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# Gilboa Historical Society

*Learning about, sharing, and preserving our history*

FALL 2013 V. 15.3

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Please check your address on the back of this newsletter. Let us know of corrections or if you will have a temporary address at the time of our December publication. Asterisk(s) next to your name indicate that your membership is paid up. No asterisks? Use the application on page 39 to earn *your* star.

## Big News!

Tom Chapin has agreed to come to Schoharie County to do a benefit concert for SALT! The concert will take place on Friday, September 27 at 7PM at the Presbyterian Church on Main Street in Schoharie.

Tickets will be \$15 for adults and \$5 for children, and may be purchased on-line at <[saltrecovery.org/chapin](http://saltrecovery.org/chapin)>. If you don't like to order online, you can call the SALT office directly at 518 702-5017.

There is a good chance that this concert will sell out, so if you want to attend, please get your tickets early.

There will be a lasagna dinner before the concert for those who want to make a whole night of it. I'm sure there'll be posters up soon with more information.

Please don't miss this special event!

Sonny Ochs

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

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

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

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## GEORGE TODD

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### *Local Cauliflower Farmer Goes International*

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*Claude Cook*

Last spring, I wrote about Prospect Farms and mentioned Fred Murphy's informal partnership with George Todd. A few people have asked about George, and so I have pulled together these thoughts about a brilliant man. Some of these come from personal recollection and some from articles from *Greenhouse Growers* magazines that we have.

George's family, and his home farm, was on Todd Road. This is not the Todd Road in South Gilboa (originally called Langden Farm Road and renamed Todd Road when the Todd family bought that land). The Todd Road I am talking about was partially in Gilboa and partially in Roxbury and is now called Charcoal Road.

Like many of their neighbors, the Frank Todd family had been dairy farmers who often planted some acreage in cauliflower, a *cash* crop that supplemented the erratic income of dairy farming. George, born in 1928, was indoctrinated with cauliflower at an early age.

As a teenager, George started a small business turning slats of scrap wood into crates for shipping cauliflower to market. He hired many of his classmates as labor in this "factory"—even in his teens, he realized that agriculture offered opportunity only if it were based on strong cost controls and improved productivity.

In 1949, the 21-year-old entrepreneur started his own business, *George Todd Farms*. Unlike most of his peers, however, he did not want cauliflower to be supplemental to the farm's main business—he planned to make his living as a full-time crop farmer.

George was fascinated with the care and feeding of plants and wanted to meet the challenge of creating plants that were able to withstand transplant shock. The majority of plants in the late 1940s were stunted or succumbed to transplant shock. While searching for improved transplant methods, he was also trying to control costs by using various inexpensive containers.

Using bare-root plants as the baseline, he started experimenting with pint milk cartons in 90-degree temperatures. The bare-root plants at first looked almost dead, while the milk-carton plants were larger, beautiful, and green. Unfortunately, over time the milk-carton transplants didn't grow as well, and the bare-root plants outperformed them.

## Facts about Cauliflower

To get the most out of our short growing season, it is best to start cauliflower in a greenhouse 2 to 3 weeks before the last frost in the spring, and then transplant them 18 to 24 inches apart in fertile, well-drained, frost-free soil. Thus, cauliflower is a labor-intensive crop.

Cauliflower is a healthful food that slows the growth of cancer cells. Cauliflower can be a great cash crop if you are able to control costs, are lucky with the weather, and efficient in tending the plants.

He then tried plastic containers and molded products of various sizes and shapes. Some shapes or sizes were better than others, but none of them were truly outstanding until he tried a pyramid standing on its point. George cut off the point on the bottom and watered the plug through this hole. In natural soil, roots grow down and toward a water source, and this inverted pyramid and a subterranean water source promoted natural root growth. Moreover, the open bottom also minimized root binding—roots growing through the hole were naturally pruned by the air.

George experimented with this shape for 3 years “not believing what I was seeing. Being a farmer, you see something one year and it doesn’t happen the next year. But after seeing the results for a few years, I became a believer. The increase in production was unbelievable.”

In the 1960s, George partnered with a friend, Bud Leisey, to also farm in Sun City, in central Florida. They produced tomato crops in the spring and fall, a cauliflower crop in the winter, and for a short while George also grew another cauliflower crop on Todd Road in the summer. These 4 crops per year gave him a faster rate of experimentation—George was on a fast track learning about high yields and plant mortality.

Most of what George developed was for use in his own operations, but he knew you couldn’t keep a good idea down. Plugs caught on and the



The unique design of the Speedling plug.

market created itself—and George’s philosophy had the seedling operation riding that wave. During this time, George also started to think about the design of manufacturing equipment (seeders, watering machines, benches), packaging supplies, and field equipment for efficiently planting seedlings.

By the mid-1960s, Florida farmers were ordering seedlings for various types of vegetables: they would pay in advance, George would build the necessary greenhouses, and the farm would grow the seedlings to fill the order. The beauty of Bud and George’s partnership was that Bud was an excellent practical farmer while George loved finding improvements to the seed- and plug- business. Orders from the region were forcing their business in divergent directions, and the farm had excellence in both.

In the late 1960s, Bud was wanting to retire, so George founded Speedling, Inc. in 1969. This company had a large greenhouse capacity. Remembering the win-win arrangements that Fred Murphy was so fond of, George always looked for ways that would benefit all parties. One of the most costly areas was seeding—it was very labor intensive, but there were a few companies working with the production of pelletized seeds.

George set up contracts for companies to supply him with pelletized tomato seeds, for instance, lowering manufacturing costs and improving germination rates to the 98–99% (up from about 80%). As an example of win-win, the partner was able to provide these pelletized seeds at a profit, and the consumer would be able to get better vegetables at a lower cost. (The agreement: the previous cost of seed at that time was something like \$8 to \$10 a pound; George told the supplier, “I’ll pay you \$100/pound. Just do one thing—sort out the bad seed.”)

At this time, Speedling started to promote its manufacturing equipment, packaging supplies, and field equipment. A Speedling client could run an entire vegetable farm at a profit using Speedling goods and services.

The company then set up a consultancy operation to help farmers set up greenhouses and teach them how to grow their own plugs and international outreach operations that started nurseries in 20 countries to feed their indigenous populations. These farmers and foreign companies became competitors to Speedling, but they were also continuing consumers of equipment, packaging, and field machinery.

Speedling customers bought not only the full range of vegetables, but the company also started in on ornamental plants and was adapted to tobacco farming. Tobacco plugs maintained Speedling’s traditional standard of 98%–99% survival and larger yields (Speedling tobacco averaged 18 to 20 leaves/plant—up from 14 to 16—an increase of 25%).

George also fostered associations with major brokers—Ball, Vaughan’s, and Michell’s. Speedling was both a supplier—growing plugs for them—and a client always selling through the broker system. And because they have sufficient greenhouse space, Speedling can accept an order, start growing the plants, and then hold the plants (within reason) until the client has optimal weather conditions (to avoid a cold snap or foul weather).

*Claude Cook*

## Before the West Was Wild!

*Carolyn Bennett*



The notion of the “Wild, Wild West” appeals to people in all parts of the world. Before the West was wild, however, it was being created in the mind of one of the Catskill Region’s favorite sons, Ned Buntline, the most prolific dime novelist of the 19th century. Buntline wrote about and was the inventor of the Buntline Special. Another 19th century writer, Ann Stephens, started it all by writing the first dime novel, set in Catskill, NY.

Carolyn Bennett will talk with us about these true historical figures—Ned Buntline, Ann Stephens, and Buffalo Bill Cody (below, left to right)—at the September meeting of the Gilboa Historical Society at the Town Hall.

**Carpool a Friend.**

**We'll see you on Wednesday, September 18 at 7:00  
Gilboa Town Hall**



## MY DAD, GEORGE TODD

*George Todd Jr.*

My father was exceptionally small when he was born in 1928, and he had a rough time surviving his first few years. Wanting to compete with his two older siblings meant he had to work twice as hard, and so he earned a nickname, Tyke. He continued to work hard—and achieve—his whole life.

He was an adult before he discovered the cause of his problematic youth. In 1948, medical researchers found that the firstborn children with an Rh+ father and a Rh- mother would progress normally, but that one-half of subsequent children could have blood-type rejection during gestation and health and growth problems in their early years. Dad's mother—my grandmother—was in the 15% of the population who were Rh-.

Dad always liked to work and was near-obsessive about productivity and efficiency. As a teenager, he set up a production line to make crates for shipping cauliflower to the city and hired his classmates at Stamford Central School to keep production rolling.

Claude Cook told a story about my father: As a youngster Dad heard that you shouldn't let alfalfa grow after the first of September because it would drain the soil of nutrients if the plant was killed by frost. He had seen a large plot of alfalfa growing past this deadline, and so George marched up to the Murphy Home Farm and read Mr. Murphy the riot act. Dad later asked Claude what Mr. Murphy must have thought of this "banty rooster."

By his early 20s, Dad earned his degree from Cornell, established George Todd Farms, Inc., and started his career in agricultural experimentation.

One of his early experiments: when you set cauliflower seeds to germinate, you don't want two plants to compete in the same pot—the competition results in smaller-than-normal heads of cauliflower—so Dad wanted to develop a way to automatically plant a *single seed* in each 1 × 1" square of an 18 × 24" flat. He made a metal box with a footprint matching the size of the flat. The box was airtight but had a hose that attached to the suction side of a compressor. He then drilled 432 holes in the box, one centered above each 1 × 1" square. Each hole was smaller than a single cauliflower seed—and believe me, those seeds are small!

By holding this box over a screen of loose cauliflower seeds and turning on the vacuum, a single seed would be sucked up to each hole and would then block the hole and shut off the suction in that area. Excess seeds in

that area would fall back onto the screen. When all the holes were filled, the box carrying the 432 seeds would be placed on top of the flat, the suction would be shut off, and the seeds would fall into the waiting medium.

This vacuum system was obviously better than planting one (and only one) seed at a time. But within a very few years, pelletized seeds were developed for a production line: individual seeds tumbling in a breeze chamber would be sprayed with inert material so each small and irregularly shaped seed would become a large, round seed. Dad immediately bought into that technology when it became available.

Dad walked every piece of his land, in his mind marking contour lines and observing water sources. He would then shape his land for irrigation—slightly sloped to spread water around and shed excess rain, and with ponds dug for collecting groundwater for irrigating in the summer. I don't believe he ever took courses, but when Fred Murphy was restoring the Rexmere, he called on my father to double-check his civil engineers and construction crews as they revamped the ponds there. My dad helped to satisfy Mr. Murphy that all was well and advised on alterations as necessary.

When Dad was first starting to farm, he also sold insurance to earn cash. He bought daily schedulers at the stationery store to organize all his endeavors, and he was compulsive about scheduling, meticulous about keeping contact information, and consistent at recording his sales calls. This kind of review helped him to recognize alternative ways to make sales (no, this was not part of any corporate training—he just liked to be efficient, and he applied the same detailed approach to the farm and his experiments with plugs).

I believe his ability to remember people's names was the result of regularly reviewing his notes and preparing for the possibility of meeting people. Then, when he saw someone at a meeting or on the street, he was able to recall who he was, when last they met, and what business might be outstanding between them.

He hated to embarrass anyone, and developed ways to avoid this. When Dad addressed audiences about agricultural techniques, a "fan" often came up to him and started to talk as if they had already met. Dad might talk with the stranger for a minute, get the drift of the question, and then say something like "Hey, I see someone you should talk to about this." He'd then bring the stranger to meet his friend in such a way that they would introduce each other. Dad then would add that new acquaintance's name to his notebook, and the new acquaintance would never forget the courtesy and friendship of George Todd.



\* \* \*

My father's ability with names meant that people who met him thought of themselves as his friend—and, depending upon the line between acquaintance and friend, they probably were. From my point of view, I think Dad had a few very good friends and a huge range of really great acquaintances.

One good friend was Fred Murphy. Dad appreciated that Murphy had grown from a person with no special privilege to a man who achieved a great deal, but respected Murphy for his commitment to society and his continual reinvestment in the world: his reorganizations of Prospect Farms, Timberlands, Audio Sears, Catskill Craftsmen, Rexamere Hotel, regional headquarters of DEC, etc.

Around 1940, a Ulster and Delaware train had a collision with a school bus. Dad was about 12 at the time, and was able to get off the bus through the back door and away from the impact. Luckily the train was going very slow and no one was hurt. Years later, Fred Murphy introduced Dad to Dr. Frank Cyr, the "father of the school bus," who found this accident of great interest. Dr. Cyr also became a close friend because Dad was impressed with Dr. Cyr's commitment to students, schools, and education.

Dad's longest lasting relationship was with Don Hendrickson. Don's youth may have been troubled when he appeared at the farm of my grandfather, Frank Todd, but he was taken in by the family and given work, most often at solitary jobs, through the rest of my grandfather's tenure. After my grandfather's death, Don continued working at the farms, and finally with me—a three-generation relationship with the Todd family.

My family moved to Florida and Dad set up a partnership with a tomato farmer down there, C. E. "Bud" Leisey, Jr. Dad continued to develop new and better ways to develop seedlings, and Bud, a great practical farmer, would document the excellence of the product. This year, both Dad and Bud have been nominated for admittance to the Florida Agriculture Hall of Fame. Among the kudos was this: "I personally saw George as an innovator, a creator and a visionary. He spent his life creating what others couldn't even see a need for. This is what set George Todd Sr. apart from others. His legacy of innovation and finding talented people to carry on the cause has helped each of us go on to great careers in the horticulture field." (Cindee Delbridge, Total Growth Solutions)

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## BROOME CENTER CREAMERY COMPANY

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*Mildred Bailey*

*November 30, 1900*

*The purpose for which it is to be for is: The manufacture and sale of butter and all dairy products which can be directly manufactured from milk.*

*Amount of Capital Stock is \$4,500.00*

*Number of shares of Capital stock shall consist is: 90 and the par value of each share of such capital stock shall be the sum of \$50.00 and the amount of Capital which said Corporation will begin business is \$500.00.*

*Business office is in the village of Broome Center, Schoharie County, N.Y.*

*Its duration is to be 50 years.*

*Number of directors is to be 9.*

*Names and addresses (post office) of directors for the first year [and their number of shares] are as follows:*

<b>Broome Center, N.Y.</b>		<b>Mackey, N.Y.</b>	
<i>James M. Case</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>William M. Selleck</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Duncan M. Leonard</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>Franklin Clapper</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Edwin P. Cook</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>John Lee</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Hiram VanDyke</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>Elisha Safford</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>William Bevins</i>	<i>2</i>		

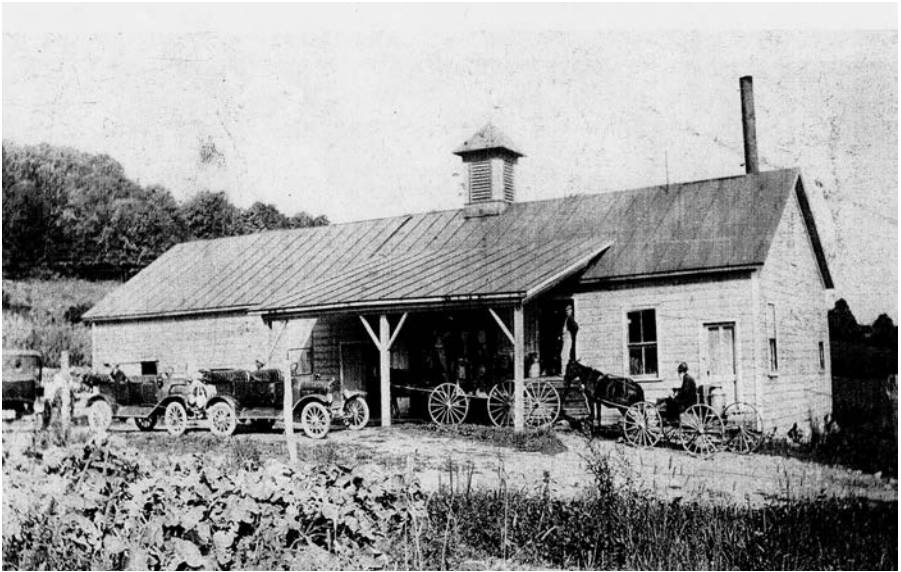
*Dec 19 1907 Broome Center:* Several of the farmers of Conesville are now delivering their milk to our creamery, since the Manorkill Creamery Company have closed their skimming station for the season at East Conesville.

*Middleburg News Jan 9 1908:* Broome Center—The Broome Center Creamery Company made during the past year of 1907 from March 1st to Dec 31, 174,799 pounds of butter, an increase of 6,977 pounds over the preceding year.

*1921* The Broome Center Creamery is nearing completion and it is expected to open for business Jan. 1.

*Middleburg News 1936:* poem written by Almearon Haskin about Broome Center residents, included:

There's the Broome Center Creamery, it's a hard-looking sight,  
with its doors and windows all barred from the light.  
It would be running today I think,  
but the Dairymen's League put it on the blink.



The first Broome Center creamery (above) was burned in 1925, and then rebuilt.

*1963 Schoharie County Historical Society's Historic Review:* An article written by Katharine S. Harrington, "Story of a Vanished Village." Regarding the creamery: In the early 1920s or a little before, a creamery was established at the forks of the road, for the manufacture of butter and cheese. For a time it was a farmers' cooperative; later the Dairymen's League took over buying the milk from R. L. Brown & Company; the supply of milk was good and pot-cheese and powdered milk were added to the products. Partly through the inertia of the dairymen, however, who refused to bother with making winter milk, thus securing the company a steady year 'round supply, so it was closed in 1933. The last flare of activity was when a company making special German cheese was started in the 1940s and run for a few years by Hans Schmelz, who could not make the business pay. Today the building, gutted of its equipment, is owned by George Bailey and used for hay storage.

*Another article by Mrs. Harrington for the 1979 Review told:* Broome Center by the character of the land, was always a dairy region. In its very early days, farmers made butter and stored it in their cellars all summer. In the fall, butter buyers came through with big wagons and bought up the 100-pound firkins which were shipped at Catskill for New York. Toward the end of the century two so-called "skimming stations" were established. One was on the Keyserkill road on the Grover Ellis farm, and another on Patchin Hollow Road, now called Maybie Road then owned by Madison Wyckoff. In both,

cream was separated from the milk, and sent to the creamery at Gilboa Village for manufacture. Skimmed milk went back to the farms, to fatten pigs. Ivan Hallock, 85 (at that time), who learned the trade of making “pot cheese” also called baker’s cheese, learned from a skilled German cheese maker from Pennsylvania.

In 1900, a creamery was built just west of Broome Center; it was a farmers’ cooperative, and the manager was the late Edward Cook of that place. Here both butter and cheese were made, and Ivan worked there. Later on, the creamery had several owners, the last being S. S. Brown of New York, who also owned the Gilboa Creamery. This closed about 1934 or ’35. It was briefly owned by L. B. Samuels of New York, where Hans Schmelz, a maker of fancy German cheeses, began their manufacture. These exotic cheeses are, during the curing period, covered with a fine white mold which enhances their flavor—no relation to the smelly black mold so hated by housewives. It was the introduction of these tiny black mold spores by a careless employee, into the curing room, that spelled the doom of Broome Center’s only industry. Once in, the black spores could not be cleaned out and the creamery closed. It is now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Herman Forsell and is used for storage purposes.

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*Mildred Bailey these snippets in 1989.*

## **Gilboa Creamery Destroyed by Fire, Middleburgh Firefighter Injured**

Excerpted from a news article of 5/8/2005

**Conesville** A fire early Sunday morning destroyed a [Broome Center] creamery, said Schoharie County fire coordinator Charlie Stanton. The fire was well under way by the time it was called in at 2 AM, by a neighbor.

The building at 1457 Flat Creek Rd. had been there for about 80 years. Kevin Largent owned the building and had been in the process of doing renovations and when Conesville fire chief Mark Robinson got there, the building’s roof and East End were already gone.

One firefighter was hurt when he fell from a concrete dividing wall in the building and was taken to Bassett Hospital of Schoharie County in Cobleskill. He was treated for an injury to an elbow and released.

About 40 firefighters were at the scene for about four hours. Conesville was the primary fire department, with mutual aid from Middleburgh and Livingstonville. The fire’s cause hasn’t been determined, Stanton concluded, and likely won’t be—there’s really nothing left to look at,” he said.

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*From the DCEC Annual Report, 1996*  
**RURAL ELECTRIFICATION IN THE CATSKILLS**

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*Millie Faulkner*

The beginnings of electrification can be traced back to 1882 when Thomas A. Edison built the first central station electric system in lower Manhattan. Electric service was a draw for people to leave the farms and move to the cities. The early technology demonstrated that electric power could be transmitted over distances to serve farms and other rural areas. However, rural America waited, and many years passed without electric lights and power. Most people in the electric power industry at that time could foresee no profits in serving farms and the rural areas.

In 1923 efforts were made to find out how electric power could be used on farms. A Committee on the Relation of Electricity to Agriculture (simply called CREA) was formed and it set up a rural electrification demonstration near Red Wing, Minnesota. Twenty farms were connected by a 6-mile electric distribution line. Half of the farms were equipped with just about all of the electric appliances and equipment then in existence, to conduct this experiment. It soon became evident that the household and farm chores were eased through liberal use of electric power. Careful cost and production records over an extended period of time showed that while use of electricity increased, agricultural production increased even more sharply. At the same time, overall expenses of the farmers dropped. The farmers saw their lives were more productive when hand labor and animal power were replaced with machines and electric power. Not one of the farms that had even limited access to electricity wanted to give up their electric appliances and equipment. Word of the experiment spread and soon committees in other states were showing farmers how to put electricity to work.

Still, the officials of the utility companies were not impressed and were preoccupied with providing "profitable" electric service to the cities and the immediate outlying areas. They would extend distribution lines to farmers and rural homes at the homeowner's expense, which at the time amounted to between \$2,000 and \$3,000 per mile of line. After the farmer paid for having extended the line to provide electric service, the power company owned the line. In addition to this, the rate per kilowatt-hour was frequently 10 or 12 cents. In some places the companies were charging as much as 25 to 40 cents per kwh to the rural consumers. Even by today's standards these prices were far beyond the reach of most rural families.

As the power companies would not or could not provide electric service to rural America, a growing number of farm leaders were demanding access to affordable electric power. As a result of the urging and innovative ideas of pioneers, Gifford Pinchot, Governor of Pennsylvania, prepared the "Giant Power Survey." In Canada, the remarkable Ontario Hydro Electric provided an example of low-cost, abundant power for rural people. In New York, Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt established a Power Authority to develop water power from the St. Lawrence River. The New York Power Authority made the first comprehensive study of electric distribution costs. Findings on cost of distribution were reported from the Power Authority study at a meeting of the Institute of Public Engineering held in New York City in 1933. This and other technical reports began to show the practicality of service to rural consumers and may be said to have opened the door for the New Deal's Rural Electrification Administration (REA) program.

On May 11, 1935, President Roosevelt signed Executive Order No. 7037, which established REA. President Roosevelt himself was the catalyst that produced the new agency. This set the availability of funding for construction of power lines for already established electric cooperatives, 46 in 13 states.

In May 1941, the first of a series of meetings was held in Delhi. This was a meeting of farmers to see who might be interested in forming a cooperative.



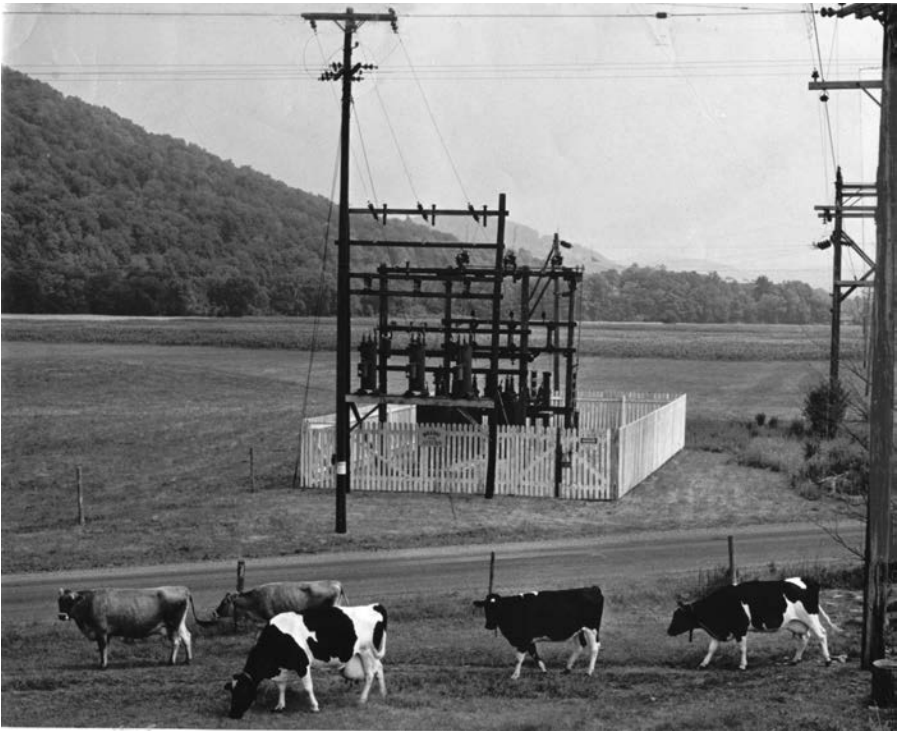
First Delhi Co-Op office on Second Street in Delhi. The first General Manager, Robert Donovan, is on the right and one of the founding members and original board members, Stanley Campbell, is on the left. Photo courtesy of the Delaware County Electric Co-Op, Inc.

A corporation was formed on July 15, 1941, known as the Delaware County Electric Association, Inc. After preparing maps to show feasibility and compiling necessary data, this information was sent to REA on Sept. 2, 1941. On Oct. 17, 1941, REA made an allotment of \$307,000 to construct 309 miles of electric lines. Applications were then sent to the Public Service Commission to obtain the necessary permits for building rural lines. At a meeting in Oneonta on Oct. 28, 1941, the REA deputy administrator and New York State Electric & Gas Company established guidelines as to which areas each would serve. A series of hearings were held by the Public Service Commission to consider the association's petition.

On March 2, 1942, Gordon P. Gleason, President of Delaware County Electric, informed all current members that a bill had been introduced in Albany that would permit farmers to form a rural electric cooperative. President Gleason urged the members to write to their senators and assemblymen regarding passing this bill. After having passed the Senate and Assembly, on April 29, 1942, Governor Herbert H. Lehman signed the Rural Electric Cooperative Law permitting farmers to serve electricity to themselves through cooperatives. On May 12, 1942, Delaware County Electric Association, Inc. was converted and became Delaware County Electric Cooperative, Inc. On May 25, 1942, the first note from REA was executed for \$25,000, the first set of bylaws were approved, and the first officers were elected.

Despite sometimes overwhelming odds and adversity, the co-op survived. It fought a neighboring utility that had previously refused to serve farms in Delaware County, but then built a "spite line" in an effort to destroy the credibility of the co-op. Only 1500 of 3700 farms had service even though Delaware was the largest milk-producing county in the state. The outbreak of World War II also added to the problems that faced the co-op. On March 30, 1942, the War Production Board (WPB) wrote to REA that no copper wire would be delivered to cooperatives less than 40% complete although the DCEC was not informed of this at that time. President Gleason, along with the other cooperatives in New York State, made appeals to the WPB to make the cooperatives a priority in order to get the materials needed for line construction, but they were denied.

In August 1942, the directors voted to close the office and suspend action on development work, as materials were unavailable. In March 1943, the WPB assured REA that materials would become available if it could be shown that the war effort would be assisted and that 53 animal units per mile of line would be served. (An animal unit was based on the average consumption rate of air-dried forage by one mature cow or the equivalent made up of all other farm animals).



Delhi substation of the DCEC, ca. 1960. Photo used with permission courtesy of the Delaware County Electric Co-Op, Inc.

The directors surveyed all applicants for an animal unit count. In August 1943, the WPB approved the co-op application for a priority rating, and the office was reopened. From August 1943 to June 1944, contractors were signed and line construction commenced. At 2:00 P.M. on June 29, 1944, the first 8.2 miles of line serving 12 farms were energized on Platner Brook.

The history of the rural electric cooperatives is one of the greatest American success stories. Rural Americans decided to help themselves better their lifestyle and, to this day, take an active role in making the decisions of their cooperative.

The Delaware County Electric Cooperative, Inc. has come a long way in the past 50 years. By the end of 1993, the co-op has over 800 miles of distribution lines in 3 counties and served over 4,300 consumer/members. In 1941 there was 1 person in the office at a salary of no more than \$15 per week and 1 project coordinator who mapped out lines and surveyed farmers for possible future electric power service. By 1996, the cooperative employed 20 field workers, linemen, and brush-clearing crews; 4 office employees; 2 on



the management staff, and 2 dispatchers on call 24 hours a day for any outages that may occur.

The 50th Annual Meeting is a culmination of a lot of hard work and dedication from people who wouldn't take no for an answer, people who captured the American spirit by helping themselves enrich their lives, and people who still take a lot of pride in owning and operating their own rural electric cooperative.



*Millie Faulkner has worked at Delaware County Electric Cooperative, Inc. since February 1989. She started as a Receptionist and has since worked as the Billing Clerk, Operations Clerk and is currently in the position of Finance Manager/Office Manager. Millie has lived in South Gilboa since 1998 where she raised 3 children. She currently resides there with her husband Mike. Millie also currently serves as the Town of Gilboa Justice.*

## Treasure Hunt

*Kris Driessen*

Once an indication of poverty, feedsacks (and the repurposing of them as clothing or quilts) are now gold to whoever owns them.

What was a feedsack and how was it used? Learn about these wonderful reflections of America's rural past. Expect to see and touch great examples of quilts, clothing, dolls and other items made from feedsacks.

Kris Driessen is an accomplished quiltmaker, historian, teacher, author, researcher, and lecturer and will be the Society's guest at the October meeting of the Gilboa Historical Society.

**Carpool a Friend.**

**We'll see you on Wednesday, October 16 at 7:00  
Gilboa Town Hall**

## Gilboa Historical Society Donations

We are making plans for winter improvements to the museum and its grounds. 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.

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## ELECTRICITY COMES TO SHEW HOLLOW

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*Betty Matalavage*

My early childhood was spent on a dairy farm in Shew Hollow. We didn't have electricity, but we had a small sawmill powered by the water in the Little Minekill River. Aside from this, any machinery we had was powered by gasoline engines. There was an engine in the barn that ran the milking machines, and this is now in the collection of Tim Brainerd. We also had a smaller engine in the wood shed under the big farmhouse. This engine charged twenty glass Delco batteries that were mounted on the side of the farmhouse and that operated lights in the house, but the lights grew dimmer during the long winter nights and so bedtime came early in December and January.

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

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

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

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

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

As well as I can recall, this was some time between 1939 and 1940. We enjoyed the workmen's stories and they became very comfortable in our home for the duration of their stay in our area. The numbers varied from week to week, depending on where they were working and what they were doing, but two or three were always there and sometimes as many as six or seven.

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

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*Betty Matalavage is a blend of Shew and Souer lineage and was raised on the corner of Shew Hollow and Decker (aka, Starheim) Road.*



Car built by Gilboan O. H. Edwards, 1908. Found in the files of the Stamford Village Library by Karen Cuccinello. Reproduced here courtesy of the Stamford Village Library.

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## AIR SPOTTERS OF WWII

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*Bob Grigg, Colebrook Historical Society  
Municipal Historian for the Town of Colebrook, CT*

During the Second World War, the government established a network of civilian airplane spotters whose duty it was to thwart any Axis sneak attack such as had befallen us at Pearl Harbor. From lonely observation posts throughout the coastal defense areas, the Army Air Forces Ground Observer Corps, numbering about 1,500,000 volunteers, maintained a vigilant and continuous watch on the skies over America to see that no hostile planes approached unnoticed. This volunteer air defense system was set up by the Army Air Force fighter command with the assistance of the American Legion and OCD [state councils of the Office of Civilian Defense] and other agencies, and established a new pattern of scouting. It remained in place until advancing technology in radar made them no longer necessary.

The town of Kent, Connecticut is credited with being the first such post in America, established on December 8, 1941, and it became the model upon which the entire program was based. The observation posts were erected on a prominent hill or any rise that offered a degree of unobstructed view. Colebrook had two such posts, one atop Panorama Hill, manned by the U.S. Army, the other at the crest of Stillman Hill, just past present day house number 33. This structure still exists in town; it is the tool shed.



Vacant land and a small hill behind the telephone company building in Hobart was the site of a lookout tower during World War II, manned by volunteers to watch for planes. After the war, this building was moved to 362 Pearl Street property and used as a playhouse for the children of William Van Buren. Photo courtesy of Jim Meagley, the Hobart Historical Society, and the forthcoming book, *A Look Back at Hobart, NY* (2013).

Everyone from high school students to senior citizens made up the cadre that manned these observation posts around the clock. Spotters usually worked in pairs, 2 to 4 hours a week, and relayed observations by special telephone to the Army Information Center; in our case, it was Brainerd Field in Hartford. On fair weather days, the spotters relied upon their eyes, and on cloudy days or at night, their ears interpreted the activity. When the observers had to rely upon their ears, the ladies might turn to knitting, and both men and women quite often played cards. There were decks of cards that featured all sorts of aircraft, both Allied and Axis, that were studied until they were committed to memory.

I recall one session when I accompanied my father to the Stillman Hill observation post that I will never forget: It was a clear day, and not much was happening. Suddenly a growl of multiple engines was heard coming from the east (directly toward Colebrook Center). Next a low flying, large aircraft seemed to emerge from the tops of the forest, which turned out to be a B-17 Flying Fortress flying at treetop level. When we first realized what it was, the aircraft was actually lower than the summit of Stillman Hill, but about the time it passed over the Center, the pilot raised the nose just enough to clear the tops of the maple trees that bracketed the observation building. The tops of these trees were lashing back and forth by the prop wash from those powerful four engines, and the noise was deafening. My father was on the phone unsuccessfully trying to make himself heard above the din. In seconds the plane vanished in the general direction of Norfolk, and he was able to complete his transmission. I doubt that he had to report that the elevation was "very low!" I will never forget the belly gunner looking down and laughing as he waved to me from just a few feet above those maples.

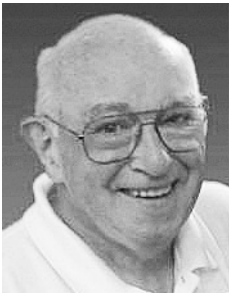
Forms were supplied on 3 by 5 cards having the following categories: Number of aircraft (one, few, many); Type of airplanes (single motor, multi motor); altitude of airplanes (very low, low, high, very high); were planes seen or heard? (check one); your observation post code name (Colebrook's was Bertram 5-7); direction of aircraft from post (N, NE, E etc.); distance of aircraft from observation post (estimate in miles); aircraft headed toward (give point of compass).

Before the card was made out however, the observer picked up the phone, which automatically connected with Hartford and reported such as this: "Flash, one, single, high, seen, Bertram 5-7, north, one half mile, east."

Of course this plane would be reported by one station after another, and the Army was able to track any and all airborne planes anywhere within the covered area.

If you were lucky, while your tour of duty was under way, someone would drop by to bring cookies or something edible.

Only one time during the course of the war did a German aircraft fly into American airspace, and that was near the end of the war when an Army Air Force crew flew a captured German plane to Florida. Of course the military knew about this, but the civilian observers were kept in the dark, just to test their proficiency. Before the plane crossed from water to land, a spotter sent in an emergency message not only identifying it as a German aircraft, but also the correct make and model.



*Bob Grigg was a cartographer and information editor for Hammond, Inc. of Maplewood, New Jersey. After retirement, Bob became involved with the Colebrook Land Conservancy and the Colebrook Historical Society, which ultimately led to his being named Municipal Historian for the town of Colebrook. For the past ten years Bob has written a weekly column in the Winsted Journal under the byline "Historic Bytes." This article reprinted courtesy of Bob Grigg, the Colebrook Historical Society, and the Winsted Journal.*

## Flood Relief Organizations

- Blenheim:**  
**and**  
**Breakabeen:** { Rural Area Revitalization Effort, Inc., a non-profit at 125 Creamery Road, North Blenheim, NY 12131 (518 925-7700, 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
- SALT:** Schoharie Area Long Term, 258 Main Street, Schoharie, NY 12157. (518) 702-5017 [info@saltrecovery.org](mailto:info@saltrecovery.org)  
[www.saltrecovery.org](http://www.saltrecovery.org)

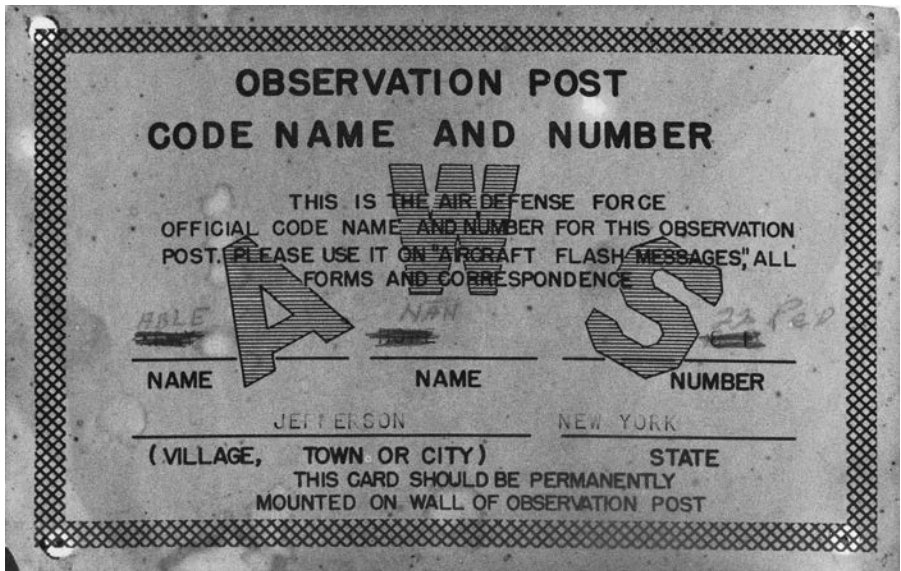
# JEFFERSON OBSERVATION POST

*ABLE NAN 22PED*

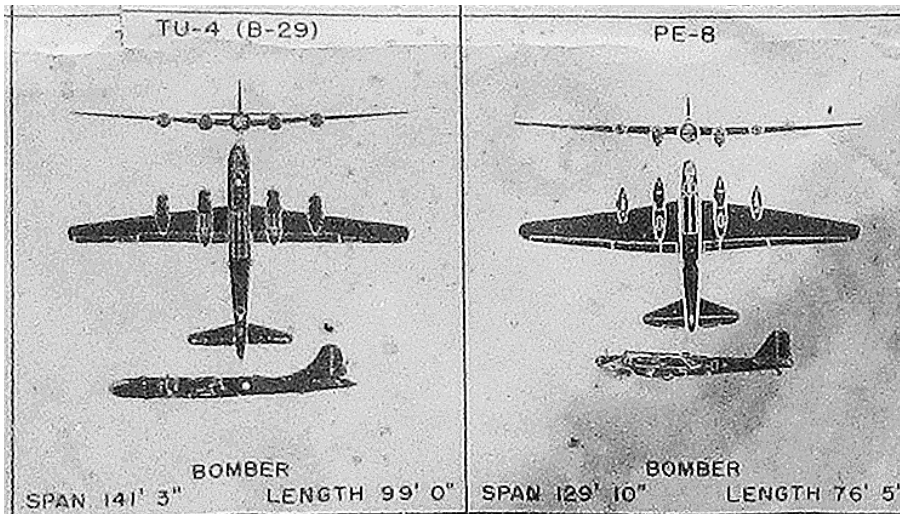
Jefferson's village green, donated by Col. Judd, has seen a lot of local history. It saw Judd start his ride to Albany to have the town named after President Jefferson, and the green was the front lawn of the first academy in the county. The Jefferson Town Green merits its state historical marker (and, possibly) a new designation as a national landmark.

Another example of the green's history: the town had been incorporated in 1803; a Presbyterian fellowship started in 1809; but its first church burned down. The green saw the replacement in 1837—a Greek Revival church on the west end that prospered for 85 years. In 1922, that fellowship merged with the Methodists who had also built on the green, but on the east.

As services were largely held at the new church, elders rented the old building to the academy for assemblies and basketball games until a new school was built around 1935. Vacant, the old church went to war: its belfry



The Jefferson Observation Post received its code name and number and was manned by volunteers throughout the war. We would like to commemorate this service with an honor roll of participants. Please contact the Historical Society or Town Historian if you know of anyone who had manned this station in the belfry of the Maple Museum.



These two planes are part of a poster used for the identification of airplanes by the Jefferson post spotters. The spotters were to sight, identify, and report all air traffic—not only to warn against attack, but also to give early warning of an air accident.

became an observer post to defend against Axis air raids, and after the war, the building was deeded to the American Legion. It served the American Legion for over 20 years, and in 1967 was sold to the Town of Jefferson.

Since then, the town has added storm windows, a new furnace, and rest rooms as well as some paneling. The building's name was changed to the Maple Museum to honor the local maple sugaring industry and housed the annual Maple Festival for several years.

The latest resurgence for the building is managed by the Jefferson Historical Society. They have presented music shows from April through October, various large-venue lectures in tune with the traditional program of a historical society, and exhibit space for vendors at the Jefferson Heritage Day celebration. The building was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2012, and was the object of a Main Street Revitalization grant received by the town in conjunction with the Western Catskills Community Revitalization Council.

For this grant, the Society had to raise \$16,000 in new revenues. They have now done this with the very gratifying support from the community at large, a \$6,000 grant from the A. Lindsay & Olive B. O'Connor Foundation, and most recently a \$2,500 grant from the Preservation League of New York State. This grant was one of only 25 for the entire state, and will start us on our way to restore the foundation and allow further restoration.





The spotters' post was in the belfry looking out the 4 windows.

These grants will assure that the outside of the building will be preserved, so we now have two more goals: to fully outfit the interior of the building and to restore the beautiful stained-glass windows. We have established a general solicitation fund to be used for the general appointments of the past and for future use; and we have individual dedicated funds for the restoration of each of the stained-glass windows (just as each of the original stained-glass windows was underwritten by a family, we hope that families will help to restore them as a memorial to today's families).

To keep in touch with progress on this continuing saga, or to contribute to these funds, please write to the Jefferson Historical Society, P.O. Box 34, Jefferson, NY 12093.

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## 1856 HARVEST IN GILBOA

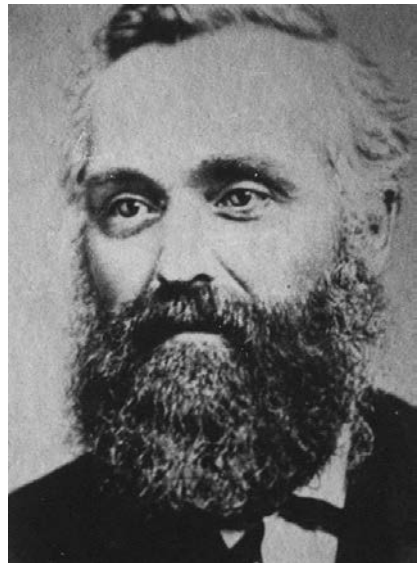
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*Socrates Hubbard*

In October as soon as the corne was ripe it was cut and put into stools this was a job I rather liked, and then soon after the first of November it was drawn to the barn and set up on the Barn floore put into the stables etc. Then came the fun of husking. By this time the weather began to get cold so that in the morning especialy we were glad to sit in sun the large east doors of the barn were opened and rite in front of them we began our work throwing the golden ears into a basket until full then empty into the wagon. I generally colected quite a veriaty of spotted red black, blew & diffirant collared corn ears.

Flax was an other article we generally raised. an half achor was about the extent. This however took a good deel of labor. Flax has to be pulled this is don by swinging the left hand around the flax as much of it as can be easily pulled at once the rich [right] is then used taking hold below the left. The handfull is spred on the ground and so in the seeds always the same way. It is shortly gethered up into bundels and set five or six in a place until the seed will thrash easily. The thrashing is don on the barn floor with frales. This thrashing was generally don some rany day when we could not work out. I can now see the cold damp day Father Paul and myself working with the flax my part of the work was playing with the beautifull seed as it slipped from the fanning mill. The stems or stalks were taken to the meddow and spred in rows left for a month or more to rot, then bound into larg bundels and placed in the barn for winter treatment.

I never liked to dig potatos to tutch them sends a shudder through me and a particular smell of the vines was very disagreeable to me. my business was picking up. The Potatos were put into a large bin in an outdoor seller nearly all the farmers had such sellers on account of the extreeme difficulty of preventing the cellirs under the house from freezing. This sellar was dug into the side of a bank neer the house, was pro-



Socrates Hubbard

bible ten by fourteen walls on the sides and timber overhead. An outer and inner door and ry straw in large bundles put betwen. Of cours the sellar was perfacly dark.

### *Gethering Apples*

Was a holliday. The orcherd was a large one everybody had Apples so we never sold an apple. What was not put into the seller and mad into cider went to the hogs and cows. Hundreds of bushels were fed in this way. Those designed for winter use were carfully picked and carried basket after basket to the bin. More than a hundred bushells were thus stowed away. Those intended for cider were halled generaly two milds to Chancy Hulberts who had a cider mill. The mill was a primitive afare circular trough two feete wide and thirty perhaps forty feete in circumferons. The apples wer scattered over the bottom of the trough, then a ponderous wheele six feed [feet] in diameter was rold over them by a horse hitched to a windless. This arangment crushed the apples very finely.

The press was two immense wood screws, we generaly made five or six barrels of cider. Three barrels was boild into one for apple sauce. The rest put into the sellar from which we drank occasionally during the winter and when to sower for that put into vinigar.

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*... from The Life and Memories of Socrates Hubbard, With a Short Sketch of the Hubbard Family, Written by Himself, Commenced the 13th of December 1856 in Quincy, Ill. This booklet is property of Craig Hubbard and reprinted here courtesy of Craig Hubbard. It is posted online at [gerryhubbard.blogspot.com/2012/10/friday-october-30-1964-frances-hubbard.html](http://gerryhubbard.blogspot.com/2012/10/friday-october-30-1964-frances-hubbard.html).*



Was this today's definition of a hay ride, or transport of the laborers to the barn to help in unloading the harvest? Photo courtesy of George Wilson.

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## EARLY BARNS IN THE CATSKILLS

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*Eric Dahlberg*

There were few settlements along the Schoharie Creek south of Weiser's Dorf (Middleburgh) in the 18th century. Although European immigrants had started to trickle in before the Revolution, serious immigration held off until after the peace treaty in 1783.

For the next 50 years, people from settled areas of New York and New England moved in to farm this area. These early farmsteads had to be self-sufficient—there was no way to easily replenish essential supplies on the frontier. The most important possessions were farm animals and the grains needed for the family's first six months: seed for the first planting (wheat, barley, oats, flax, rye, and buckwheat); summer rations for the livestock that plowed and planted the crops; and (hopefully) some grains to be ground, cracked, or left whole to feed the family until the fall.

From 1783 through the middle of the 19th century, barns had a common use and therefore design: most of them were the work area of small farms, and a key task was to harvest the grains for the next year. This common design was what we now call a threshing barn. It was relatively small, from 25 to 35 feet in one dimension and slightly larger in the other (say about 30 × 40 feet, or 1200 square feet). It had three bays: a narrow bay for animals, and two larger bays.

### Threshing and Winnowing

After harvesting, grains had to be threshed and winnowed.

To thresh grain, the farmer would lay the grass on a surface and beat it with a flail—a 3-foot stick with one or more shorter sticks attached by a short chain. The beaters, hitting the grass, would shake the grain and chaff from the individual stalks. There were different weights and shapes for beaters threshing each of the grasses. The stalks could then be combed out of the mix with a fine rake and laid aside. This seedless grass—called straw—could then be used for bedding (animal and human), baskets, construction materials (insulation, thatching), hats, and crafts. The first threshing machine was manufactured in 1784 in Scotland, but it did not appear on this frontier until 50 years later.

Chaff refers to the scales, dirt, bugs, and other small pieces of waste

The large bay on an exterior wall would be used for the storage of hay and grains. This area was usually placed to the west to protect the rest of the barn from the prevailing winter winds.

The large central bay would be a floored work area and used for, among other things, the threshing of grains and the storage of seed—hence the name for the barn. Large exterior doors were on the ends of this bay and would provide cross ventilation to cool the work area during the summer.

There are two traditional threshing barns along the Schoharie: the Dutch barn and the English barn. They each have proponents, but to my mind, the main difference is that the Dutch barn (left) has the large access doors underneath the triangular peak of the roof, while the English barn (right) has the access doors on the rectangular sides.



*Eric Dahlberg*

mixed in with the seed, and winnowing was the process to separate the grain from the chaff. Dr. Robert Thall donated a treadle-operated winnower that is on display at the Juried Barn of the GHS Museum. The flailed material was placed on the top of this machine and slowly shaken through a screen. As it fell, a hand-operated fan forced air through it, blowing the chaff to one side and allowing the seed to fall to the base and be funnelled to a container.



Treadle winnower donated to the Gilboa Historical Society Museum by Dr. Robert Thall. Photo by Gerry Stoner, courtesy of Dr. Thall and the Gilboa Historical Society Museum.

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## THE HISTORY OF AN EARLY BARN

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*Beatrice Mattice*

This is a short history of the property of the old barn recently taken down. It was built across the road from its house many years ago on the Susquehanna Turnpike (now called Durham Road, at its intersection with Toles Hollow Road in the Town of Conesville). This was the major east-west road taking people from Catskill to Unadilla and farm crops the opposite way to the Hudson River.

After the French and Indian War and before the Revolution, patents were often granted to English soldiers by the King of England. This 200-acre property was granted on August 4, 1774 to Charles Tate from England.

The following are subsequent mentions of this property:

- 1806 The property had a house and barn.
- 1856 The Wenig & Lorey atlas shows that E. Scoville lived on this land.
- 1865 The census shows Eleazer and Betsy (Scoville) Hubbard and their daughter (Charlotte), son (Thomas) and and Thomas' wife (Erzilla) lived on that place.
- 1866 The Beers atlas shows Mrs. Hubbard owned the property.

Later years, Wesley and Serena (Knowles) Rivenburgh lived there, and then their daughter Hattie and her husband, Ford Bailey, lived there. In the 1960s, the Baileys moved, and the place was sold to the Solands. The land with the barn was purchased by Henry and Mary Caretti, who bunked in the barn while building their lovely brick home. The Carelli's later used one end of the barn for their hunting guests.



*Beatrice Mattice, Town of Conesville Historian*

Gilboa Historical Society Museum  
Web Site OPEN 24/7 [www.gilboafossils.org](http://www.gilboafossils.org)

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## DECONSTRUCTION OF AN ENGLISH BARN

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*Eric Dahlberg*

I make my living with wood. I harvest it and mill a lot of it for posts, lumber, and all sorts of building materials. The scraps and branches of the harvest get processed into firewood, and the shavings and sawdust get used for animal bedding. I love wood, to see how it can be used to enrich our lives, and to have wood with me as much as possible.

My house is a very standard raised ranch like many that were built in the 1950s and 60s. It's comfortable, attractive, but it does not have the allure for me as the inside of a barn with exposed beams. As my life has changed over time, I find also that I would like to alter the layout of the house.

A few years ago, I decided that I wanted to design a house that would suit my lifestyle and show a lot of the material that I love: wood. I talked to my friend and neighbor, Issy Durkin, the "we'll buy your barn" guy. I explained what I was thinking of, and gave him a rough idea of the amount of footage I would need. He found it in the barn Bee Mattice described on page 30.

The barn itself was starting to have serious faults: much of the foundation sill was rotting and the roof had a few leaks. Without a major investment, the barn would be falling down like so many have in our area. For my purposes, however, the barn was ideal: the beams were mostly solid (one beam had been cut at some point, and one beam had some rot in the middle) and the joints were tight. Issy would be able to replace and mortise/drill those two beams, and I could mill the sill and floor joists to make a tight home.

The following is the story of how we developed the frame for our house.



One end of the barn and a side were in decent shape. Those walls and the chimney for a wood stove were probably the result of converting this end of the barn for hunting guests. However, the rest of the barn was disintegrating, and all of the sheathing (planks on the outside walls) were punky—irregularly soft and rotting. Photos throughout this article are from Eric Dahlberg, and used here courtesy of Eric Dahlberg.



The deconstruction of a barn generally follows the same sequence of steps as construction, but in the reverse order—the shakes on the roof are the last step in construction and the first step in deconstruction.

These wooden shakes are especially dangerous—any one of them might slide out from the sheeting, taking itself (and you) over the edge. A more direct way to get down in a hurry is to walk over a punky roof, allowing you to go straight through. Everyone therefore breathes a sigh of relief when the shingles are gone—you can see where you are walking and have an idea where the weak spots are.



Rafters are the sloping beams that support the pitched roof. Generally, flat pieces of wood called sheeting are nailed to the rafters, often with a little space between each plank. This space leaves a toehold so a carpenter can move around. Once the shingles are down, any punky sheeting is removed but good sheeting is left in place to provide footing for the workers.

The next step is to take the rafters down. Using the planks of sheeting to move around, you can move to one end and work on the first rafter. Taking



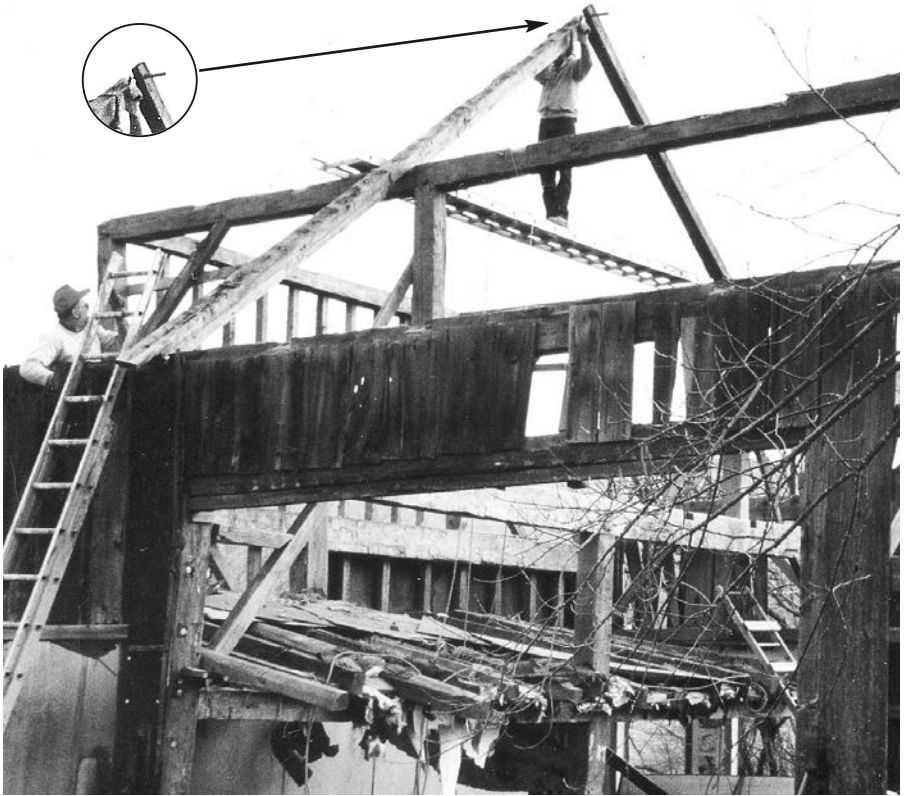


down the rafters is pretty easy if you have modern equipment. Taking them one at a time, you have to support the first rafter; disconnect it from the rest of the barn (take off the sheeting and unpin the joints), attach lines to a large crane, and John Deere can do the rest. I'm standing in front of the barn with 13 rafters down and only 4 remaining. You can see here how the solid sheeting left on one side allowed us to move around.

Construction in the nineteenth century used very little metal: all beams were held in place by hardwood pins of maple, oak, or ash. The holes were drilled in such a way that the pin, when driven in, would force the tenon into the mortise, and the shoulders would fit tightly against each other. Each joint would be immovable and would not loosen over time or due to temperature changes.

We started on the left end and worked back toward the middle. This change of direction allowed us to easily support the last set of rafters to the barn's sill and the center frame. In the top picture opposite, Fran is freeing this last rafter. Each rafter is pinned in 3 places: the opposite pair of rafters was pinned together at the ridge of the roof; and then each rafter was pinned halfway down at the shoulder beam, and again at the sill (right next to the ladder). Look carefully and you will see that Fran is driving one of the ridge pins out of the rafter joint.

Once the rafters are unpinned, John Deere can lift them off the barn one at a time and stack them safely off to the side.



As each structural member of the barn is brought down, a numbered tin plate about an inch square is nailed into the beam and recorded on a set of plans. With this memory jogger, we will be able to rebuild the barn exactly as it was,

although in a different location. Number 141 is shown below. On the right, Fran Cox is recording the original location and position of each piece.



Once the rafters were removed, the remaining siding could be removed. This was a quick job as the sheathing was not worth keeping. With the last of the siding off, we were able to clean up the work area and had an unobstructed view of the barn's rescued frame.



Farm animals lived in a narrow bay the length of the barn with joists and a ceiling over their heads. This second floor was for storage of goods and equipment, but the low ceiling would also keep the animals warm in winter.



At this point, Fran was able to start unpinning the remaining beams just before the end of the year. The majority of beams were hemlock, but when we were stacking them neatly at the site of their future home, we found a series of shallow cuts across the beams regularly at 4 foot apart. Issy told us that the practice of the tanning industry was to cut the bark off in 4' lengths, and the remainder of the wood could then be used for lumber. The core of larger trees were used for beams such as the ones in this barn.



*Delaware Record Mirror, Tuesday, June 13, 1882*  
**CYCLONE AT MACKEY'S CORNERS.**

[Of the doings of the storm of May 28th, at Mackey's Corners, [a correspondent of the *Gilboa Monitor* sent us]:—Two storms or winds appeared to meet north-west of the village, forming a cyclone. The first building it met in its course was a large barn, which it raised bodily and carried three feet. It next struck a blacksmith shop, moved it about ten feet and leveled it with the ground, and in this manner it swept through the little hamlet, nothing in its path escaping destruction. Geo. Madison Clapper's large white house, hop house, barns, and other outbuildings, are a complete wreck. Squire Becker's house was badly stove in by flying trees and timbers. The front glass in Wm. Mackey's store went in with a crash. Oscar Jackson's new barn went down like a cob house. In Milton Selleck's hop yard, not a pole was left standing. Not a rod of fence of any description that stood in the track of the gale remains standing. Picket fences were blown away, carrying with them the stones to which they were bolted, some of which were large and heavy. Apple trees were uprooted, and in one instance a thrifty maple about ten inches in diameter was twisted off about 8 feet from the ground and the top sent crashing through a house. About fifteen buildings were either destroyed or damaged. The loss is estimated at about \$5,000. The ground is strewn with timbers and rubbish of all kinds, and things present an indescribable appearance to those who have never seen before the effects of such a cyclone. One remarkable and fortunate thing is, that no one was killed or injured.

### **For the Fun of It**

Joan Sondergaard will speak with the Gilboa Historical Society at their November, 2013 meeting on toys in the attic. This slide show—given the title “For the Fun of It”—tells the history of toys found in a Rhode Island attic and now housed at the DAR museum in Washington, DC.

The show was scripted by the curator of the museum with illustrative slides of the toys, and I will be bringing a few for show-and-tell. However, I hope that you might also like to bring a toy to share.

**Carpool a Friend.**

**We'll see you on Wednesday, November 20th at 7:00  
 Gilboa Town Hall**



At South Gilboa. Found in the files of the Stamford Village Library by Karen Cuccinello, and reproduced here courtesy of the Stamford Village Library.

## Bottle Auction, and Bring a Friend

Bring an attractively wrapped bottle—of anything that you yourself would like—to be auctioned off for the benefit of our society.

The Bidders bid on the chance that the bottle contains something special they would like to have—but don't unwrap the purchase until all the bidding is over. You can trade your bottle with someone else after the last bottle is "SOLD!"

Tony VanGlad, auctioneer extraordinaire, will again lead the festivities with the help of his elves, Kristin and Al. And of course, delicious refreshments will be served.

**Historical Society Annual Bottle Auction**  
**December 18th at 7 PM**  
**Gilboa Town Hall**

Your name, address, and membership status appears on the label of the physical Newsletter: \* next to your name indicates a paid-up individual membership; likewise, \*\* indicates a paid-up couple's membership, and \*\*\* indicates a paid-up family. A single dagger † indicates lifetime membership and a double ‡ indicates a couple's lifetime membership. Please consider joining if you are not a member, and let us know if we have incorrect address information.

### Membership Application Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Subscription format: Physical  Electronic  Both

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address:\* \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

\* Please provide any temporary address for our mailings in early March, June, September, and December.

Seasonal address for mailings: Mar.  Jun.  Sep.  Dec.

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Total amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

† 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.

**Gilboa Historical Society, Post Office Box 52, Gilboa, NY 12076**

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