

GILMANTON — The Corner Ladies Aid had as guest speaker Mrs. Maude Schultz of Frisky Hill, who gave a most fascinating talk on the early days of Gilmanton. It is a subject in which she is completely at home, for in her years of residence in this community, she has channeled her deep love for Gilmanton into a steadfast effort to learn all she could of its history.

For many years Mr. and Mrs. Schultz ran the Corner store, and in those days it was an emporium in true country style. There were benches placed around the stove for the old timers, who often chatted with Mrs. Schultz about their young days in the community and how things were then. Mrs. Schultz heard at first hand from folks who were present many stories which in later years became thought of as legends or mere figments of some story tellers imagination. And so as the highlights of her talk to the Ladies Aid, Mrs. Schultz brought forth these particular stories, and corroborated them with documentary evidence.

One was the fact that between 1810 and 1830, Gilmanton did actually have a population of 4,000 people. It is incredible to people living here today to believe this was once a large and thriving community, full of industries of national reputation, with large hotels, two important private academies, 13 public schools, many many stores of every kind, even including a pharmacy and a jewelry store, and boasting three newspapers, two of which were full sized sheets of more than eight pages.

But this was so Mrs. Schultz amply proved, presenting the newspapers of the day with long columns of local advertisements, and the catalogues and journals of the academies, and the personal documentary proofs. She also verified the story that at one time the contract was ready for a rail road to go through our town. It was to run from Pittsfield to Barnstead to Gilmanton to Alton, and was called the Suncook Valley Extension. And she also substantiated the story Gilmanton had been considered to be a sure thing for the capital of the state, and missed by a whisker becoming so.

Mrs. Schultz showed the ladies a framed map of both Gilmanton and the Iron Works, showing all the houses on all the roads, the Post Offices and schoolhouses and many, many dwellings which have since vanished into a clump of alders over a forgotten cellar hole.

The early days of our town, which was incorporated in 1727

introduced Mrs. Schultz's talk. She retold the story of the Indian Medicine Spring on the site of the present Hyde house, which brought so many Indians to this community every spring it greatly delayed the actual settling of Gilmanton. And of course the familiar and beloved tales of Hannah Mudgett and Mary Butler had their place in the story for no talk on Gilmanton would be complete without them. She also told of a thriving iron industry in the part of the township which is still called Iron Works, and she said that iron from Gilmanton foundries went into the making of the anchor for the famous ship "Constitution" and into the great iron chain that was put across the Hudson to stop the British in the War of 1812. Winni Roma of this community still has one of the famous plows made here, an implement unrivaled for "sod-busting."

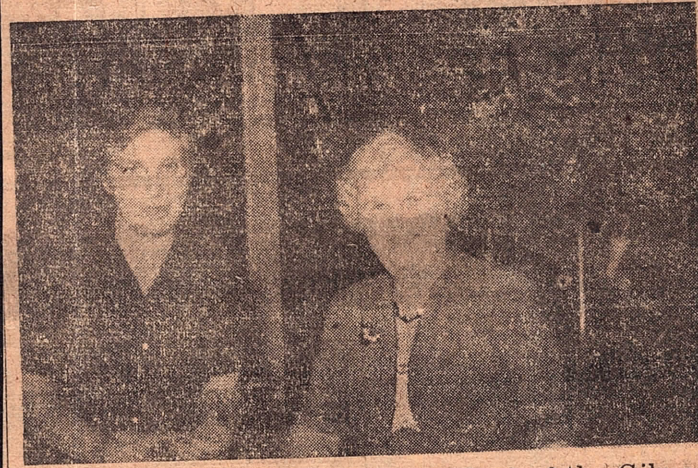
She retold the story of the metal cone on Peaked Hill that guided the ships into Portsmouth Harbor, and of the many-windowed - eight - sided cupola that was removed carefully from the top of the Von Bernuth house, and dragged by 16 span of oxen to the top of the hill. Mrs. Schultz pointed out that in olden days folks ran rings around us moderns when it came to moving things about. Let us quiver in horror at the thought of moving a mere garage. When the need arose, old timers calmly moved anything from glass walled cupolas to huge colonial homesteads.

Mrs. Schultz said when the Academy and the Theological Seminary were booming and need new dormitories, they simply got busy and moved more buildings into the Corner, among them the house presently occupied by Mrs. Harriet Jilson, and the magnificent homestead belonging to Jane Aresi.

Besides the map and the newspapers, Mrs. Schultz exhibited catalogues and leaflets and programs from the Academy, pictures and postcards of the community and its people, and buttons from the coats of soldiers of the revolution, who used the field across from her Frisky Hill home as a drilling ground. There she herself had found the buttons, traced their history, and forged for herself another link in the chain of history of this community which she loves so well and tells so beautifully.

Her talk brought enthusiastic applause from the audience, who only wished they could keep her talking even longer, and continue to draw from her stories of our community which are of such interest to everyone.

Relate's Gilmanton's History



Mrs. Florence Chaffee, president of the Gilmanton Corner Ladies Aid, greets Mrs. Maude Schultz of Frisky Hill, who gave a most interesting talk to the group on the history of Gilmanton.