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Gilboa Historical Society

Learning about, sharing, and preserving our history

SPRING 2013 V. 15.1

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Our membership year is the calendar year, so many of us may not yet have rejoined the Society. You can check your status by looking at the mailing address on the back cover.

Also, please let us know of address corrections or temporary addresses.



Note: asterisk(s) or dagger(s) next to your name indicate that your membership is paid up. Neither? Please use the application on page 39 to join us as a member in the GHS.



Nate Simon

In the last issue of the newsletter, we had an article about an area peddler, Nate Simon. That article sparked other memories, and so we have two more stories on this interesting personality of our early twentieth century.

Reprinted from "On the Road in Schoharie County," 1986

NATHAN SIMON

Julia Smith

To some, Nathan Simon was an "entrepreneurial Mohammed," a ragman, a junk dealer who haggled over price and would buy anything on which he could make a nickel, who knew a soft touch when he saw one and was, at the same time, fair game for local tricksters. To others, he was Nate, a special guest, an intriguing visitor, a religious man, a link with the outside world, and a

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

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

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

Send feedback or suggestions on the Newsletter to
gerrys@gilboahome.com

Gerry Stoner, 152 Starheim Road, Stamford, NY 12167

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sojourner Schoharie housewives were pleased to make “feel at home.” Nathan Simon, a Russian Orthodox Jew, peddled dry goods throughout the southern half of Schoharie County from about 1910 to 1960. He began with a one-horse cart pulled by a horse named Bishop, and ended, years later, with a van-type truck. And, rascal or religious, penurious or warm-hearted, his impact on Schoharie County was wide and deep.

Nate’s regular sojourns were occasions for the farmers’ wives to demonstrate their hospitality to an outsider who brought visions of the world beyond their doorsteps with his visits. They permitted him his own room, warmed his bed with soapstones in winter, and cooked menus that pleased him. (His eating habits are well remembered—vegetables from the garden, sweet corn, cucumbers, potatoes, and onions, all with plenty of horse radish. Fish, herring, suckers and sardines, boiled eggs, dark bread with cheese, and pancakes, all without the least hint of grease or butter on them.) Sometimes, though, this could lead to good-natured teasing by the men of the house, particularly regarding his strong revulsion to pork and its by-products. Once when a steaming pile of pancakes was set before Nate, a fellow breakfaster remarked that they were “Awful good pancakes, even if they were cooked in pig fat,” a direct attack on Nate’s religious dietary habits.

His arrival was looked forward to as a chance to learn first hand about city goods and fancy items. Besides the standard work clothes and shoes for the men, he had a good selection of women’s underwear, “the cotton stockings we liked,” bolts of cloth, and crepe Georgette dresses for small-framed figures, all of which could be purchased for cash or exchanged for his board.

Nate also brought fascinating and unfamiliar religious rites and practices into the homes of Schoharie. The folk with whom he stayed have memories of Nate at prayer, of his observing the Sabbath and special Jewish celebrations such as Hanukkah. Nate would awaken on the Sabbath morning, face toward the east and recite or read from his prayer book before coming down for breakfast. Then, he would rinse his hands in water, dry them and, wearing his hat, sit and begin his breakfast. From sundown on Friday until sunset on Saturday, Nate would not do any work, not even place a stick of wood on the fire. He would don his skull cap, place a worn shawl over his shoulders and, facing the east, open his large Hebrew Bible for prayer. As darkness fell on the Gilboa farm, he would call for one of the house’s children to turn on the light, refusing even to perform that worldly task. Then he would continue reading, a tall, erect figure with hands folded behind, walking back and forth meditatively, perhaps through the entire night. In the morning he would again call for one of the children to turn off the light as he continued reading aloud in low, indistinct tones until sunset. At Hanukkah, the picture of Nate seated in the candlelight

on a winter's night lighting the menorah candles or pouring a glass of wine for Elijah is still vivid in the memories of the people with whom he lived. To some, his religiousness is remembered and regarded as almost synonymous with his Jewishness, both strange and exotic, far distant from Schoharie County ways.

To this day it remains important to the housewives who took Nate in, and to their children and grandchildren too, that they are remembered as being "good to Nate," caring for this foreigner whose ways were different than their own. In a way they made him a part of their families, while at the same time being unable to fathom his own family relationships. Especially difficult for the folk to understand was Nate's lack of family ties and his rejection of family responsibility. Nate rarely spoke of his family in fact. He was married but had left his wife in Prattsville to raise their three children and take care of their store, while he took to the road. It is recalled that he did not speak favorably of his wife, that she committed suicide, and that he remarried and had two children by this second wife. At the same time it is recalled how proud Nate was the day he announced he had fathered a son.

Nate's relationship to his two brothers was another enigma which was accepted as "just the way Nate was." It is said that Nate believed in helping a relative three times and in forgiving him three times. Apparently, he had come to the financial aid of his brother, Friday, those three times. On the fourth occasion, after Friday's wagon overturned in Blenheim, sending chickens and crates everywhere in total destruction, Nate would not speak of him again. When asked how Friday was doing, he would reply that he did not know who he was; Friday was no longer his brother. Such strange attitudes were incomprehensible to many Schoharie folks.

Farmers where Nate boarded tolerated him as a lazy but interesting nuisance. He loved to keep a good fire going in the stove but wasn't much help in keeping the wood box full. He liked following the men to the barn at milking time, swapping stories there with them. He told of the brutal death of his father in Czarist Russia and of how he and his younger brothers came to America and lived in the lower East Side of Manhattan. He told them stories of working for a tailor in the garment district and of Eddie Cantor coming by the shop and singing on the sidewalk for whatever change people might throw to him. Such stories from a world so far away would keep any audience's attention.

Sometimes, however, the folks' tolerance of Nate waned, especially when an occasion to teach him a lesson about bargaining presented itself. Such a time presented itself one night in the barn of Newell Miller. For two or three days, Nate had been pestering the farmer for a haircut, and this particular

night Farmer Miller was busy clipping his cows when Nate asked him again for a haircut. The “barber” asked Nate how much he would pay for a haircut, and Nate answered, “five cents.” Pulling up a stool, Nate sat down and took off his cap. Miller stood facing him, and with one quick sweep of the clippers, shaved a single path across Nate’s head, from front to back. “There” he said. “that’s five cents’ worth.” The haircut was later completed “at no charge” before Nate travelled on.

On another occasion, Nate’s limited experience with indoor plumbing was turned against him. He was a neat man, kept his hair closely cut, his beard clipped, and always wore his cap. One evening after supper, though, he must have mislaid it because it was missing. He came into the living room, asking if anyone had seen his hat. Told by one wag that it was last seen being flushed down the toilet, Nate ran in to the bathroom and flushed the toilet again, hoping to raise the vanished cap. Several times during that same evening and throughout the next day he could be heard flushing the toilet in the hope that he could retrieve his cap. Nate had always used the outhouse and was not familiar with the workings of the toilet.

Closely linked with the name of Nate Simon is the name “Bishop.” Bishop I, Bishop II, and perhaps even Bishop III were all horses used by Nate in his peddling business. Nearly everyone remembers the Bishops, not that they were especially fine animals or that Nate took especially fond care of them. They are remembered just because they were Nate’s horses. He often said that Bishop was an old bachelor and disliked women because on one occasion, Bishop had bitten a woman when she tried to pet him. When Bishop II died, the story was told that Nate had skinned him before burial on Wood’s farm—folk’s reaction was that it was “most likely a true story, for Nate would buy, sell or swap anything to make a nickle, and that included feed bags, ladies hats, ginseng, old car batteries and horse hides.”



Nathan Simon and Bishop, his faithful horse. When Bishop finally died, Nate was accused of skinning the hide from him before burying him. (Photo courtesy of Elwood Hitchcock)

Nate’s business dealings with many folk in Schoharie contributed to their forming a prejudice toward him, for most had had limited experience with Jewish traders, while his love for a dollar left him vulnerable to their tricks and rough humor. Once, Nate pulled up alongside the road where the town’s highway crew was working. Usually the foreman would wave Nate on and, in return, Nate would call him “Simon Legree.” But this particular morning he was

permitted to stop his truck at the work site. He got out and began unpacking, asking if there was anything in particular the men might want. One of the crew asked for a special kind of sweater which he knew Nate sold. But the van's contents were accessible only from the rear doors and every recess of the truck's interior was packed full in a most disorderly fashion. Nate took out everything looking for the sweater. There were heaps and heaps of clothing piled behind the truck and the men were certain that he would never be able to fit it all back inside. But at last Nate triumphantly held up the sweater he had been looking for. Yes, that was the kind of sweater the man wanted, all right, but unfortunately it was in the wrong color. Nate knew he had been a victim and became terribly angry. He crammed all the goods back into the truck, shook his fist at the highway man, and continued up the road.

On another occasion, Nate the peddler got the better of the deal when he went shopping for tires for his truck. He pulled into the local garage and asked if they had any tires for sale which would fit the van's wheels. The owner said that he did, indeed, have some, and Nate was quoted a price. Nate then asked if he would "throw off" any if he bought two tires. Yes, the garageman answered, they would be so-much less for the pair. At that, Nate decided to buy the tires. He said that he wouldn't have to be trusted for their cost because he could pay for one now and would take it with him. The second tire could be sent up to Gilboa on the stage and he would pay for it there. Nate paid for the one tire, put it in his truck, and off he went, satisfied with his deal. He never sent for the second tire.

Some time in the 1960s, Nate Simon returned to Prattsville to live and be cared for by a family he had previously known. When he was no longer able to peddle because of his age, he took up a paper route and collected aluminum cans for redemption. And folks he had known in his earlier peddling years used to stop by to visit him. About a month before his death, probably in 1972, his daughter came and took him to a nursing home. It was rumored that in his last years he kept a suitcase under his bed containing thousands of dollars he had saved from his earnings.

Nathan Simon still lives in Schoharie County. Rooms in the farmhouses where he stayed are still called "Nate's Room." One child of the Gilboa family that boarded Nate for thirty years carries the name that he chose for her, and the great-grandson of a family from Broome Center who befriended him early in his career has been named after Nathan Simon. Such honors do not come lightly, nor do they disappear.

Over the years this unusual and durable peddler built special relationships with the folk. His travel in the hills and valleys of Schoharie touched the lives of

thousands of people. As one of his friends said, “If it weren’t for Nate Simon, I’d never be talking with you now.”

Julia Smith worked at the Old Stone Fort in Schoharie, lived in Breakabeen with her husband, the minister of the Breakabeen Presbyterian Church, and developed this paper for an adult education course through Cobleskill Agricultural and Technical College in 1986. Dr. H. Duell taught the series of courses called “On the Road in Schoharie County,” and these papers give an enduring insight into earlier times in our county. Reprinted here courtesy of the author and SUNY Cobleskill.

Rose Mace recalled that Nate often stayed overnight at their house and always wanted to pull his own weight—be it helping with the cutting of ice or giving the young girls of his host family a pair of brown stockings.

Rose’s parents, Goldie and Newell Miller, fostered a large number of children—a *really large number*, many of them girls. True to form, Nate would always repay the Miller’s hospitality with stockings for all these girls, grumbling as he did so.

<http://hubbardfamilymusic.blogspot.com>

THE PEDDLER

The Ballad of Nate Simon

Gerry Hubbard

In the winter 2012 newsletter, we had three articles on peddlers from different periods in our communal history, and one of them was on Nate Simon. After the article appeared I was directed to a web song on this man.

The words are:

The peddler, an old Jewish man, drove up from New York,
 He went to church on Saturdays and stayed away from pork.
 His dull green Chevy paneled truck was built in '32
 and he dressed in denim overalls, faded, worn and blue.

A real life old time peddler, his route was long and rough
 and he drove the Catskill Mountain roads selling all his stuff.
 Straw hats 'n' jeans 'n' sewing thread, his truck was crammed with goods
 and he'd start out high and end up low just like we knew he would.

He had a scraggly unkempt beard all sprinkled through with gray,
 his deep set eyes held a guarded look that never went away.
 His manners were impeccable, old world genteel and fine,
 his voice, accented, rumbled low, but always warm and kind.

A rolling-dry-goods-hardware-store, he'd show up close to noon
 and to keep his faith, for lunch he ate potatoes with a spoon.
 That old green truck was loaded with his memories and his dreams
 as well as khaki shirts and pants and gingham by the ream.

He'd always block the tires so his old truck wouldn't roll,
 and I bet he had the shadows of old pogroms on his soul.
 Of all the many millions he knew of one at least
 an uncle, brother, nephew, a neighbor or a niece.

I heard his wife took her own life in a very painful way
 by drinking lye or DDT on a bleak, besotted day.
 Other's lives are mysteries we cannot fathom well,
 I guess she changed a hell to heaven or heaven into hell.

We don't know where he came from, and we don't know where he went,
 but he still lives in our memories as strange and old and bent—
 and when I think about him now, I'd really like to know,
 would he be surprised we remember him from 60 years ago?

*The song, written by Gerry Hubbard, is sung by Gerry with Craig Hubbard on guitar at
<http://hubbardfamilymusic.blogspot.com/search?q=the+peddler>*

GHS Calendar for Summer Activities

June 19, 2013: June meeting, 7:00 at the Town Hall, a great speaker TBA

July 6–7, 2013: Gilboa Museum open weekends thru Labor Day

July 4, 2013: Eleventh annual Flat Creek Kids Parade

July 14, 2013: Gilboa Museum Open House

July 17, 2013: Annual Ice Cream Social

August 21, 2013: Annual GHS Field Trip TBA

Put these dates on your calendar.

Bring the kids, carpool a neighbor!

The Pratt Family, 1626–1871

At our March meeting, we will hear from Carolyn Bennett about the distinguished national history of the Pratts from when Lieutenant William Pratt came to America with Puritan Thomas Hooker and his group in 1626 until the death of Zadock Pratt, Jr. in 1871. Zadock Pratt, Jr. was a soldier in the War of 1812; founded one of America's first planned communities in Pratts-ville; sponsored the Washington Monument, transcontinental railroad, and Smithsonian Institution. He is memorialized at the Zadock Pratt Museum.

Other Pratts also distinguished themselves during these times—men like Zadock Pratt, Sr. (Revolutionary War pensioner who had been imprisoned in the infamous Sugar House and on the British prison ship, *Whitby*) and Colonel George W. Pratt (commander of the 20th Ulster Guard and mortally wounded in the Battle of Second Manassas, 1862); and Pratt women Esther and Beda Dickerman, Abigail and Mary Watson, and Susie Grimm.

Carolyn Bennett is the Director of the Zadock Pratt Museum and the Prattsville Historian.

Carpool a Friend

Wednesday, March 20, 2013 at 7 PM
Gilboa Town Hall

Flood Relief Organizations

- Blenheim:** { Rural Area Revitalization Effort, Inc., a non-profit at 125
and Creamery Road, North Blenheim, NY 12131 (518 827-3166,
Breakabeen: { rareny.org) and/or North Blenheim Presbyterian Church,
Clauverwie Road, Middleburgh, NY 12122
- Middleburgh:** Village of Middleburgh Flood Relief, P.O. Box 789, Middleburgh, NY 12122
- Prattsville:** Prattsville Relief Fund, c/o NBT Bank, P.O. Box 380, Grand Gorge, NY 12434
- Schoharie:** Schoharie Recovery Fund, P.O. Box III, Schoharie, NY 12157
- SALT** Schoharie Area Long Term, P.O. Box 777, Schoharie, NY 12157 518 702-5017 <http://www.saltrecovery.org/>

PRESIDENT LINCOLN

Sends Resolution to Governors for Ratification

*Proposed as the Thirteenth Amendment
to the Constitution of the United States*

Washington: 16 March 1861 President Lincoln forwarded the Corwin Resolution to each of the state governors for consideration. Should the requisite three-fourths of states approve this resolution, it will become known as the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution.

It reads:

JOINT RESOLUTION TO AMEND
THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES.

Resolved, by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that the following article be proposed to the Legislatures of the several States as an amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which, when ratified by three-fourths of said Legislatures, shall be valid, to all intents and purposes, as part of the said Constitution, viz :

ARTICLE XIII.

No amendment shall be made to the Constitution which will authorize or give to Congress the power to abolish or interfere, within any State, with the domestic institutions thereof, including that of persons held to labor or service by the laws of said State.

WILLIAM PENNINGTON,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

* * * *

It may be puzzling to think that Lincoln would be willing to allow slavery to continue—after all, civics classes and Spielberg’s movie tell us that Lincoln *freed* the slaves.

Actually, there were 2 earlier proposals that could have become the thirteenth amendment had they not failed to be ratified.

Procedures for Amending the Constitution

There are two methods of proposing amendments to the Constitution:

- A majority vote in two-thirds of the state legislatures can call for a Constitutional Convention. This has not yet occurred; or
- Congress itself can draft a resolution that is passed by a two-thirds majority in both Houses of Congress. This resolution then would be sent to each state for discussion in their legislatures. Three-fourths of the states must approve the resolution for it to become an amendment to the Constitution.

Our representatives in Congress typically propose up to 200 amendments to the Constitution during *each term* of Congress, but only 33 resolutions have been passed by the requisite majorities in both houses. Of these, 27 have been ratified—and became law—and 6 remained “open.”

Possibilities for the 13th Amendment

The twelfth amendment was proposed in 1803 and ratified on June 15, 1804; the next resolution to be ratified would become the 13th Amendment.

The Titles of Nobility Amendment

A proposal called *The Titles of Nobility Amendment* was approved by Congress in 1810, but failed ratification by the states. If approved, it would have revoked the citizenship of any American citizen who accepted a foreign title of nobility.

The Corwin Amendment

Fifty-six years later, President Buchanan urged Congress to come up with an “explanatory amendment” that protected Southern states’ rights.

As a last-ditch effort to avert the outbreak of the American Civil War, Senator William Seward of New York and Representative Thomas Corwin of Ohio shepherded passage through their respective houses of what became known as the Corwin Amendment. To avoid the “political cliff” facing the country, drafting the Corwin Amendment was accomplished in February 1861, was passed by the required pluralities, and was sent to President Buchanan on March 2, 1861.

Communications before the Civil War were slow—Western Union Telegraph was founded in 1851, and by 1860 had lines radiating from the East coast to the Mississippi River, and from the Great Lakes to the Ohio River. But communications throughout the South were slow—the federal Congress deliberated in relative obscurity from state governments, and state governments were basing their actions on local belief of what the national government might do.

During February 1861, most of the South was in ignorance of the Corwin

Amendment and South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas seceded from the Union. Lincoln was inaugurated as President on March 4 and the paperwork to ratify the proposed amendment to perpetuate slavery did not get forwarded to the states until the middle of March. It is little wonder that Ohio, Maryland, and Illinois were the only states to take any action on this matter, and there was little point in trying to hold the Union together after secession had already occurred.

The Ratified Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution

The Emancipation Proclamation had been a wartime tool aimed against the economy of the Confederacy—it freed slaves in belligerent states but would not end slavery in the rest of the country.

The Lincoln administration pressed Congress to pass an amendment to end slavery once and for all. It was finalized by Congress in December 1864, was passed by the House of Representatives on January 31, 1865 and by the Senate on the next day. It was then sent to the states and ratified on December 6, 1865. It was the first amendment to be ratified in over sixty years, and the first to significantly expand the definition of liberty since the Bill of Rights in 1789.

ARTICLE XIII.

Sec. 1. Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

Sec. 2. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Gilboa Historical Society Donations

We are making plans to further improve the grounds around the museum, expand and improve our collections, work on a protective display of additional farm equipment donated to the museum, and plan for the restoration of the Forks in the Road Schoolhouse.

If you want to donate to these (or other) activities, please get in touch with a GHS board member or send us a note with the membership application form on page 39 of this newsletter.

NEW ONLINE RESOURCES

New York State Census for 1855

Some portions of the New York State Census for 1855 have been lost, but the majority is now available free, online at

<https://familysearch.org/search/collection/1937366>

This census asked the following questions:

Dwellings numbered in order of visitation; of what material built; and value.

Families numbered in the order of their visitation; name of every person whose usual place of abode on the first day of June was in this family; age; sex; color (black, mulatto, blank [white]); relation to the head of the family.

In what county of this State, or in what other State or Foreign Country born.

Married; widowed.

Years resident in this city or town (great for migration studies).

Profession, trade, or occupation.

Native voter; naturalized voter; alien.

Persons of color not taxed; persons over 21 years who cannot read and write; owners of land.

Deaf, dumb, blind, insane, or idiotic.

Topographic Maps

The University of New Hampshire has scanned topographic maps for all of New England and New York, and has them available online. The Gilboa quadrangle, for instance, is there in 4 parts, and each file is less than 2 mb.

<http://docs.unh.edu/nhtopos/nhtopos.htm>

Thanks to LDS members and non-member volunteer indexers for the census, and to all those UNH TAs and graduate assistants who worked on the topos.

Making Sense of the American Civil War

A 6-session reading and discussion program, sponsored by Zadock Pratt Museum with support from NYS Council on the Humanities, will start on Saturday, March 16, 11:30 AM-1 PM at the Village Square Literary Center and Bookstore, 7950 Main Street, Rte. 23A, Hunter. The subsequent dates will be March 23, April 13, May 3, May 17 and June 22.

Civil War historian John Quinn will facilitate the sessions and the reading materials will be provided by the Zadock Pratt Museum. Group size is limited: send an email of interest to prattmuseum@hotmail.com and receive a registration form. FMI: 518-299-7122.

PROSPECT FARMS

Claude and Norma Cook

Fred Murphy worked in New York, and got away from those pressures to recharge his batteries in Stamford. His wife, Gertrude, had passed before I came on the scene in the late 1950s.

Fred was a gregarious personality who loved to have people over and entertain. He was proud of his farm and local accomplishments, and was passionate about creating jobs for people in the area.

Agriculture in the mid-1960s

Local agriculture as a Catskill business had an up-and-down history, but Fred had a dream to bring agriculture back to profitability with a farm that was large enough to withstand market cycles. He bought additional farms over a period of time and slowly integrated them into an efficient whole.

Most of his neighbors in the 1950s were looking to get out of agriculture and Fred's dream for the area was appealing to these folks. Late in that decade, many neighboring farmers agreed to sell their properties and get rid of the economic headaches, and often the clincher was that Fred allowed these farmers to remain in their former houses. The Soule farm, for instance, was bought in the '50s but the family stayed in their home for nearly a decade while their former land was integrated into Prospect Farms.



The side of the Murphy home in August, 1966. Paul and Margaret Carroll lived in this section. Paul worked for Catskill Craftsmen (another Murphy enterprise) and loved working on the gardens. Fred Murphy loved the gardens but did not like cut or potted flowers inside the house.

Picture from the scrapbooks of Norma and Claude Cook.

The scope of Prospect Farms

Seven large farms formed the core of the operation, and the land stretched from State Route 10 next to Scotch Valley Ski Center on the north to the grade going up Utsayantha on the south. The western boundary was just inside the Village of Stamford; the eastern boundary ran close to Benjamin Road.



Prospect Farms stretched from Scotch Valley on State Route 10 south through the eastern edge of the Village of Stamford to the Mt. Utsyantha slopes; and west/east from inside the Village along State Route 23 into Gilboa, including the farms on South Gilboa Road to Benjamin Road and State Route 23 to Charcoal Road. The majority of this property was in Gilboa and the approximate extent of the farm is shown in grey.

- Key: 1 Farview Farm 2 Hunter Farm 3 Pine Island Farm 4 Brenn Farm
 5 Gray Farm 6 Home Farm 7 Moore Farm

The '60s and '70s: years of construction

I was committed to farming, had tried unsuccessfully to buy a family farm, and then joined Prospect Farms as a laborer. I was flattered—no other word for it—by Mr. Murphy’s interest in me and my ideas on farming, and I jumped at the opportunity of becoming the manager of Prospect Farms.

But Fred Murphy taught me a lot in the area of working conditions—he insisted that all of the people at Prospect Farms earn a decent wage, have adequate housing, and that they receive recognition commensurate with their responsibilities. Fred therefore hired Jim Snyder, a contractor from Gilboa, to shape the infrastructure of Prospect Farms.

Barns were modified to hold sawdust bedding from Catskill Craftsmen, modern milking systems were installed, and additions to existing barns significantly increased capacity. Several barns were modified and additional structures designed for maple sugaring and cattle breeding.

In terms of people, houses were renovated as they became available, and houses and apartments were fashioned for the staff of Prospect Farms. Fred

Construction at Prospect Farms in the 1960s and 1970s

Housing

1961	new house (Soule)*
1965	new garage (Soule)
1967	renovation, old house (Soule) 2 apts.
1967-68	new construction, 3 apts. (Smith)
1967-68	Hellijas house, 2 apts.
1969	renovation, 2 apts. (Soule)
1970	renovated Collier house, 2 apts.
1971	new house, garage (Pine Island)

* We bought this house in 1974.

Barns expanded & renovated

1966-68	2 new silos (Pine Island)
1967	barn (Soule)
1968	barn (Soule) burned
1967-68	barn (Smith)
1967-68	Hellijas barn
1968	heifer barn (Soule)
1968	barn (Farview)
1969-70	barn twice (Hunter)
1975	dry cow barn (Farview)
1976	addition to barn (Gray)
1978	barn (Home)
1978	barn (Moore)
1979	barn (Brenn)
1982	second addition to barn (Gray) DelAir loose housing modernized sap house (Farview)

Murphy insisted that Prospect Farms apartments have at least a full bath-and-a-half, and houses had to have 2 full baths-and-a-half.

Thanks to Fred's concern, Prospect Farms became a picture of modern efficiency and health, where all the cows and people alike were safe, healthy, and productive.

Another example of his humanistic approach was in neighborhood cooperation: one of the large cauliflower farms in the area was run by George Todd on State Route 23 towards Grand Gorge and on South Gilboa Road to the east of the hamlet. Cauliflower had been very profitable for this area, but cauliflower needs significant amounts of water and is subject to clubroot—a disease that is introduced into the soil by the plant itself. As a result, each year's crop has to be planted in ground near a stream or pond and that has no cauliflower history (or is heavily limed). Water was not a concern due to the fire ponds on most farms and Bearkill Creek along Route 23, but George needed cauliflower-free land for his crops.

Murphy's solution was to use a bulldozer to annually level a few acres of Prospect Farm land near a pond or stream and then turn it over to George, who would groom the land with fertilizer and lime. The first year's crop of cauliflower from this soil was generally great, and lime generously applied would make it fertile for a couple more years of cauliflower. Then, he would return the land to the farm and work on another patch. George had great crops from this practice, and Prospect Farms had better land for both crops and pasture. Most

of the land south of Route 23 (the current Eklund and Albano farms) has a history both of growing cauliflower for George Todd and as a working dairy farm in the Prospect Farms operation.

Impact on the community

I managed the Soule Farm, and each of the other farms had a resident barn-manager reporting to me: Norwood Tompkins (Pine Island), Tom Meehan (Farview), Dave Sperbeck (Hunter), Arnold Clapper (Gray), Bob Monroe (Brenn), Cliff Speenburgh (Moore), and a few managers at the Home Farm including Doug Lull and later Millie Sparling.

Each of the farms had a varying number of other hands, so that each of the farms was self-supporting in terms of milking chores and could supply work crews for any projects required by Prospect Farms as a whole. The bookkeeping was handled centrally out of the office in Cold Spring (the building at the western end of Prospect Farms land), and my wife, Norma, handled the payroll at our home.

During the 1970s, Prospect Farms was the largest dairy farm in the area and hosted tours for the general public and the agricultural community. It had a total of about 1300 head, with about 750 cows being milked daily. We employed about 24 people full-time, putting in 6-day work-weeks; but unlike traditional farmers, the people at Prospect Farms also took vacations!

In thinking back on that time, I've got to say that it is truly exciting when you are doing the types of things that we did. Mr. Murphy took good care of us—he was the type of guy who didn't just talk, but *did*—and we felt that we were an elite group doing what others before had never done.

Fred Murphy died in 1979 (with a sketch of the new barn on his desk and commitments for two more years of construction on various projects). However, the 1980s didn't have the usual expansion and the cohesion, and the business went into receivership and then on the auction block in 1997.

The Gilboa Museum
122 Stryker Road
Gilboa, NY 12076

Closed for the season, but
open by appointment (607 588-9413), and
online 24/7 at <http://www.gilboafossils.org>

**PROSPECT FARMS
MILKING HERD & EQUIPMENT DISPERSAL
APRIL 22ND, 23RD & 24TH**

STAMFORD, NY 12167

SALE STAFF

DAVE RAMA
607-746-2226

HAROLD FRALEY
717-546-6907

DONALD WELK
717-687-7475

HORACE BACKUS
315-963-7231

BUDDY FLEMING
607-753-7818

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**SALE CLERKS
MERRY RAMA & PAUL ROWE**

ORDER OF SALE FOR CATTLE SELLING:	4/22/97	1. SUNRISE BARN
		2. BRENN BARN
	4/23/97	3. HUNTER BARN
		4. FARVIEW BARN

EQUIPMENT SELLS APRIL 24TH AT THE BRENN BARN LOCATION - 2 MILES EAST OF STAMFORD ON RT 23!

MOTEL: RED CARPET MOTOR INN, STAMFORD, NY 607-652-7391

TERMS OF SALE: CASH OR GOOD CHECK! NO CATTLE RELEASED UNTIL SETTLED FOR!

LUNCH WILL BE AVAILABLE AT ALL LOCATIONS

OWNERS:
PROSPECT FARMS INC.
WILLIAM MURPHY
MANAGER: DOUG MURPHY
607-652-7581
HERDSMAN: ARNIE CLAPPER

SALE MANAGED BY/CATALOGS



Dave Rama RD 2 Box 79 Delhi, NY 13753
Ph 607/746-2226 Fax 607/746-2911

DIRECTIONS - SEE MAP ON FOLLOWING PAGE

Title page of the program for the foreclosure sale of Prospect Farms. Picture from the scrapbooks of Norma and Claude Cook.

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

Mirror Recorder, Wednesday, January 31, 1968

PROSPECT FARMS BARN LEVELED BY FIRE

68 Head of Livestock Driven from Dairy Barn

A large dairy barn owned by Prospect Farms on the Stamford–Grand Gorge Road was completely destroyed by fire Monday night. The farm was the former Soule property purchased several years ago by Prospect Farms and included in their Pine Island Division.

According to Claude Cook, farm manager, Thomas Pape, an Adirondack Trailways bus driver stopped at their home around 7 p.m. and told them the barn was on fire. Mr. Cook, who resides next to the farm, said when he looked out the window, flames were coming out of the roof in the east end of the building. Arthur Wood, an employee on the farm, had just finished milking a few minutes before the fire was discovered, Mr. Cook stated.

Cook, Sam Mason and members of the Wright family of Roxbury, who were passing by at the time, helped drive the stock from the burning barn. Led to safety were 56 head of cows and heifers along with 12 calves. 40 head were milkers, Mr. Cook said.

As far as he could determine Tuesday morning, Mr. Cook said the barn and contents were a total loss. A silo located nearby, constructed of concrete, was saved and the power unit for the barn cleaner was only slightly damaged. The barn cleaner and a self-propelled truck used in the barn were lost.

The barn had just recently been renovated and remodeled. An addition was built to accommodate 20 cows along with new stalls, concrete work and installation of a new pipeline system. "There was enough hay stored in the upper level which would have lasted us until summer but this was all lost," he stated. A large quantity of shavings were stored in the east end of the barn.

Stamford firemen were directed by Chief Elton Laux Jr. When they arrived, the fire had a head start in the east end of the barn while flames



Only concrete and twisted steel remaining of the leveled Prospect Farm dairies barn following Monday night's fire. Photograph courtesy of the *Mirror Recorder*, Stamford, New York January 31, 1968 from the scrapbooks of Norma and Claude Cooke

were fanned by a strong wind. One of the local fire trucks was unable to get to a nearby pond for water due to heavy snow but some water was obtained by other means.

Hobart firemen stood by in Stamford and also delivered an auxiliary pump to the scene. Terry Collins and Sam Mason were treated at Community Hospital for smoke poisoning and released. Firemen stayed at the scene until 1:30 Tuesday morning.

The 12 calves were taken across the road to Leland Gray's property. Remainder of the livestock was herded to Blackberry Street and placed in a barn on the former Smith farm. They were later trucked to the farm of Albert Jones in Gilboa.

In a subsequent edition of the *Mirror Recorder*:

Thomas Pape, Adirondack Trailways bus driver, received a \$100 bond from Claude Cook, manager of Prospect Farms. While on his regular run from Kingston to Oneonta one night in January, he noticed one of Prospect dairy barns on fire and quickly stopped his bus and notified Mr. Cook. This action, according to Cook, saved the entire herd from perishing in the fire that destroyed the barn. . . . The bond was a gift from Fred Murphy, owner of Prospect Farms.

Reprinted courtesy of the Mirror Recorder, from the scrapbooks of Norma and Claude Cook.

A Crooked Gun

Peter Lindemann

In my upcoming book, *A Crooked Gun: The Civil War Dead of Schoharie County*, I see epic themes from some stories of the 395 Schoharie County men who died in the Civil War. For instance, Schoharie's Col. Simon Mix died leading his men at Petersburg and lies there yet in an unknown grave—but had been on the same ticket as Abraham Lincoln in 1860.

Thirty-six Schoharie County men died, and most remain, at Gettysburg, the bloodiest battle and turning point of the war. I hope to move these—and all of our honored dead—to higher ground.

**Carpool a Friend
Wednesday, April 17, 2013 at 7 PM
Gilboa Town Hall**

THE GILBOA MUSEUM LIBRARY

Karen Cuccinello

The Museum Committee asked Karen Cuccinello to document and organize the books, pictures, and documents in the museum.

Here is her report.

- 1941 Autograph Book of Miss Mabel Post [mostly 6th graders at Gilboa-Conesville School]. [in drawers]
- Angel Dogs: Divine Messages of Love*, by Allen & Linda Anderson, 2005.
- Another Day, Another Dollar: Civilian Conservation Corps of the Catskills*, by Diane Galusha, 2008.
- Ballads of the Hard Hills and Other Poems*, by Katharine Salisbury Harrington. [3 copies, 2 in drawers]
- Blenheim-Gilboa Power Authority:
Progress Towards Power, Summer 1973—First Power: Blenheim-Gilboa.
— Ground Breaking, Blenheim-Gilboa Pumped Storage Power Plant, July 12, 1969.
- Blenheim-Gilboa Power Project scrapbook, 1969–1972. [author unknown]
- Blenheim Reformed Church: Baptisms 1797–1839.
- Brainard Genealogy.
- Catskill Mountain Region Guide* [magazine]: 9/2008. [3 copies]
- Catskills*. [magazine, in 3-ring binder, mixed with *The Conservationist*]: Spring & Autumn 1973, Spring 1974.
- Cave House Museum of Mining and Geology*, Howe Cave.
- Cemeteries: Gilboa Rural (alphabetical & by section), Conesville, and Keyserkill. [from the collection of Beatrice Mattice]
- Census, Broome 1855. [from the collection of Beatrice Mattice]
- Census, Gilboa 1855 and 1900. [from the collection of Beatrice Mattice]
- Changin' Work and Other Stories: A collection*, by Jack Gordon.
- Church of Broome, later Church of Gilboa 1843–1879, "The Chapel."
- Civil War: The Town of Prattsville and the Neighboring Greene, Delaware & Schoharie County Area*, by Gerald E. Sutch, 1986.
- Cole Genealogy.
- Collector's Price Guide to Bottles, Tobacco Tins and Relics*, by Marvin & Helen Davis.
- Conservationist, The* [magazine in 3-ring binder, mixed with *Catskills* and some loose]: Feb./Mar. 1973, June/July 1973, Apr./May 1975, Sept./Oct. 1976, Mar./Apr. 1977, July/Aug. 1977, Sept./Oct. 1977, Nov./Dec. 1977, Jan./Feb. 1978, May/June 1978, Aug. 2007, Oct. 2007, Feb. 2008, Apr. 2008, June 2008.
- Country Life Scrapbook: Moving Antique Farm Equipment*, November 14, 2008. [donated to the Gilboa Museum by Michael McNamara]
- Court Ledger of Town Justice, c. 1914–18. [in drawers]
- Diaries and Memories: Stilwell, Stevens, Lewis, Miller, Stryker, Reed, Tibbits and*

- Brandow*. [from the collection of Beatrice Mattice]
- Diary: The Year 1927*. [To Uncle Ira from Everett & Julia] [in drawers]
- Early American Cookery* "The Good Housekeeper, 1841," by Sarah Josepha Hale, 1996.
- Ellerson Genealogy, papers, etc. [3-ring binder & metal box]
- Eyes of the Storm, Hurricane Irene in Images & Words*, by Gilboa-Conesville Central School Students, 2012.
- Family Songbook*, Readers Digest, 1969.
- First American Cookbook*, by Amelia Simmons, 1984. [originally 1958]
- Flood 2006: Disaster in the Heartland*.
- Folklore from the Schoharie Hills* (songs & ballads), by Emelyn E. Gardner, 1937.
- Four Traditions: Women of NY During the American Revolution*, by Linda Grant DePauw, 1974.
- Frontiersmen of New York*, Vol. 1, & *Border Strife*, Vol. 2, by J. R. Simms, 1883. [in drawers]
- Fulton, Town of, 175th Anniversary Celebration, July 12, 2003.
- Fulton, Town of, People and Places, c. 2007.
- Gilboa Bird Register*.
- Gilboa, Conesville & Manorkill Ancestors*, by Randy Scutt. [3-ring binder]
- Gilboa-Conesville Central School Yearbook *Reflector*: 1932, 1934–36, 1938–40, 1942, 1945, 1947–63, 1965–69, 1972, 1974, 1975, 1983, 1986, 1987.
- Gilboa, The Fifteen Churches of*: [information gathered by Beatrice Mattice]
- Gilboa Fossils*, by Linda VanAller Hernick, NYS Museum, 1996 & 2003.
- Gilboa Historical Society newsletters: Winter 1999, Winter 2000, Spring & Fall/Winter 2001, Spring/Summer & Fall/Winter 2002, Spring/Summer & Fall/Winter 2003, Spring/Summer & Fall/Winter 2004, Spring/Summer & Fall/Winter 2005, Spring/Summer 2006, Fall 2007, Summer 2008, Spring 2009, Fall 2009, Fall 2010.
- Gilboa—NY's Quest for Water and the Destruction of a Small Town*, by Alexander R. Thomas, 2005.
- Gilboa Reformed Church Vital Records: Baptisms 1801–1882; Marriages 1803–1884.
- Gilboa, NY, Sesquicentennial 1848–1998*.
- Gilboa Sesquicentennial Celebration*, August 1, 1998. [booklet] [4 copies]
- Handbook Guide to Orange County Bottles*, by Beatrice Rosenblum, 1974.
- Handbook of Paleontology for Beginners and Amateurs*, Part 1: The Fossils, by Winifred Golding, 1950.
- Historic American Engineering Record of the Route 20 Bridge*, NYS Museum, 2010.
- Historian Reports*, 1970s. [mostly Jefferson and county, compiled by Mildred Bailey, County Historian] [3-ring binder]
- History of New York*, by William Smith, A.M., 1814. [in drawers]
- Honoring Our Veterans: A Quilting Bee of Acknowledgment, c. 2009.
- Hot Whiskey for Five: Schoharie County and the Civil War*, by Edward A. Hagan, 1985.
- Kaatskill Life* [magazine]: Summer 1990, Summer & Winter 2005, Summer & Fall 2006, Summer 2008, Fall & Winter 2010.
- Land of Little Rivers: A Story in Photos of Catskill Fly Fishing*, by Austin McK. Francis.

- Liquid Assets: A History of the NYC Water System*, by Diane Galusha, 1999.
- Mackey Grange Minutes 1913–1916. [in drawers]
- Middleburgh Telephone Books: 1996–97, 1997–98, 1998–99.
- Middleburgh Telephone Book: 1938–39. [in center case]
- Middleburgh Telephone Company: A Century of Service, 1897–1997*.
- Murders and Funky Stuff in Schoharie County*, by Karen Cuccinello, 2012.
- National Treasury of Cookery (series): Victorian America, Early America, Young Republic, Ante Bellum America and Westward Empire*, 1967.
- Nature*, “Lost World,” April 2007. [magazine, 3 copies]
- New Fossil Discovery*.
- New York Archives* [magazine]: Fall 2001, Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter 2002; Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter 2004; Spring, Summer, Fall 2005; Summer, Fall 2006; Summer, Fall 2007; Spring, Summer 2008; Summer 2009.
- New York History*, Summer & Winter 2001. [& 1 more book], NYS Historical Association.
- Nineteenth-Century Costume and Fashion*, by Herbert Norris & Oswald Curtis, 1998.
- Notebook. [possibly written by John Ammann in 1887–89; includes his Civil War service] [in drawers]
- Oak Hill: Voices from an American Hamlet*, by Michael Hayes, 2007.
- Official 1985 Price Guide to Bottles*.
- Old Eagle-Nester: The Lost Legends of the Catskills*, by Doris West Brooks.
- Old Gilboa, Pictures of, c. 1920s. [compiled by Richard Lewis]
- Old “Up and Down” Catskill Mountain Branch of the NY Central*, by John Ham & Robert Bucenec, 2003.
- Oldest Known Petrified Forest*, by Winifred Goldring, NYS Museum, Albany, 1927.
- Old Stone Fort Library Guide*, 1998.
- Old Stone Church and Fortress, Catalogue & Historical Notes*, Schoharie County Historical Society, 1933.
- Opening of the Gilboa Museum*, July 11, 2010. [booklet]
- Owl 1959*. [Yearbook for Albany Business College]
- Partners in Success: The NYS Archives and the Archives Partnership Trust*.
- People Made It Happen Here: History of Rensselaerville, 1788–1950*.
- Pride of the Valley: Railroadng in Schoharie County*, by E. A. Hagan, 1828–1942.
- Public Archaeology Facility Report: Gilboa Dam Project, 2010 & 2011*. [sponsored by NYC] [4 books]
- Rocks and Gems*, by DeWitte Hagar, 1960.
- Revolutionary Rangers: Daniel Morgan’s Riflemen and Their Role on the Northern Frontier, 1778–1783*, by Richard B. LaCrosse, Jr., 2002.
- Rogers Family Letters*. [3-ring binder]
- Saturday Evening Post* [magazine]: 11/13/1926. [poor shape; in drawers]
- Schoharie County Cemeteries*, by Schoharie County Historical Society, 2009.
- Schoharie County Historical Review*: Oct. 1949, Oct. 1953, May 1954, Fall/Winter 1988, Spring/Summer & Fall/Winter 1989, Spring/Summer & Fall/Winter 1990, Spring/Summer & Fall/Winter 1991, Spring/Summer 1992.
- Schoharie County One-Room Schoolhouses*, by Karen Cuccinello, 2011.
- Schoharie County scrapbook, 1976–77.

[newspaper clippings mostly from
Jefferson & Blenheim]

School Books

Elementary Geography, by James Mon-
teith, 1877.

School Reader, 4th book, by Charles W.
Sanders, A.M.

English Reader, by Lindley Murray,
1832?

Elements of Written Arithmetic, by
Charles Davies, 1884.

How to Keep Well, Albert F. Blaisdell,
M.D., 1896. [in center case]

Evangeline: A Tale of Acadia, by Henry
W. Longfellow.

Manual of Patriotism, by Charles R.
Skinner, 1900.

Album of Horses, by Marguerite Henry,
1951.

Hand-Book of Ready References, edited
by Andrew A. Gardenier, Ph.D.

Book-Keeping, by Bryant & Stratton,
1866.

Hygienic Physiology, by Joel Dorman
Steele, Ph.D., 1889.

Scott's Lady of the Lake, by L. DuPont
Syle, M.A.

Government Class Book, by Andrew W.
Young, 1903.

Students American History, by D. H.
Montgomery, 1899.

The Cooking School, by Emma E.
Brown, 1880.

Stories from Early NY History, by Sher-
man Williams, 1910.

America's Story, by Mara L. Pratt, 1908.
100-page composition book from
School District No. 7, South
Gilboa, by Marian Grey and Mary
J. Holmes.

Shandaken Tunnel, issued by Ulen &
Company, 1923.

Sidney: Images of America, by Erin An-

draws and the Sidney Historical Asso-
ciation, 2010.

*Sir Walter Scott: Political Works & Sketch
of His Life*, by J.W. Lake, 1843.

*Slughters' History of Schoharie County
1795-1995*. [compiled by Lester & Anne
Hendrix]

*Slughters' Instant History of Schoharie
County*, by Hendrix & Whitbeck, 1988.

*Some Information on Broome Center and
Mackey*. [from the collection of Beat-
rice Mattice]

Southard Genealogy.

Stone Fort Days, 1983-1990. [booklet]

*Story of the Susquehanna Turnpike, West
Through the Catskills*, by Dorothy
Kubik, 2001.

*They Walked These Hills Before Me: An
Early History of the Town of Conesville*,
by Beatrice H. Mattice, 1980.

*Through "Poverty's Vale": A Hardscrabble
Boyhood in Upstate NY, 1832-1862*, by
Henry Conklin, 1974.

*Time Wearing Out Memory: Schoharie
County*, by Steve Gross and Susan
Daley, 2008.

*Tomahawks and Sabers, Indians vs. Cav-
alry*, by John T. Hayes, 1996.

*Trappers of New York, or a Biography of
Nicholas Stoner and Nathaniel Foster*,
by Jephtha R. Simms, 1860.

Triumph from Tragedy, by Arpenia
Karagosian, 1997.

*Walk in the Woods, A: Rediscovering Amer-
ica on the Appalachian Trail*, Bill
Bryson, 1998.

War in Schohary, 1777-1783, by Edward A.
Hagan, 1980.

When Cauliflower Was King, by Diane
Galusha, 2004.

Windy Ridge Grange #1573, South Gilboa,
Stamford, NY - Yearbook 1985-1986.

Wyckoff Genealogy.

Wyckoff, Imer H. [4 certificates c. 1960s–70s, in drawers and assorted files in 3-ring binder]

Loose Sheets

Anti-Rent Wars in the area.

Bartholomew Becker Surveys.

Blenheim History: Anti-Rent Wars.

Beer & Hops Brewing. [article]

Blenheim & Broome Hill Turnpike Road, 1848.

Bliss, F. Walter: Biography and Court Case with New York City. [about the Gilboa Dam]

Brewster, John. [1 page]

Broome Center: Vanishing Village, by Katharine Harrington

Cole Family, 1850 and 1855 Census. [1 page]

Cotton Factory. [small article]

Conesville, Glimpse of.

Deeds (2)

DeSilva Family history.

Doney Family of Broome in 1855 & 1865 Census. [1 page]

Egnor Family in Census Reports, etc.

Flat Creek Baptist Church, 110 Years.

Folklore of the South Gilboa area by Clyde C. Darling.

Sing session, “Forks of the Road School” South Gilboa, NY. [book # 5 & 50] [2 copies]

GenWeb—misc. articles.

Genealogical Research Methods.

Gilboa Creamery.

Gilboa Records Available at the NYS Historical Association in Cooperstown.

Gilboa Projectile Points.

Gilboa School District #7 1933 Silent Reading Exam.

Minutes of Old School/Primitive Baptist Association 1895.

Gilboa Township 1900 Census.

Gilboa Fire Alarm Gong.

Gilboa Water Company.

Gilboa Monitor 1880.

Gilboa Map Pertaining to Power Authority, 1969.

Stories of Old Gilboa, The. [1988–89 4th grade class of Gilboa-Conesville Central School]

Gilboa County Map.

Gilboa Town Historian Reports, 1950–86, by Katharine Harrington. [biographies and & historian reports]

Hoagland Family in America.

Gilboa Honey Farm, 2005. [magazine article]

Ingraham/Ingram Family. [notes]

Alice Lewis and Son. [interview]

Richtmeyer Family Genealogy.

Schoharie County History from 1860 Gazetteer.

Schoharie, Laws of NYS, 1819–70.

Schoharie County, NYS Historical markers.

Scotts Patent, 1828.

Shafer, William David & Family.

Timothy Murphy Story. *Schoharie County Historical Review.*

VanDyck & Jackson: Letters from 1851 & 1837.

Weeks/Croswell Families.

Wickert, Marion Emma Emelia, “Jesus and the Little Children” by Frederick William Wickert III.

Wyckoff, Beatrice & Cecil. [picture]

Save the Date: Open House at the GHS Museum, July 14, 2013

CONSTRUCTION OF THE DAM AT GILBOA

Excerpted from Board of Water Supply Annual Reports

Gerry Stoner

The location of the Gilboa dam had been determined by January 1915, and the following six years were spent preparing the infrastructure that had to be in hand before the dam's construction. In the *Board of Water Supply Annual Report for 1920*, the chief engineer reported: "the principal work in hand has been the development of the Schoharie watershed":

- Progress on the Shandaken tunnel was continued and the number of men employed on this contract was increased by about 200 per cent.
- Hugh Nawn Contracting Company has practically completed the highway system, erected the temporary bridge across the Schoharie Creek, proceeded with the development of a quarry, installed much plant and equipment, made material progress on the construction of the stream control works for the Schoharie Creek and the Steen Kill, and has placed itself in position to prosecute the actual construction of the dam during the season of 1921.
- Lupfer & Remick has constructed steel highway bridges over the Schoharie Creek and the Manor Kill and practically completed the abutments for them.

Compared to the essential infrastructure, the dam itself was a fairly straightforward operation. The plans were well drawn, and the work started in 1921 continued throughout the next five years without major problems. The dam was essentially finished in less time than was used in its preparation.

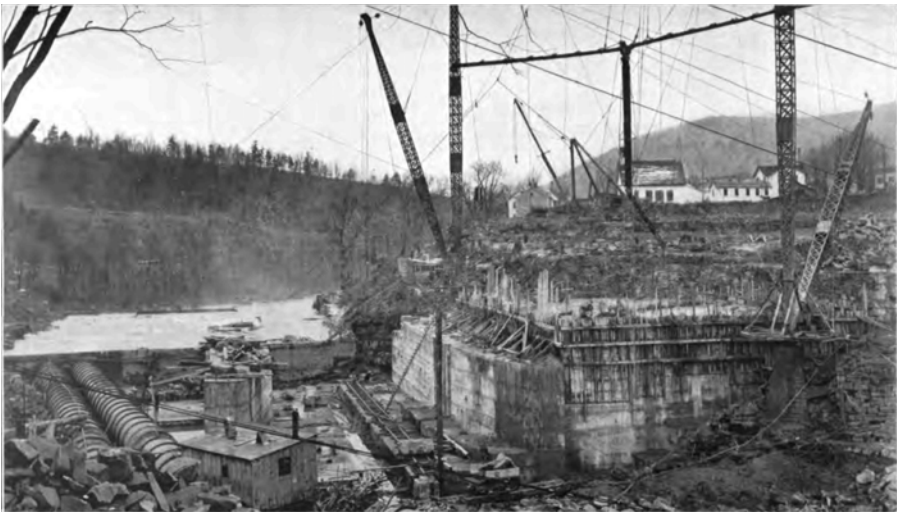
Thus, at the end of 1920, the village itself was sitting on its slight bluff looking down on the creek as it always had. But there was the Riverside Quarry downstream across the creek and another quarry on a hill looking down to the village. There were also the visible signs of the future: coffer dams breaking up the flow of water, towers for the future transport of gravel and cement, and roads and bridges where there had been fields.

The chief engineer also noted: "During the 5-year period from 1916 to 1920, inclusive, the average annual rate of increase in the consumption of water has been 42 millions of gallons per day." Given this rate of increase, he calculated "the entire Catskill watershed will meet the increase in demand only until 1932, and that thereafter the water supply situation will . . . be the same as that which led up to the development of the Catskill project in 1905."



1920. Looking eastward from Road 8, with the upper coffer dam of the Schoharie Creek stream-control works in center, and the elevator tower, mixer and crusher just beyond at top of bank. Belt conveyors for bank material are in the foreground, and a portion of Road 8 is at left.

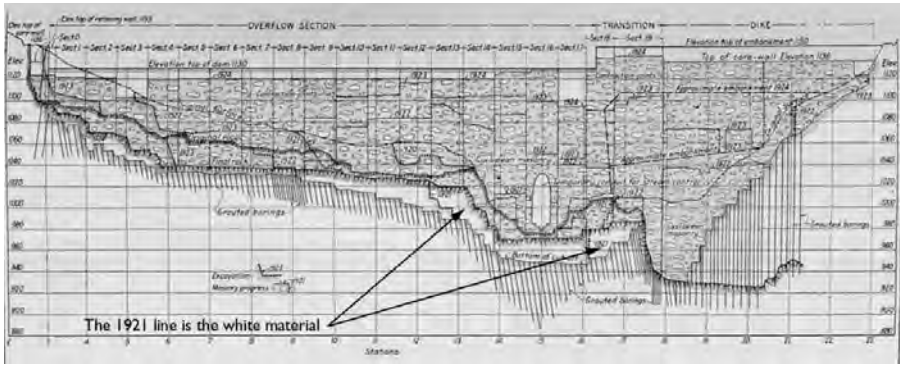
Photograph scanned from the *Annual Report of the Board of Water Supply for 1920*, used courtesy of the Department of Environmental Protection.



1921. Looking downstream from the upper coffer dam. The concrete invert and portions of both side walls of the stream-control conduit through the dam are shown in central foreground. The main portion of the dam built to date is to right of the conduit. The flow of the Schoharie Creek is carried through the two 9-foot steel pipes at left. Excavation for the spillway channel is in progress in right background. Photograph scanned from the *Annual Report of the Board of Water Supply for 1921*, used courtesy of the Department of Environmental Protection.



1921. The first step is construction of a cut-off trench to excavate all permeable material so that water can't seep under the dam. This is looking east along the excavation for the cut-off trench. The bottom of the cut-off is at elevation 949. Photograph scanned from the *Annual Report of the Board of Water Supply for 1921*, used courtesy of Department of Environmental Protection.



1921–1924. This longitudinal section of the Gilboa dam comes from the 1924 *Annual Report*, and shows the yearly progress of excavating the cut-trench and placing masonry through 1924. From the vantage point of 1921, this plan shows what has been accomplished to date in white, and what the plans are for the future. The grouted borings from the base of the cut-off trench were drilled well into the clays that serve as “bedrock” for our area. Diagram scanned from the *Annual Report of the Board of Water Supply for 1924*, used courtesy of the Department of Environmental Protection.



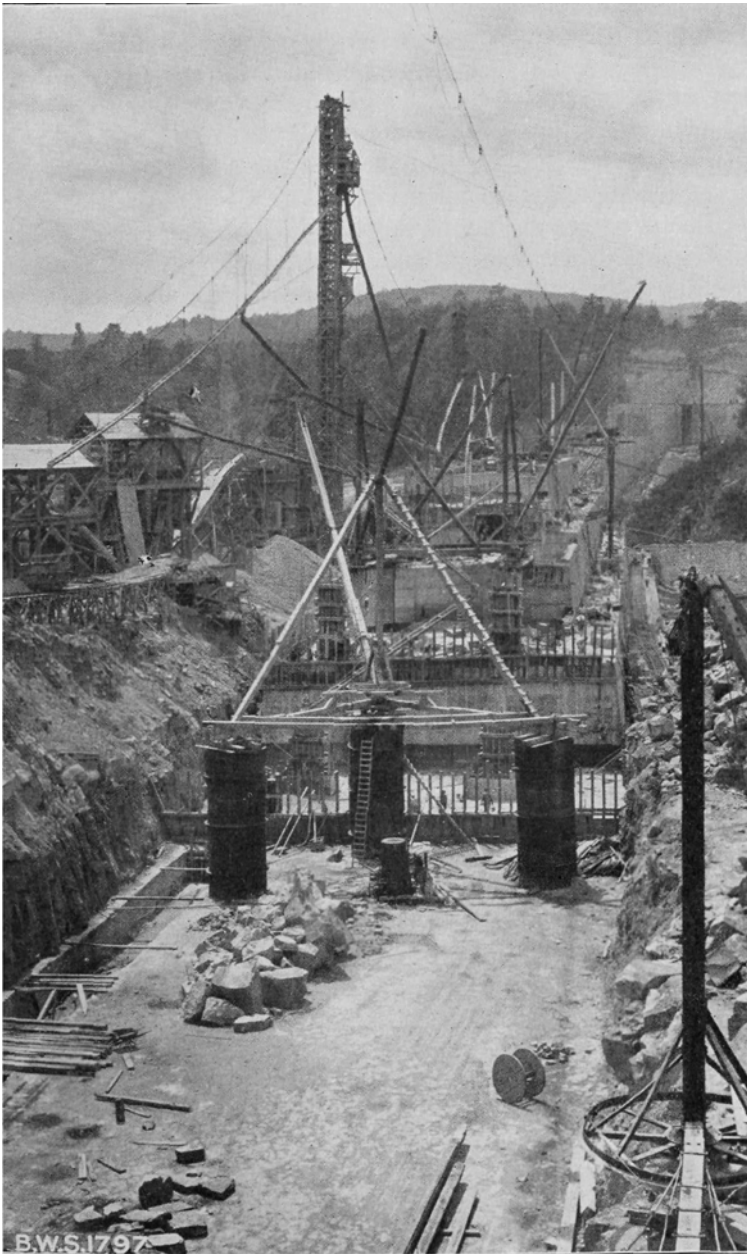
1921. Looking easterly, the towers support the cables that carry stone from Stevens Mountain to the site. Masonry of the dam is shown behind and to the left of the nearest tower, and excavation for the spillway channel is under way just beyond the masonry. In the right foreground are the Steen Kill dike and temporary flume. In the background Road 1 and the temporary road can be seen with the crusher plant and quarry on Stevens Mountain at extreme right. Note that the village buildings still stand. Photograph scanned from the *Annual Report of the Board of Water Supply for 1921*, used courtesy of the Department of Environmental Protection.



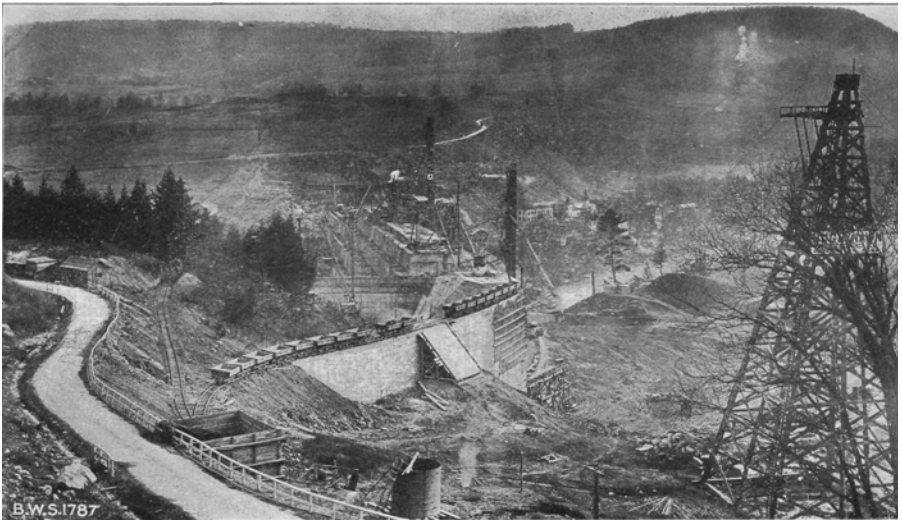
1922. This picture shows the difference that one year can make at the Gilboa dam. The masonry placed in the dam and the excavation for the spillway channel are shown at left and the Steen Kill dike and flume are in the right foreground. The blanket fill for exposed ledges can be seen behind and to the right of the cableway tower in foreground, and the Stevens Mountain quarry is in the extreme upper right-hand corner. Photograph scanned from the *Annual Report of the Board of Water Supply for 1922*, used courtesy of Department of Environmental Protection.



1922. Looking eastward, showing the progress of the dam and the spillway channel on the left. The dam is blocking us from seeing the coffer dam and two conduits that channel the creek water through the construction. Stevens Mountain quarry is in background. Photograph scanned from the *Annual Report of the Board of Water Supply for 1922*, used courtesy of Department of Environmental Protection.



1923. Masonry portion of the Gilboa dam looking to the west. The derrick in center is set on sections of the 9-foot steel pipes formerly used for the Schoharie Creek stream-control. Photograph scanned from the *Annual Report of the Board of Water Supply for 1923*, used courtesy of Department of Environmental Protection.



1923. The massive masonry of the dam is in the center background and the concrete core of the dike is exposed in the middle of the picture. On the left is Road 8 with a fence along its right side. Just beyond the fence in the foreground is a square structure—this is an empty train car used by a narrow-gauge railroad to transport fill. This train enters from behind the trees on the left, straight toward the camera, and then up an incline toward the empty car. The train then reverses direction and switches to the track going onto the top of the core. Called a switchback, this is an easy way for the train (it is on the core) to navigate a construction site. Photograph scanned from the *Annual Report of the Board of Water Supply for 1923*, used courtesy of Department of Environmental Protection.



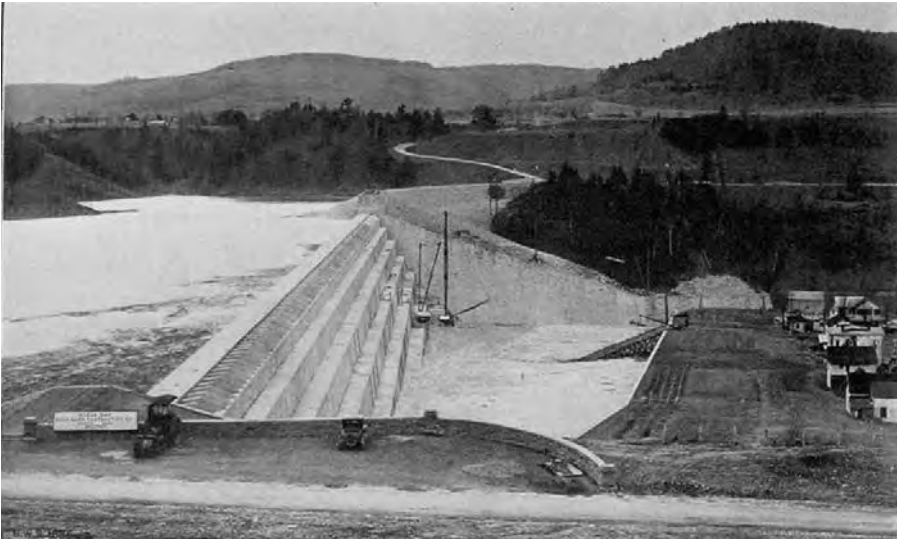
1924. The east end of the dam with the retaining wall of the spillway on the left. The future spillway is being used as a construction staging area, and the lowest step of the dam (arrow) is at elevation 1099. Photograph scanned from the *Annual Report of the Board of Water Supply for 1924*, used courtesy of Department of Environmental Protection.



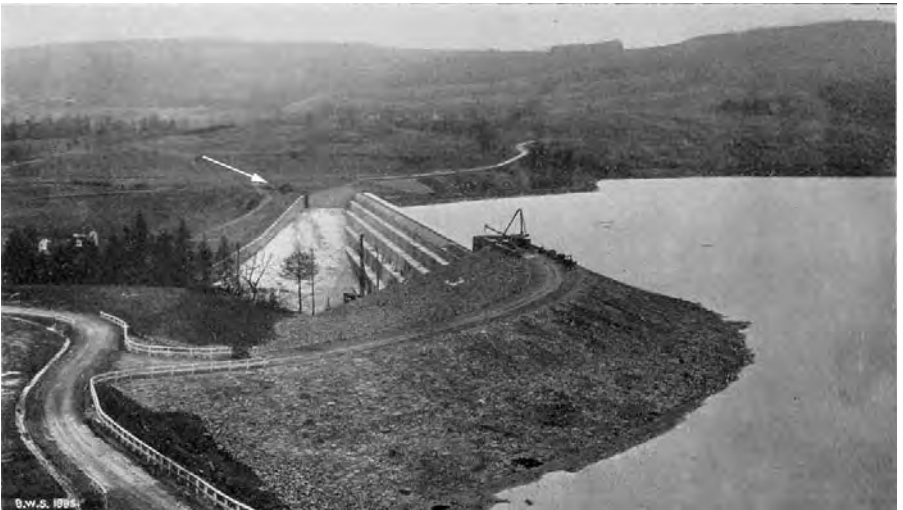
1924. Gilboa dam and dike, looking eastward from the end of the dike. Three steam shovels were used to handle the material dumped from the core-wall or trestle into wagons for evenly spreading the fill. Imagine sitting in those buildings and looking up at the dam! Photograph scanned from the *Annual Report of the Board of Water Supply for 1924*, used courtesy of Department of Environmental Protection.



1925. Part of the Schoharie valley to be flooded by the waters of the reservoir, looking to the south from a point above the Manor Kill. The reservoir basin has been cleared of trees and the steep slopes grubbed to elevation 1135 using generally local labor. The temporary bridge across the creek was used by another narrow gauge railroad that brought sand from the Patchin Pit to the mixer. The gatehouse and intake chamber of the Shandaken Tunnel is hidden in the trees (arrow) just past the railroad. Photograph scanned from the *Annual Report of the Board of Water Supply for 1925*, used courtesy of Department of Environmental Protection.



1926. Downstream face of the Gilboa dam, looking westerly from the bank at the easterly end of the dam, with the plaza and the relocated portion of Road 1 in foreground. A portion of the reservoir is on the left of the dam and the spillway channel is on the right. Note the baffles on the top step of the dam below the crest. Photograph scanned from the *Annual Report of the Board of Water Supply for 1926*, used courtesy of Department of Environmental Protection.



1926. Looking east: the earth dike, spillway channel, Gilboa dam, and a portion of the reservoir. The water in the reservoir is at about elevation 1120, ten feet below the crest of the dam. On the left front is Road 8 that continues around parallel to the spillway. It meets Road 1 (arrow) and together they were the permanent new highways around the reservoir. Photograph scanned from the *Annual Report of the Board of Water Supply for 1926*, used courtesy of Department of Environmental Protection.



1927. Looking to the west from the east wall of the spillway channel on October 21, 1927, waters are discharging over the crest of the Gilboa dam. The water in the reservoir is at elevation 1130.95, nearly one foot above the flow-line. Note the baffles on the step of the dam at elevation 1123.5 and their influence on the overflowing waters. Photograph scanned from the *Annual Report of the Board of Water Supply for 1927*, used courtesy of Department of Environmental Protection.

Construction of the Gilboa Reservoir

Gerry Stoner will present an overview of the construction done to bring Schoharie water to New York City taps. The talk will start with the factors used to locate the eventual dam; constructing the supporting bridges and roads, developing the infrastructure to deliver materials, building the tunnel, controlling the river's flow while construction is under way, developing the berms around the reservoir—as well as constructing the dam itself.

Pictures from DEP annual reports and archives are the centerpiece of the talk that also illustrate the procedures behind all of the DEP reservoirs.

Stoner is a 20-year resident of Gilboa, publishes books on local history under the Stonecrest imprint, and has been publishing the newsletter of the Gilboa Historical Society for the past 7 years. In that time, the newsletter has grown to a quarterly publication of 40 pages per issue and is available online at gilboahome.com.

**Carpool a Friend
Wednesday, May 15, 2013 at 7 PM
Gilboa Town Hall**

News Clipping Dated 1980

FOX CREEK FACTS & FANCIES

Esther N. Mackey

Water Over the Dam

Recently, Norma Fleischer and I were pouring over the newly published history book written by Beatrice Mattice. The book is a history of the Towns of Conesville and Gilboa entitled *They Walked These Hills Before Me*.

As Norma and I conversed, she recalled an event of long ago that was of great interest to me. This memorable event concerned the completion and the filling of the Gilboa Reservoir.

The following dates are from Beatrice Mattice's book: On July 14, 1926, the dam was completed and the first waters were confined within it. On Oct. 20, 1927, after many fall rains, the water level had crept upward and was very near the top of the great concrete structure.

Norma said that at Broome Center, where she was living at that time, the local telephone switchboard operator was alerted, probably from the Grand Gorge or Prattsville operator, that the dam was about to run over for the very first time.

The Broome Center operator was called "Mrs. Van," but Norma didn't recall her full name. Mrs. Van immediately rang 10 rings on all the lines, which was an alert signal for the patrons to pick up receivers and listen.

After getting the word, everyone who possibly could dropped whatever he was doing and started for Gilboa by any means of conveyance available.

Uncle Verge Nickerson closed the creamery; the Clyde Bailey store closed; Aunt Marcia Nickerson forgot her classes and let the children out of school; farmers unhitched their horses, gathered up their families and ran for their cars.

Uncle Verge drove his old gray Dodge car down by the Wyckoff farm and parked it nearby because there were so many cars ahead of him. They walked the rest of the way to a knoll west of the present central school buildings and waited there for more than an hour with a huge crowd of excited onlookers. On the Grand Gorge side of the dam, the hillside also was covered with people and cars.

People came from Prattsville, Manorkill, Conesville, and all surrounding hills and valleys to watch the water spill over the dam for the first time.

Finally the great moment came—the water spread over the wide top and sprayed downward over the great frontal steps accompanied by loud tumultuous shouting and cheering from the watching crowds. After the tumult and shouting died, onlookers watched the ever increasing overflow in silent awe and then proceeded homeward with mixed emotions.

There was sadness for a once thriving but now lost village and the dispersal and separation of many neighbors and friends. Also there was joy for the finish and success of a new and tremendous engineering accomplishment.

A few disparaging remarks were heard, echoing back and forth—“It will never hold.” “There is too much pressure for that dam to hold.” “I’m telling you I wouldn’t want to live in Blenheim, Breakabeen or Middleburgh—even Schoharie would be washed away.”

But the great dam did hold and has held now for more than 53 years. It has been a place of interest for thousands and thousands of sightseers during the passing of time and there seem to be no worriers among the folk of the downstream towns and villages of being washed away.

Congratulations

Congratulations to Beatrice Mattice for the excellent work she did in compiling the history of the Town of Conesville. It is a book of great interest, well put together and very well written.

Lawrence Rickard, who used to live on the farm adjoining the Manorkill Creamery, went over Norma’s copy of the book from cover to cover and could recall most every name and place mentioned. The book means so much to former residents of the town and to their relatives as well as to many others.

Keep the faith and go with love!

* * * *

And an addendum from Rose Mace in 2012: My oldest sister, Carrie B. Miller, married Chauncey M. Dent on October 20, 1927. After the ceremony, the bride and groom, the wedding party, and all the guests celebrated at the reservoir watching the water go over for the first time. Yes, indeed, it was a day to remember in Gilboa.

Dr. C.S. Best House and Medical Exhibit

1568 Clauverwie, Middleburgh, NY 12122

(Across from High School, to east and behind Methodist Church)

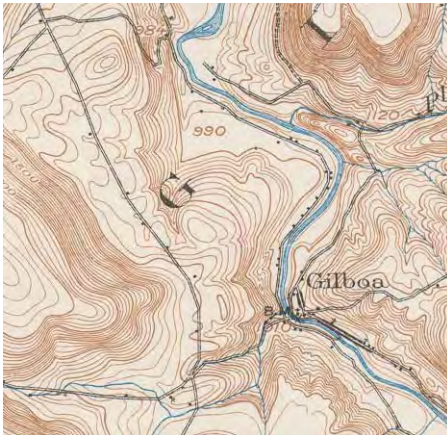
518 827-4504 518 827-5142 518 827-7200 (Th. only)

Starting the First Week in May
Open Thursdays, 10:00 AM–3:00 PM
and by appointment

EVOLUTION OF ROADS

How Do I Get from South Gilboa to the Schoharie Creek?

Gerry Stoner



Topography of land doesn't change significantly over 150 years, although creekbeds do drift around in valleys.

The topo map on the left is from 1903 and shows the village of Gilboa. On the west side of the creek, current-day Stryker Road hugs the creek going north until Cresent Road forks off to the left.

State Route 30 is the highway going nearly vertically on the left side of the map. Across the bottom, South Gilboa Road comes from the left, crosses Route 30, and goes reasonably straight along the contour to Gilboa village.

The map on the bottom left (1866 Beers Atlas) reflects the same story.

The third map is modern: there is now a slight dogleg in the original road going east from Route 30 to the village (1)—the road now is not directly opposite South Gilboa Road. The Board of Water Supply created a new road called Road 8 going north (2). Old-timers remember the overlook right where the original road joined the new. Around 1963, the road from Route 30 east to the bridge was closed and State Route 990V (3) became the route to the reservoir.



Regarding the physical Newsletter: Your name, address, and membership status appear on the label. An asterisk* next to your name indicates that your individual membership is paid up for the current year; likewise, ** indicates a paid-up couple and *** indicates a paid-up family. A single dagger† indicates a lifetime membership; a double on indicates a couple's lifetime membership. Please consider joining if you are not a member, and let us know if we have incorrect information.

Membership Application Form

Name: _____ () Lifetime membership (\$100.00) \$ _____

Subscription format: Physical Electronic Both () Family membership (\$25.00) \$ _____

Email: _____ () Couples membership (\$15.00) \$ _____

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_____ () Senior or student membership (\$7.00) \$ _____

_____ () Scholarship fund \$ _____

City: _____ () Gilboa Historical Society *Newsletter* \$ _____

_____ () Gilboa Historical Society Museum \$ _____

State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____ () *Old Gilboa* DVD (\$19.70 total) \$ _____

* Please provide any temporary address for our mailings in early March, June, () *Family Letters* by N. Juried (\$8.40 total) \$ _____

September, and December. () General fund \$ _____

Seasonal address for mailings: Mar. Jun. Sep. Dec. () Memorial gifts† \$ _____

Address: _____ Total amount enclosed \$ _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

† The Board has a "wish list" of memorial gifts; please inquire of a board member, and provide the complete wording of the dedication, your name and address, and the name and address of a next-of-kin to be notified.

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