time to spend with his grandchildren. He rarely said "no." My grandfather was so cool—if you sat with him, he would sit and talk and tell stories of the old days, make up rhymes for you or draw pictures of birds with one continuous line or for no reason, make board games out of wood in the woodshop for you to keep. In my too-short time, he kept busy, but he wasn't driven by work. As he got older he enjoyed more being involved in his children's and grandchildren's lives, helping them build their homes, etc.

I hope everyone knew a grandfather like ours.

The Birds of New York

Chris and Dave Keefer will present "The Birds of New York," a compilation of extraordinary photographs taken in and around Schoharie County. Dave is the master behind the camera lens; Chris wrote "Birding Trips and Trivia," a weekly birding column for the *Daily Gazette* for 20 years. Lifelong enthusiasts, Chris and Dave enjoy birdwatching, rockhounding, hiking, raising caterpillars, and local history. All are welcome to enjoy these vivid portraits of common and unusual birds, hear the stories behind the shots, and chat with fellow bird enthusiasts.

Wednesday, May 18, 2011 at 7:00 PM
Gilboa Town Hall

All Gilboa Historical Society Newsletters are available free at
<http://www.gilboahome.com/>.
 Email this address to friends & family.

July 20th—Esperence Band and Ice Cream Social
FREE 7:00 PM FREE

GILBOA (TINSELTOWN), NEW YORK

Janette Reynolds

Would you believe there were two movies made in the old village of Gilboa? Our wonderful old town and surrounding area was the scene for two silent films made in 1915 and 1916.

The Witch

The first of the two movies, *The Witch*, was released on Feb 27, 1916. It was directed by Frank Powell, and starred Nance O’Neal, Alfred Hickman, Frank Russell, and Macey Harlam.

According to an article written in the *Gilboa Monitor*, two actors had to jump into the water from a high cliff (Minekill Falls). Victor Benoit and June Janin could not swim, yet they volunteered to jump. Burdened with heavy clothing, they had great difficulty getting out. Also a “Mexican Spy” was hung in the old barn by the Minekill schoolhouse.

Caprice of the Mountains

In May 1916, the second Gilboa movie, *Caprice of the Mountains*, began. It was directed by John G. Adolphi, and a few of the main actors in this film were June Caprice, Harry Hilliard, Joel Day, Lisle Leigh, and Richard Hale.

As written in the *Gilboa Monitor*, a cabin was built on the Stryker property in the southwest part of the town and another on the Hardenburgh place in Prattsville.

Caprice of the Mountains was shown in Oneonta in September 1916. Several local people “motored” there to see it—Dr. & Mrs. Baldwin, Belle Carpenter, Carrie Hagadorn, Hobart Pausly, Donald Neville, Paul Stryker, Avery Hinman, George Mattice, and Louie Snyder. They reported “the picture was fine.”

June Caprice

The success of Mary Pickford overshadows rivals such as Marguerite Clark and the ill-fated Mary Miles Minter. Even less memorable, perhaps, but in her day a force to reckon with, was June Caprice.

I bought this glass slide portrait of June Caprice at auction earlier this year. The film *Caprice of the Mountains* was a nitrate film that deteriorated quickly—artifacts like this, used for an ad in a trade magazine, are all we can ever hope to see regarding the film.

Glass slide courtesy of Janette Reynolds.



Helen Elizabeth Lawson from Arlington, Massachusetts, won a Pickford look-alike contest and was signed on the spot by movie mogul William Fox. She was cast as the lead in his movie, *Caprice of the Mountains*, and changed her name to June Caprice. Fox confidently promised a skeptical trade that “within six months, June Caprice will be the best known woman on the screen.”

The Manhattan debut of the film was on July 9, 1916 at the Academy of Music on 14th Street. A *New York Times* film critic said of her: “she is young, pretty, graceful, petite, with an eloquence of gesture that augurs a bright future in the movies.”

Though never quite achieving that lofty goal, Caprice did enjoy an increasingly large following via a string of Pickfordian melodramas such as *Little Miss Happiness* (1916) and *A Modern Cinderella* (1917). She married director Harry A. Millarde, and together they collaborated on *Blue Eyed Mary* (1918) and *The Heart of Romance* (1918).

Like Pickford, Caprice yearned to grow up and play sophisticated young ladies her own age. Unfortunately *The Love Cheat* (1919), based on a musical-comedy by P. G. Wodehouse, was not a success. Her last film work was a 1921 fifteen-episode science fiction serial called *The Sky Ranger* (a.k.a. *The Man Who Stole the Moon*).

She left the film business to begin a family, giving birth to a daughter, June Elizabeth Millarde in 1923. It is believed she returned to working on stage and modeling, appearing on 1920s Coca-Cola calendars holding a fountain glass of Coke. In 1931 her husband died at the age of forty-six, and Caprice died five years later from a heart attack in Los Angeles after a long bout with cancer. She was interred in the Forest Lawn Memorial Park Cemetery in Glendale, California (November 19, 1895–November 9, 1936).

Caprice’s daughter was thirteen years old when orphaned and was raised by her grandparents on Long Island, New York. June Millarde became a cover girl known as Toni Seven. The June 17, 1949 issue of *Time* reported that she was the heiress to an estimated \$3,000,000 fortune.

Gilboa Historical Society Museum Web Site

OPEN 24/7

www.gilboafossils.org

Email this address to friends & family.

Schoharie County's Inuit

His name was Minik (or Mene as some accounts give), an Inuit from Greenland. The anthropologist from the New York Museum of Natural History had asked him to bring a live specimen back with him, so in 1897 Robert Peary returned from one of his expeditions with six Inuits (Peary had invited two of his trusted guides back to New York for a one-year visit, and they in turn brought their families). After two died, it was decided to send the rest to Lawyerville where it was thought the weather was more suitable for them.

Ted Shuart, the Town and Village Historian of Cobleskill, will tell the story of what happened to them while here in our county. In 1980 an Inuit man, Ken Harper, wrote a book about Minik titled *Give Back My Father's Body*. The story has become very popular in Europe and Ted has since taken two documentary filmmakers, one German and one Danish, through Cobleskill to help them film the sites where Minik lived when here.

Wednesday, April 20, 2011 at 7:00 PM
Gilboa Town Hall

Beecher Scholarship

The Greene County Historical Society is now accepting applications for the 2011 Beecher Scholarship honoring Dr. Raymond Beecher. The 2011 award will be a \$1,000 scholarship awarded to any high school senior residing in Greene County.

The award will be based on a 3-5 page article related to Greene County History. All articles must be original, written in acceptable English style, word-processed, double-spaced with a bibliography of Work Cited. A panel of three Society Trustees will judge the project. Articles submitted may be published in the Society's *Quarterly Journal*.

Students should submit their project to: Beecher Scholarship, GCHS, Inc., PO Box 44, Coxsackie, NY 12051 by May 1, 2011. Please contact Jennifer Barnhart, Operations Manager, GCHS, Inc. at Box 44, Coxsackie, NY 12051; 518-731-1033; jbarnhart.gchs@yahoo.com.

HISTORIES OF SCHOHARIE COUNTY

Roscoe: History of Schoharie County

Simms: History of Schoharie County and Border Wars

Gerry Stoner

Two books have been central to understanding the history of Schoharie County. Published in the mid-19th century, they are still sought after by local historians, but are now freely available to you for research and non-profit use thanks to Google, Microsoft, and northerncatskillshistory.com.

William E. **Roscoe**. *History of Schoharie County, New York, with Illustrations and Biographical Sketches of Some of its Prominent Men and Pioneers. 1713–1882*. Published by D. Mason & Co., Syracuse, N.Y.

Jeptha R. **Simms**. *History of Schoharie County, and Border Wars of New York; Containing also a Sketch of the Causes Which Led to the American Revolution; and Interesting Memoranda of the Mohawk Valley; Together with Much Other Historical and Miscellaneous Matter Never Before Published*. Illustrated with more than thirty engravings. Albany; Munsell & Tanner, Printers. 1845.

Background

At the Frankfurt Book Fair in October 2004, Google announced a goal of digitizing all published books—they now estimate that there are 129,864,880 unique books in the world. Two years later, Microsoft set up a similar plan that ran until May 2008 when the project was abandoned.

Both these companies very aggressively went ahead with the scanning of books. As of October 2010, Google Books had scanned over 15 million works, and Microsoft's scans, now called Internet Archive, number an additional 2.5 million.

The purpose of these projects had different meanings to different folks: they were hailed for the potential to offer unprecedented access to the largest online body of human knowledge and promoting the democratization of knowledge; while publishers, authors, and other owners of intellectual property criticized them for potential copyright violations and claimed it was a self-serving way of getting around copyright protections.

After much litigation, the critics arguing against the project as an infringement on intellectual property has gotten Google to agree to not include *their selected titles* until those titles enter the public domain: the result is that Google

is free to scan all titles *except for those that currently have copyright protection and have been brought to Google's attention as being protected.*

If you have published a book that is in copyright, Google can still scan and distribute that book *unless* you notify them of its continuing copyright status.

Which brings us back to the Roscoe and Simms books.

Roscoe was digitized for the Microsoft Corporation by the Internet Archive in 2007 from the University of Toronto, and may be used for noncommercial, personal, research, or educational purposes, or any fair use. It may not be indexed in a commercial service.

Northerncatskillshistory.com has downloaded this single, massive, and non-searchable PDF, broken it into chapters, converted each chapter into searchable .pdf files, and uploaded them to the northerncatskillshistory.com website with the same qualifications that Microsoft established in 2007.

www.northerncatskillshistory.com/Writing_History/200_Documents

William E. Roscoe. *History of Schoharie County, New York*

The chapter numbers and titles are:

01 Front Matter	07 Gilboa	17 Seward
02 The German	08 Conesville	18 Richmondville
03 German Loyalty to the King	09 Broome	19 Carlisle
04 Formation of the County	10 Jefferson	20 Esperance
05 Civil War	11 Summit	21 Wright
06 Schoharie County Civil List	13 Fulton	22 Schoharie
	14 Middleburgh	23 Cobleskill
	15 Sharon	24 Appendix
	16 Blenheim	25 Names of Citizens

Note: there is no chapter 12 in the original volume: chapter 11 ends on page 165, and chapter 13 starts on page 166.

Simms was digitized for Google who was “proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them public and we are merely

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their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.”

Northerncatskillshistory.com has downloaded this single, massive, and non-searchable PDF, broken it into chapters, converted each chapter into a searchable .pdf file, and uploaded them to the northerncatskillshistory.com website with the same qualifications that Google established in 2005.

www.northerncatskillshistory.com/Writing_History/200_Documents

Jeptha R. Simms: *History of Schoharie County and Border Wars of New York*

The chapter number and titles are:

00	Front Matter	08	McDonald Invades	16	Invasion by Major Ross
01	Origin of Schoharie	09	Interesting Incidents	17	Predatory Warfare
02	Poverty of Schoharie	10	Captivity of Cowley	18	Ratification of Peace
03	Ancient Apple Trees	11	Enemy Moving	19	Capt. Thomas Machin
04	Groat Family	12	Captivity of Hynds	20	Schoharie County Formed
05	Vrooman Family	13	Timothy Murphy	21	David Williams
06	Revolution Approaches	14	Schoharie Militia		
07	Frontier Settlements	15	Mutiny at Hd-Qtrs		

From the 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. Pindar of Cobleskill has about 6500 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. Pindar 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: Pindar'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.

LETTERS FROM THE FRONT

to Mother, Father, and Daniel Reed

Robert Morrissey

I found letters written from the Civil War when moving into my home, and the earlier ones have already been published in the GHS *Newsletter*. This fifth letter by Jeremiah, shown to the right, was written on February 25, 1864.

Fort Reno Feb 25th 64

My Dear Father,

I have just received your letter bearing date the 19th[.] it found me well. I did not learn whether Lyman is agoing to send me his order or not—that I can know the alotment is Broke. Lyman knows or should know I cannot draw my money here unless he sends his order to that effect. nothing but his order can draw the money to the chamberlain's[.] wisconsin is to far off to bother with that little matter & I wish to have the handeling of my money here. I can [tend] to 13 dollars a month & send Home what part I please[.] Lyman has made no transfer you say. so I think he has moved away & dont intend to send me his order. he meant to let the thing stand as it is. I wrote to him the 12th stating what I wanted him to do[.] I think he had not received the letter when you saw him, or he would of mentioned something of it. your letter was a great while going through. I also sent you one dated the 14th. Your letters comes in two & three days. this one is stamped on the envelope Feb 22nd & came the 24th. I read it just before sunset. when you find out where Lyman is I want you to send me his address[.] then I can write to him[.] the last day of this month I shall be mustered in again for two months pay[.] Four months pay is my due then, & if I could get Lymans order before the pay rolls is made out, I could draw the whole 52 dollars here. there is the 48 dollars over paying Lymans demands as I understand your letters, as evrything is all squared up. if he gives it to Joseph it is all well enough. I shall be owing him some now I must owed him on the Rent [X].

Ellsbree Note was \$200.dollars & interest \$14 making \$214. I have not learned what Joseph has done with my share of the hay. he must dispose of it if he can[.] dose Joseph think of Buying Mrs Haskins Farm & what can it be bought for[?] John Haskin sais he thinks it can be bought for \$800.dollars. he sais Luther Cain wants it. he advises William Cain to help his Father Buy it. the place is worth that money. let some perservering man that is able to work take it in hand[.] they in time would make quite a good lot of it. Joseph must do as he

Font Renc Feb 25th 1854

My Dear Father,

I have just received your letter bearing date the 18th it found me well. I did not learn whether Lyman is going to send me his order or not - that I can know the allotment is broke. Lyman knows or should know I cannot draw my money here unless he sends his order to that effect. nothing but his order can draw the money to the chamberlain's wisconsin is to far off to bother with that little matter. & I wish to have the handling of my money here. I intend to 13 dollars a month & send Home what part I please. Lyman has made no transfer you say. so I think he has moved away & dont intend to send me his order. he meant to let the thing stand as it is,

thinks best, but to much land good for nothing like that we Booth have is far worse than nothing. if I was at home I think I would like the whole [X] lot myself[.] I think I can make a farm of it yet. I had rather have schoharie flats though. But them I haint got. I have land enough at present. if you want to pay up the \$275.dollars on the upper half of the old place you can do it as fast as you get able to. Grandmother must have the handeling of it as long as she lives or as long as she is able to be around. she must have it for her home as long as she lives. if you have that with the knowledge it will make you a good farm. I will keep the 60 acres & what I have got is much as I want at present. If I was at home I think I should manage to buy Jacksons 50. acres & have the whole lot together. Jackson offers it cheap enough. It is worth the money he asked for it. I stated in my letters th 14 [X] dollars I would like to have it if you can spare it as well as not & what is coming from Lyman would pay half the sail on the wood lots. you can have a note for the money [X] turn it towards Grandmothers lot. just as you & she can make it any way [X] make thing [X] & satisfactory till J returns. there is no such thing as [X] [X] enlisting over [X] [X] untill we have served two years or more. I dont think I shall reenlist if J could to day. We have had the coldest wether last week we have had this winter but no snow. I have not been on picket or guards in two months. I am on daily duty[,] all the while building it in [X] city here. J recd a letter from david of Monday. if I can get a

Gilboa Museum Summer Program

The theme for the 2011 season at the Gilboa Museum will be “Antique Musical Instruments,” and an integral part of this summer’s exhibit will be the music associated with the hops fields. The labor force didn’t make much money in the fields, but an integral part of the remuneration was the fun, food, and dancing afterwards as they went from farm to farm and were fed and entertained all night with folk dances.

2011 Season

The Gilboa Museum will be open from 12:00–4:30 on Saturdays and Sundays, July 2 to September 4; and for Columbus Day, October 8 and 9.

OPEN HOUSE: Sunday, July 10, 2011, 1:00–3:00

FREE—REFRESHMENTS AND FOLK MUSIC—FREE
with a Hop Pickers Dance as background and theme.

Donations are appreciated for museum tour

45 hour pass I think I will go & see him. it is only 150 or 160 miles. [XXXXX] going over the [X] & Virginia to see the 4th. [X]Boys, I thank you for that dollar John fetched me. he fetches the gloves [X] lines of your composing was very Butiful. I dont know as anything more just now[.] when you write again explain how all our matters is that you have not explained. Good morning

Jeremiah W Reed

Excuse all Blunders[.] I have scribbled it off in a great hurry.

GROUP No. 1, 1864
RECORD OF DEATH AND INTERMENT.

Name and number of person interred.	Jeremiah W Reed 581
Number and locality of the grave . .	1234
Hospital number of the deceased . . .	13416
Regiment, rank, and company	7th U.S. Inf. Co. 2 ^d
Residence before enlistment	Broome Orange Co. N.Y.
Conjugal condition, (and if married, the residence of the widow) . . . }	Single
Cause of death }	Typhemia following a wound of right leg
Age of the deceased }	30 years
Nativity }	N.Y.
References and remarks }	
Date of death and burial	June 28 th 1864

Duplicates sent to the Adjutant General of the United States Army, and to the Sexton of the Cemetery.

Memoranda:

- (Effects)*
- (1) Knapsack
 - (1) Blanket
 - (1) Uniform coat
 - (3) Shirts
 - (1) Tr. Stockings
 - (1) Gaiters
 - (1) Caps
 - M. S. Currency (\$4⁷/₈)

The above amount \$4⁷/₈ was turned over to Maj. Lawyer P. Mc W. S. A. Aug 17th 64 by Hauen Webster, Army Surgeon U. S. A.

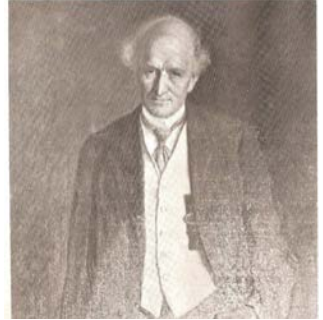
CHURCHILL HALL

“The Saratoga of the Catskills”

Emily Schultes

Once upon a time in the village of Stamford, there was a man with a vision for enterprise. His name was Dr. Stephen E. Churchill and, with some money and determination, he changed Stamford forever.

In 1866, Churchill bought Stamford Seminary and the land around it. He expanded the school in 1868 and he and his family moved into the Ladies' Hall. In the summer of 1871, two couples from New York City mistook the school for a boarding house. Churchill allowed them to stay there for the summer though, which gave him a brilliant idea.



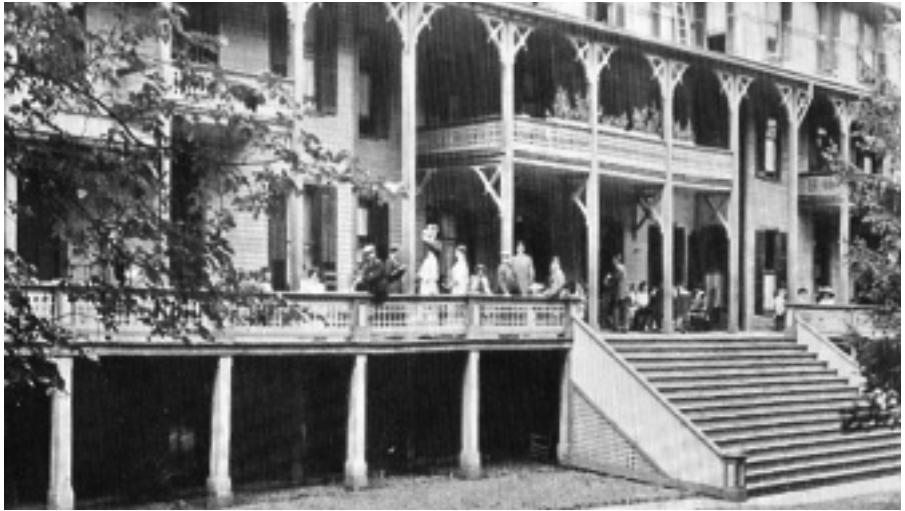
Churchill decided the following year to use the school for the summer as a place for tourists to stay. He advertised the opportunity for a “healthy escape from city smog” in a newspaper in New York City. The ad lured couples to ride the Ulster & Delaware Railroad up from the city and stay for 2 days at a decent price. In response to the ad, Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, a widely known pastor from Brooklyn, and 30 couples came up and stayed in the seminary for a good portion of the summer.

After hearing a good word about the group's stay in the boarding house, Churchill realized the potential Stamford had as a resort destination. To accommodate more guests, Churchill built the first section of what was to become the largest and most prominent feature of Stamford.

Such a large building brought the village's need for a water and sewer system to the surface. An indoor plumbing system was installed in Churchill Hall, and it was officially opened as a full-scale 300-room hotel the next day, July 4th, 1883.

For that first summer tourist season, it would have cost guests \$3 and up per week to stay. That rate is very different from today's hotels. Churchill Hall charged their guests based on how many weeks they stayed there, not on how many consecutive nights. People who came to Stamford from the cities usually stayed for several weeks at a time. It would be pointless to spend a day on a train traveling and only spend a day in Stamford just to turn around the next morning and spend another day traveling back. Tourists stayed at hotels such as Churchill Hall so they could spend more of their summer in the Catskills.

Some of the hotel's higher-class activities were:



- nightly dances in the ballroom
- weekly concerts by a classical orchestra
- lectures by influential speakers
- bridge tournaments
- movie screenings
- plays and theaters
- fashion shows
- bowling (1903)
- casino

Churchill Hall was very current in the technology field. Some features to make the guests' stay as comfortable and convenient as possible were:

- indoor plumbing and running water
- electric lights
- steam and gas heat

Some room features to make the guests feel at home were:

- private bathrooms
- library
- reading rooms
- individual rooms or suites

Some popular outdoor activities at Churchill Hall:

- tennis
- horseback riding
- baseball field
- bicycle trails
- hiking
- boating
- driving track
- 18-hole golf course

There was a huge 500 sq. ft. open park in the center of the hotel complex where guests went outside to visit and take part in games and get some fresh mountain air.

Churchill Hall had one of the first in-ground pools in the village for the guests, and the general public could use it for 50¢. At the pool during the

summer, there were sometimes aquatic shows held, which attracted huge crowds. There were swimming demonstrations performed by several Olympic medalists and even alligator wrestling shows featuring an alligator fresh out of the Florida Everglades.



Churchill Hall served many different types of gourmet meals to their guests in their state-of-the-art dining room, which was on the lower floor of the hotel and had broad windows giving a view of the street.

The Ulster & Delaware Railroad Station was just an eighth of a mile from Churchill Hall. Guests could ride the train up from major cities such as Albany, Kingston, or New York City and walk to the hotel in just under 5 minutes.

In 1890, an East Hall was built onto Churchill Hall. This addition, along with the building of a West Hall two years later, only spurred Churchill's desire to manage the most hotels in town.

That same year, a new hotel was built right next to Churchill Hall. It was named the Hamilton House and soon became Churchill Hall's greatest competition. But in less than 10 years, Churchill bought the 50-room hotel and connected it to his own via outdoor verandas and covered porches. By 1899, Churchill Hall stretched along Main Street and consisted of four

Churchill Hall		
Dinner		
STAMFORD, MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 1889.		
—		
Beef, with Italian paste.	SOUP.	Pouree of Clams.
—		
FISH.		
Boiled Salmon Mayonnaise.		
—		
BOILED.		
Beef, a la braise.	Ham.	Corned Beef and Cabbage.
Mutton, with caper sauce.		Tongue.
—		
ENTREES.		
Breast of Lamb, with tomato sauce.	Chicken Curry, with rice-	
	Compoie of Peas, with rice.	
—		
ROAST.		
Ribs of Beef	Spring Chicken.	Mutton, brown gravy
Spring Lamb, with mint sauce.		Turkey, cranberry sauce.
—		
COLD MEATS.		
Roast Mutton.	Roast Beef.	Boiled Ham.
Boiled Corned Beef.		Roast Lamb.
—		
VEGETABLES.		
Boiled New Potatoes.	Stewed Tomatoes.	Green Corn.
Mashed Potatoes.	Sweet Potatoes.	New Beets.
—		
SALADS.		
Chicken.		Lobster.
—		
RELISHES.		
Worcestershire Sauce.	Gherkins.	Cold Slaw.
Sliced Tomatoes.	Celery.	Tomato Catsup.
Sliced Cucumbers.	Olives.	Lettuqe.
		Pickles.
—		
PASTRY.		
Apple Pie.	Apricot Pie.	Blackberry Pie.
Plum Pudding.	Occoannt Pie.	
	Blanc Mange.	
—		
DESSERT.		
Vanilla Ice Cream.	Sponge Cake.	Pineapple Sherbet.
Tea.	Coffee.	Crackers.
		Cheese.
—		
FRUIT.		
Mixed Nuts.	Apples.	Pears.
		Grapes.

inter-connected buildings, the most impressive hotel by far in Stamford.

Churchill was the proud manager of this massive hotel complex up until the year 1907, when he decided to turn his attention to his other hotel across town, the Rexmere. In June, he leased Churchill Hall to S. I. Brown, who was the manager of the Greycourt Inn, another of Churchill Hall's competitors that

had been in operation since 1890. Soon after, in 1910, the Greycourt Inn officially became a part of the Churchill mega-complex and added 75 more rooms.

Stephen E. Churchill passed away in 1917 and, out of respect, Churchill Hall was renamed The Maselyn after H. H. Mase who became the new manager in 1919. As of the year 1926, the complex had over 400 rooms, far surpassing the next leading hotel in the village. It cost \$113,000 to build this super hotel. The Maselyn remained in operation until 1942 when it was torn down for reasons no one is quite sure of.

During its existence, Churchill Hall and The Maselyn brought in huge business for Stamford and changed it forever as a tourist destination. It's ironic how the "Age of Tourism" in Stamford was from 1883 to 1942—the two dates when Churchill Hall was built and then torn down.

Bibliography

Stamford NY and The Catskills Guide by Thomas H. Hendrickson, 1899; *The Queen of the Catskills Grand Hotel Era*, by Carlton & Dorothy Bloodgood, 1883–1942; *Catskill Mountain Resorts*, 1907; *The Catskill Mountains*, by Leo H. DeSilva, 1926; *The Catskills*, by Arthur G. Adams, 1990; *Two Stones for Every Dirt*, by Charles D. Cook, 1987; and *New York Times* newspapers, 1881–1907.



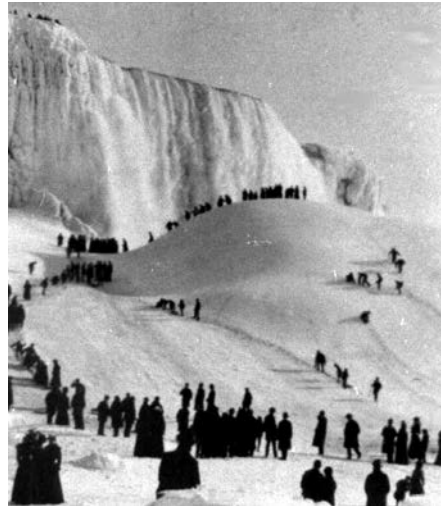
Emily Schultes is 15 years old and a freshman at Stamford Central School. "I have had a love of writing since the third grade. At school I am in a couple of activities such as band, soccer, and softball, and am a member of my church's puppet team. I've gotten Cum Laude averages throughout middle- and high school and I think I will try to be a small animal veterinarian when I get older. My favorite subject is Life Science."

The preceding project is the result of an assignment given in the Sense of Place elective taught by Megan Eklund, history teacher at Stamford Central School since 2004. The course focuses on the history of Stamford and the Catskills, giving the students a better sense of the place in which they live. Many of the course's topics come from curriculum created by the Catskill Watershed Corporation. In one unit, students learned the Catskills were a resort destination for many prominent New York City residents looking to escape the heat of the city during the summer months. Stamford had its share of hotels during its reign as "Queen of the Catskills" so each student in the elective was asked to select a hotel to research. This was the most difficult research project the students have done thus far in their educational careers since there is little published material describing the history of Stamford's hotels. Much of the research came from primary sources as students pieced together the history of their selected hotel.

When Niagara Falls Stood Still

Periodically, emails make extravagant claims—such as the day in 1911 that Niagara Falls was completely frozen. Such claims can be checked at snopes.com. In this case, Snopes was not able to confirm the legitimacy of the photos, but was able to say that “only once in recorded history has freezing weather actually stopped water from flowing over the falls,” citing a report in the *Buffalo Express* on the closing of down-river factories due to lack of water pressure in March 1848.

As for winter 2010-2011, temperatures and snow were in normal ranges, but the lack of major thaws put the flood potential now above normal.



According to Amos Flint in Broome Center, you need 2 inches of ice to support a man, 4 inches of ice for a horse, and 8 inches of ice for a team.

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 paid-up couples/family membership; three asterisks indicates a paid-up lifetime membership, and four asterisks indicates a paid-up lifetime membership for both of you.

Membership Application Form

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

Total amount enclosed \$ _____

* 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.

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