

Notes on Gilmanton Iron Works by Louise (Place) Shurbert
Transcribed by Carolyn Baldwin, December 2001 from handwritten
and typed originals with annotations.

Louise Place Shurbert is a life long resident of the Gilmanton-Alton area. For many years she has been putting down on paper her recollections of the early days in this Town. What she has recorded is not so much a history as it is a collection of personal memories of the activities behind the real history. The account is both homespun and warm. Her first hand knowledge of people and incidents is a major contribution in the written heritage of Gilmanton.

[The first section is from handwritten notes.]

"Gilmanton"

Gilmantown was incorporated in 1727 being granted to twenty-four people by the name of Gilman, among 153 others, as compensation for services for services rendered in the defence of the Country. Most coming from Exeter, Portsmouth and vicinity.

The Charter was signed by Lieutenant Governor and Commander-in-Chief over said Province, John Wentworth May 20 in Portsmouth, N.H.

"Boundries" (sic)

The original grant was bounded on the North by Lake Winnepesaukee, East by New Durham Gore, now Alton, Southeast by Barnstead, Southwest by Canterbury, Loudon, Northfield and Northwest by the "Winnepesiogee" River to where Endicott Rock now stands at the Wares (now Weirs). (Lancasters History)

The Indians had a settlement there as the fishing was good. Stone walls were built down stream in an inclined line until they came together at a 45° angle, a cage of crossed sticks placed there to receive the fish that were taken in great number.

Archaeologists have recently been excavating that area. Many relics were found.

There have been 21 different ways of spelling the Indian names of Lake Winnepesaukee up to 1742 (Belknap History).

"Block Houses"

At the first annual meeting of the Proprietors, March 11, 1736, a committee was appointed to clear a pathway from the Epsom Blockhouse to the South East Corner of the first division of lots. The first on[e] was called White Hall because it was located on a white rock and is believed to have been located on Sanborn hill, near the town line of Pittsfield on land now owned by the Bosiaks.

Because of Indian wars it was 1748 before two more were erected. A second one was erected at the Wares (Weirs). A third was erected at Shellcamp Pond, a mile South of the Academy. A fourth [sic] was erected at Third Camp Meadow now overflowed and made a reservoir for power by the Gilmanton Manufacturing Co. (Lancaster's History page 60).

Wm Badger bought 100 acres from Isaac Sawyer and constructed a dam in 1832 from huge slabs of granite. (Picture of dam.) Part of it can now be seen at what is now known as Lawyer Lake.

The Province Road was laid out in 1770, leading from Portsmouth to Canada, going through what is now known as Lower Gilmanton. (More on plaque on Frisky Hill.)

"First Settlers"

Benjamin Mudgett and his wife Hannah [Bean] arrived in Town Dec. 27, 1761 having come from Epsom non foot. They were the first settlers in Town. She was the first white woman in town. Hannah could go no further so they camped about a mile from the end of their journey. John Mudgett and wife arrived the next day. A plaque has been erected at the site where they rested for the night by the Lower Gilmanton Community Club.

Orlando Weed and wife joined them 15 days later. He settled and built a house on what is now the Potter farm. These three families remained all winter. Their first homes were all log cabins.

By 1767 there were 45 families in Town.

Gunstock Village (now Gilford) disannexed from Gilmanton in 1812 as they couldn't get over the mountains in the mud of early spring to attend town meeting. Taxation without representation brought the Town of Gilford into existance [sic].

East Gilmanton (later known as Belmont which was incorporated in 1859) (also called Factory Village after the large brick mills were erected by Wm. Badger in 1832. ?Lake City now Lakeport. They were called the Gilmanton Manufacturing Co. and put out cotton goods. It was re-sold several times.

[Transcriber's note: Belmont was called Upper Gilmanton and was also called Gilmanton Factory Village. See journal of Thoreau who passed through the town on a walking tour shortly before it became Belmont on 1858.]

Moses Sargent bought it in 1865 converting it to a hosiery mill which became very successful employing 200 people within my memory.

When nylon hosiery came in the demand for cotton hosiery was much less and the mills had to close around the late 40s. "1950" (on a slate stone in Belmont cemetery.)

Col Dudley Prescott of Upper Gilmanton (Belmont) was a volenter [sic] of the American Revolution and became the highest ranking officer. He was buried near his home Aug 3, 1815. His epitaph reads:

His life was devoted to acts of charity
Many of the first settlers were often sustained by his assistance
May his ashes slumber in sweet repose

His faults be forgotten and his Virtues imitated by posterity.

Buildings in Gilmanton in 1817 before Belmont and Gilford disannexed 5 meeting houses, 20 school houses, a court house, a cotton factory a nail factory (flat nails made of iron) 99 grain mills (grist) 10 sawmills, 2 clothing mills, a carding machine, an oil mill, and 9 trading stores.

Smith Village in Upper Gilmanton (now part of Belmont) It was named for the first physician who settled in Gilmanton. It was located where the "Winery" is now, the Durrell Mountain Road coming out at that location.

The Province Road Grange Hall and the Baptist Church, which they are not renovating, and a school were in that area, also a cemetery which is still kept in good shape

A famous painter, Stafford Good retired to his home on Durrell Mountain Road in Gilmanton about 1930. He coached my father (Frank Place) on some of his paintings which were very good. (Mr. Maher has several of them.)

Mr. Good took Norman Rockwells place on the Saturday Evening Post cover pictures.

Gilmanton Iron Works

The parsonage of the Baptist church which was destroyed in the 1915 fire was located between Mr. Mahers house on Elm St. and Cookies Beauty Shop. It was used by the Congregational Church for a parsonage until it was struck by lightening and burned to the ground. (It was the large white house on the left of the post card picture I showed you.)

Smith Meeting House area

There were two people by the name of Frank Page, one living near the Smith Meeting House and the other residing not far away in the Gale neighborhood. So one went by C. Frank and one by Frank J. for first names.

Lower Gilmanton

Miss Hazel Parsons who lives in a large old colonial home at Lower Gilmanton, great great great grandfather served Gilmanton as a preacher, starting in 1763 going to peoples home until a church was built at Lower Gilmanton. His name was Rev. William Parsons.

These items may or may not be in the writings I gave you. Am sending them to you anyway.

Sincerely, Mrs. Richard Shurbert

Evangelical Baptist Fellowship Gilmanton Iron Works

The Evangelical Baptist Fellowship began with seven members in 1964 without any funds or property.

The meetings were held at the homes of Mrs. Robert Tibbetts, Mrs. Esther Burbank, Mrs. Barbara Purtell, Mrs. Albert Blais, and others.

Land across from the Pine Grove Cemetery was bought in 1965 and construction of the present church was started in the same year. Mr. & Mrs. William Goff worked to help build the church by visiting everyone in Gilmanton offering prayers and Bible Study. He was studying for the ministry at that time.

The first service was held in the basement three months later. The sanctuary was dedicated in February 1968 and the Rev. Sherman Stevens was hired as a full time pastor. When the Methodist church was taken down to make way for Sunrise Towers in

Laconia the pews, alter and pulpit chairs were donated to this church.

The Arthur Bickford homestead was bought to use as a parsonage. In June 1969 the building (parsonage) burned down, four of his children losing their lives. They were Vicki 15, Bonnie 13, Deborah 7 and Hope 14 months old. The Rev. Stevens being the father of 13 children was concerned for the future of our young people...

These words were spoken by a Communist: "We are going to destroy the moral character of a generation of young Americans, and when we have finished you will have nothing with which you can defend yourselves."

After reading that, a Christian school for all grades was started and named "The Victory School." It is doing very well, and is a rewarding work for all to benefit by.

The Church is now called the Victory Christian Fellowship. They have been victorious over many obstacles with many prayers and lots of faith.

[From handwritten notes]

Iron Mine in Crystal Lake

Moses Morrill was voted permission from the proprietors of Gilmanton June 5, 1778 to mine iron ore from Lougee Pond or Crystal Lake as we now know it.

It was smelted there and the useable ore was hauled 1 1/2 miles by oxen to the iron works which were erected at Middle Falls the same year.

The iron was used for making the plows invented by John Huzzy [sic] and manufactured at his mill near by (Huzzy Mill on Page 3).

The Huzzy plows could be found on most farms for miles around. Three blacksmith shops were located nearby having easy access [sic] to the iron needed for horseshoes (on page 4). It was made into tools, iron cooking utensils used in fireplaces, door hinges and latches. It became famous after making the anchor for "Old Ironsides.": From the commencements of these operations this part of the town was called the Iron Works village. Up to that time it has been known as Avery Town. About 1850 these operations were discontinued because of the scarcity of the ore and the difficulty of obtaining it.

Slag, a fused residue separated in the reduction of ore in founding basic iron can still be found in piles under twenty feet of water in the vicinity of Sandy Point Beach.

The three blacksmith shops on Page 4.

Gilmanton Corner

Gilmanton Corner once called Academy Village is certainly the most beautiful and historic section of the Town.

The first framed barn was erected in 1763 by Gen. Joseph Badger (Was this the very large one in Gil Cor or on the corner?) Home built in 1779.

Gov. Wm. Badger who was governor of New Hampshire for two terms in the early 1800s. (Josiah Badger, Revolutionary war General, was grandfather of Gov. Wm Badger and lived in the house that was the Parsonage of the Methodist Episcopal Church now owned by John Dickey next to Bingham's new house.) It is now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Leslie Roberts. In 1794 a charter was obtained for an academy. It was erected in 1796, burned in 1808 and rebuilt. It burned down again in May 1894 being 100 years old. It was rebuilt again on the same location the same year. Many famous people graduated from there. The ones who went on to Dartmouth were accepted without a written examination because of the high quality of education given there. I have a list of the graduates from 1885 to 1891 which I will list on another paper. The last class was in 1910 with only three graduating. Alice Page was one. (George Roberts has photo of them that I gave him.) She was born in the house now owned by George Roberts. Town Meetings were held in the Academy in 1797 and was used as a County Court House in 1799.

Graduates Class of 1885 were: Ned Dearborn, Tilton, George Dennett, Gloucester, Mass. Charles Hall, Wm Ingalls, Kingston, N.H. Edwin Plummer, Gil, Walter True who became Laconia's first city physician. Harriet Cogswell, Gil, Emma Page, Gil.

Eight graduated in 1886--Nine in Class of 1887--2 in class of 88, six in Class of '89--seven in class of '90. John F. Currier, Alton, who became an agent of the Boston and Maine Railroad. His home in Alton was remodeled into the Gilman Home and he became the first resident in the home. Others that year were Winn Hart, Irving Hurd (cousin of my mother) Arthur Randlett, Laconia, Elmer Sargent, Belmont, Lillian Eveleth, Gil, Mabelle Moore, Gil. Class of '91 George Varney, Anna Cogswell. Class of '92 Arthur Greely, California, Harvey Jewett, Lakeport, Kate Fuller, Belmont, Leita Fuller, Belmont. Class of '93 Jasper Smith, Belmont, medical student, Rolland Woodward, Springfield, Mass. Lura Glines, Mary Weeks. Class of '94 Thomas Cogswell, Gil, Herbert Downing, Gil, Naham Wight, Gil medical student, Bertha Batchelder, Tilton, Sarah Farrar, Belmont.

Other students attending, Anna Barber, I.W., Elna Carroll Gil, Belle Marsh, I.W., Lena Moulton, I.W., Clarence Cogswell, I.W., Curtis Huntoon, Belmont, David Sawyer, Gil, Ernest Smith, I.W., Ruth Lane, Gil, Harriet Pease, Loudon, Blanch Sawyer, Gil, Mary Wight, Gil, Georgia Wright, Gil, John Sawyer, Gil, Myrtie Clark, Belmont, Bertha Ellis (Hislop) I.W., Myrtie Gale, Gil, Ena Kendall, Gil, Zina Marsh, I.W. Gertrude Page, I.W., Ena Osborn,

Lower Gil, Mabelle Wright, Gil, Tressa Smith, Belmont, Rowland Carroll, Gil. Forrest Canney, Gil, Charles Currier, Alton, Alfred Gault, Gil, George Knowles, Byron Herbert, Laconia, John Hoadley, Gil, Wm French, Gil, Guy Page.

The last graduating class was in 190[?] consisting of three, Alice Page _____, _____. George Roberts has picture and names of the last class that graduated.

Famous graduates were Dr. John French, Sylvester Gale, Dr. Henry Dudley, Dr. Wm. Lovett father of Rev. Isaac Smith. Dartmouth accepted students without written exams who had graduated from this academy.

Dr. Henry W. Dudley, born in Gilmanton Nov. 30 1831 graduated from Gil Academy 1851 graduated from Harvard Medical School in 1864, settled in Abington, Mass. Was professor of pathology at Tufts Medical School from 1893 to 1900. From 1904 to 1906 he was president of the Old Home Day Association, Smith Meeting House.

In later years it was turned over to the Gilmanton School District to use as an elementary school.

The Gilmanton Historical Society have taken it over now and hold their meetings there.

The picture of the sign at the 5 roads meeting there is used on their program.s

A Congregational Church was built next to the Academy in 1826.

In 1827 the brick Methodist Church was built on the corner of the lot George Bingham has just built a house on.

In 1835 a large Theological Seminary built of brick on the same lot, being 88 ft. long 50 ft wide and 3 stories high. It opened in connection with the Academy.

Rev. Stephen S.N. Greeley born in Gilmanton June 23, 1813, attended the Academy, graduated from Dartmouth in 1835 and the Gilmanton Theological Seminary in 1838. He was ordained at the congregational Church at G.I.W. His home was near Rocky Pond. History mentions Col. Greeley's mills at Rocky Pond, Probably his father.

The seminary closed in 1848 for lack of students. It was then used as a dormitory for the Academy. Later it was the Mountain view Hotel which burned down.

Quakers, called Society of Friends, settled here in the yearly years of the town, erecting a church in 1780. It was located half way up the hill on route 140 toward G.I.W. Their parsonage was just across the road from the church. The house is still there but the church was taken down. Their graveyard is next to where the church was. I have been told that many of the beautiful homes in the area were built by them.

The Old Store was located next to the Academy where Roxy Stockwell lives now. They operated it for many years.

Orlando Fogg was the blacksmith.

A large Tavern was built across from the store, on corner of Currier Hill Rd. in 1793 and was a stopover for the Concord Coach. When the many layers of wall paper were torn off, rare stenciling by Moses Eaton were found and Masonic emblems on the wall. fraternity meetings held there in the late 1700s.

On the corner of 140 and 107 a large brick house, built in 1770, was where Hon. Joseph Badger, Jr., Huckins, and Curtis Hidden Page who was professor of English Literature and languages at both Dartmouth and Columbia Universities lived. Page was Town moderator for many years and left money to the Town to build and maintain a park.

Robinswood Inn was located on Currier Hill Road. Across from that is the very large Kitchen farm. Lieutenant Major Ebenezer Eastmans homestead before that. In back of that is Mary Butler rock that was her grave stone. The D.A.R. placed a plaque there in memory of her bravery and made a road into it placing a marker at the entrance. Lieutenant Ebenezer Eastman married her in 1773. After Major Andrew McClary was killed at the Battle of Bunker Hill, Lieutenant Eastman took command. While the battle was raging she received word that he had been wounded. She rode bareback on a horse with her baby in her arms to her fathers in Brentwood, following a trail marked by notches cut in trees and many hostile Indians around. She left her baby there and proceeded to Bunker Hill. When she arrived she found he was not seriously injured/wounded.

Dr Naham Wight, a graduate Bowdoin Medical school, located in Gilmanton Corner in 1830 where he practiced for 52 years. He was called the best surgeon in the state. He instructed 111 students including Dr. Albion French and his two uncles Dr. John French and Samuel French and Dr. Henry Dudley [sic] all being graduates of Gilmanton Academy and Dartmouth. Dr. Dudley attended Harvard Medical School in 1864.

In 1841-1842 and 1843 Dr. Wight was a state representative in the legislature. His very large beautiful home was called "The Elms" setting way back from the road on 107 near the entrance to the cemetery. The school house was on the Province Road almost across from Dr. Wight and is now called Peaked Hill Grange Hall.

Lower Gilmanton

Lower Gilmanton soon became a flourishing settlement with a tavern and dance hall, blacksmith shop, harness show, a brick school house on the old road next to the baptist church which was built in 1770.

The house next to the Church was built in 1790. It has now been restored to its original splendor by Douglas Towle. At the top of the hill, now called Frisky Hill, was the large training field for the soldiers, lead ([sic] by Lieutenant Ebenezer Eastman, who were to fight in the Revolutionary war and was called the Parade Ground. It was located on Jonathan Brown's land on the other side of the Church. Later it was turned into a

very large apple orchard having manly rows a mile long. Morse Brown, our selectman for 18 years, lived there and operated the orchards, setting out manly trees of his own on the other side of the road, Frisky Hill becoming most all apple orchards, which have most all been cut down now.

History of Edgerlys next--Lower Gilmanton settlers.

"First Range Road in Gilmanton"

The first range road was number one in the division of 40 acre lots. It was 24 rods wide and 587 rods long to the first cross road which was the Potter Road, 440 rods to the next road that crossed just beyond the Hasty home where Charlie Stone had his home and sawmill, continuing through Night Hawk Hollow 394 rods to home of Hon. Thomas Cogswell from thence 290 rods to Crystal Lake (Lougee Pond). The Hon Thomas Cogswell was the first person to go very it with wheels drawn by a team of horses in 1764. On the way down into Night Hawk Hollow on very steep Garrett Hill his load slid off breaking all the crockery he had brought home from Exeter. The Hon Thomas Cogswell built the very large beautiful home now owned by Mrs. Conrad Snow. His son, Atty. Thomas Cogswell, built the house where the Skantzes live in on what is now Route 140. The Cogswell mills were built at the foot of the hill from his home on Mill Brook in Night Hawk Hollow. More on Cogswell descendants and the mills in Lancaster History.

The Gale School was located next to C. Frank Page's house carried on by his son Harold Page. In later years Grace O'Connell and bought it for a summer cottage. Her brother Lawrence building a house nearby. The school house burned and Lawrence sold his place, both moving to new locations.

Sylvester Gale, only son of Thomas and Hannah (Sanborn) Gale, was born in Gilmanton Feb. 10, 1832. He graduated from Gil. Academy and was a blacksmith by trade. He was the first man from Gil. to volunteer for the Civil War at age 30. He was raised to the rank of sergeant and proved his courage at the Battle of Chancellorsville, Va. where he was severely wounded and was incapacitated for further service. He was a member of the Masonic fraternity, also a grand army [???]. He married Hannah S. Glidden of Gil. in 1857. Their children were Cora B. and Arthur A. He was one of Gilmanton's best citizens and the first man to act in reclaiming the Old Smith Meeting House. He died June 15, 1903. A beautiful monument marks his grave but the church is a grander monument to his memory.

The large farm near him was the Royal Page farm which burned. (He was well known but can't find anything about him.) Moses Merrill, father of Florence Durgin, lived on the corner near Pages and Florence Durgin was born there. It was where Louise Boardman lives now. Next to that on the same side was the huge farm of Lawyer Thompson. His buildings were struck by lightning and burned. He left the land to the Town. His low

office was over Dockams Store, G.I.W. Fannie Paige was his secretary for 40 years.

Lougeetown

Sgt. Albert 19 yrs, 2nd Lt. Harlon 24 years and Cpl. Asa Paige 18 all brothers were volunteers of the of the Civil War and born in the house called Scovills' Hennerly. Asa Paige was my great grandfather; Grace Paige (Place) my grandmother) and Edger Paige, my great uncle. Albert Paige was the father of Minnie Page, Harlon Paige father of Fannie Page. They lived in a settlement called Lougeetown which took in land from there to the head of Lougee Pond, now Crystal Lake, the road continuing to the Thompson farm through the hollow to Guinea Ridge.

Smith Meeting House Church at Center Gilmanton

What we know as the Smith Meeting House Area was called Gilmanton Center.

A Congregational Church being erected in 1774 and the first schoolhouse. They had no heat in the church but for 50 years many people came from long distances on horseback and in winter by ox-sleds. With the building of other churches in Town the number of people attending became less. Up to 1897 it was sadly neglected and the building had to be torn down.

Sylvester J. Gale began the work of reclaiming the building. In 1989 an improvement society was organized and the following officers were chosen. President Thomas Cogswell, vice President

Sylvester Gale, Secretary George Parsons, Treasurer Daniel S. Ayer.

The Church was re-built and the first fair was held on Old Home Week calling absent sons and daughters to come home, and is still held annually.

Rev. Isaac Smith was the first pastor. He was born in Conn. Nov. 1744 and wanted to farm, buying the huger farm at the foot of the hill on the road that is now closed being the road that came out at the top of Frisky Hill. When his father was dying he told him to prepare for such an hour as this and that made him to become a minister. He attended Princeton College, graduated in 1770 working his way through. James Madison, later President of the U.S. was his friend and companion during their college years together. He studied theology with Dr. Hart and Dr. Ballamy who were famous.

In 1772 he visited Hanover and called on Dr. Eleazer Wheelock, the first president of Dartmouth College, when it was still a log building. In 1774 he received a call from the Town of Gilmanton to become their minister which he accepted. For 43 years he preached at the Smith Meeting House as the most sacred trust God ever gave to man.

Dr. Prime [?] of New York writing a history of the five most noted ministers in the U.S. included the Rev. Isaac Smith among them. He did much to encourage education in the town and was one of the first trustees of the Gilmanton Academy. His only son

Rev. Francis P. Smith was born in Gilmanton in 1795, moving to Braintree, Mass. and marrying the daughter of the Rev. Ezra Weld. He was a graduate of Gilmanton Academy and Dartmouth and later practiced law in Mass.

On the 25th of March 1817, in the 73rd year of age, and the 43rd year of his ministry he stood face to face to the mighty mystery that shrouds the world, going to his grave after a three day illness, near the church. The church testified the sense of his worth by the erection of an appropriate monument to his memory.

Smith Meeting House Cemetery, located near the church could tell us a great deal of the history of the early settlers as it was the first burying ground laid out in the town. Many of the verses appearing on the grave stones reflect their values about life here and hereafter. The oldest marked grave is that of Joseph Philbrick who died in 1776. Wm Badger, Governor of N.H. 1834-1835 is just beyond the tomb of Rev. Isaac Smith. Many graves are marked by large field stones. The Ham lot has a very large one with a plaque on it. The Brock family is another one. They were the last family to reside in the very large farm at the foot of the hill which burned. Ed Ham bought the land as a pasture for his cattle.

Transcription by Carolyn Baldwin of typed recollections with hand-written annotations.

[Page 1] RECOLLECTIONS OF GILMANTON IRON WORKS

by Louise (Place) Shurbert

Of course, most of us know how it got its name. It was called Avery Town before that.

The iron was mined at the lower end of Crystal Lake, originally called Lougee's Pond as there was a settlement near there called Lougee Town which was beyond the Scovill Hennery taking in most of the land to the head of the lake on Guinea Ridge.

The mine shafts were near Sandy Point Beach which was a marsh or bog before the present dam was built. The slag, a fused residue separated in the reduction of ore [??] The ore was hauled by oxen 1 1/2 miles to a point near the Huzzy Mills called Middle Falls, to be smelted into chains, door hinges and latches, tools and the plows which Mr. John Huzzy Invented. These were found on most farms for miles around and manufactured at the Huzzy mill at the back of his house on Mill Road. The anchor on the ship Old Ironsides was reported to have been made there. This was abandoned in the 1830s. Remains of the charcoal pit can still be seen.

Night Hawk Hollow was the first settled part in this area of the town.

I have seen the remains of two dams on that road, that were used for water power for grist mills and saw mills.

[Reverse of page 1]

The Hon. Thomas Cogswell was the first person to go over it with wheels in 1764. His team going down the steep Garrett Hill, when he lost part of his load and broke all his crockery.

He built the house now owned by Mrs. Conrad Snow. His son, Col. Cogswell Jr. built the house where the Skantze's live. He became a lawyer after graduating from Dartmouth College and Harvard Law School. He was admitted to the bar 1866 and began his profession at G.I.W. His office was in the second story of Dockhams store. The next attorney was Mr. Thompson who settled on a large homestead located just below the Royal Page farm in what was known as the Lougetown area. His secretary was Fannie Paige (my grandmother Place's cousin). His buildings burned and he left the land to the town. As far as I know the Town still owns it.

The Cogswell mills were just below these houses in the Valley which ic called Night Hawk Hollow. The first grist mill was built on Mill Brook and the first saw mill on butler Brook, both flowing into Suncook Lake.

[page 2.]

The first range road went straight from the bogs at Crystal Lake by the Fred Young farm, down by Conrad Snow's house, across Route 140 to Night Hawk Hollow. If followed through it comes out on Route 107 at Lower Gilmanton near the site of the Mudgett Homestead Plaque. Not passable now.

The settlement was moved to the present location at B.I.W. because the brook through the Hollow did not give them enough water power for their mills.

Three dams were then built from Crystal Lake to the end of Elm Street.

At the Lower Falls on the Suncook river, a grist mill was built in 1770.

The Iron works business was erected at Middle Falls in 1778.

They had their first Post Office in 1796. Dudley Leavitt was the first Postmaster at Gilmanton Iron Works.

A printing press was started in 1800 by a Mr. Clough. "The Farmers Weekly Magazine, "The Gilmanton Gazette" and the "Leavitt's Almanac" were published for a short time by Dudley Leavitt and Mr. Clough. The business was continued by Mr. Prescott who printed the "Parents Magazine" and "The Biblical Journal". This press moved to Concord where the railroad went through and is now called "The Rumford Press."

There was a tannery located at the present bridge on Elm Street. The foundation can still be plainly seen.

[Page 3]

A large shoe shop was built near there and employed quite a few people. It was first owned by Jonathan Clark. He also owned the tannery which furnished the leather for the shoe factory.

I remember the Huzzy mill very well as I lived in the house owned by John Huzzy and the three story mill was down a very

steep hill to a dam and mill which had housed several businesses, making plows, woodworking and a clapboard and shingle mill. It was where the local undertaker Elmer Lord made his coffins on the third floor, in the shape of the ones that king Tut was entombed in.

I remember seeing them lined up against the wall in all sizes from very large to very small.

There was a saw mill run by water power from the dam under a lean-to at the mill. My grandfather Jesse Place was the board sawyer.

Many years later, when the mill had been abandoned, the pool by the old log dam was the old swimming hole, and many a good time was enjoyed by the children of the village.

It was reported that a local boy used one of the coffins to go down stream in with a paddle. that must have been quite a sight!

There were three blacksmith shops in the Iron Works Village at different times. The first and most famous was located on High Street next to Bob Tibbetts' house.

[Page 4]

It was built by Noah and Joseph Marsh and owned by the family as long as it was used. Nellie Hughes was Bill Marsh's housekeeper. She was always chewing snuff. In those days women didn't smoke. But they did chew tobacco !!!

Bill Marsh was the last one to operate it. His brother had a harness shop near the back of it in a separate building.

The blacksmith shop was built in 1779 and reported to be the oldest one still in existence at that time. Henry Ford was interested in buying it about 1928 to move to his farm in Sudbury, Massachusetts, but decided it was in too bad condition to be moved.

There was a blacksmith shop on land next to the river on Elm Street formerly owned by Frank Place. Mr. Mahr has a post card picture of it that I gave him. When digging holes for a garage, many horseshoes were found. Mr. Josiah Goodwin was the blacksmith.

The last one I remember was in the building that is known as Nelson's Garage.

"Billy Sunday" Kinsman was the Smithy. He got his nickname from an evangelist of that name because of the language he used at times-----when he wasn't praying.

I used to watch him when he was pounding the red hot iron, shaping it into horse-shoes. How the sparks did flow and how it did ring.

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He also made beautiful hand wrought[t] andirons for fireplaces. Does anyone in town have a set of them?

Bill Hislop was called in a lot by the towns-people to look at sick horses and other animals and could also shoe horses.

He had a wonderful way with animals and would have made a good veterinarian.

On the back side of the double tunnel Suncook bridge which was built in 1775 and was the first bridge to cross the Suncook River. By the log dam at the Lower Falls at the End of Elm Street there were large stone foundations and within my memory, an old saw mill and a cider press operated by Ralph Eastman.

On the Elm Street side was a creamery, a grist mill operated by Danford Cook (his house was located next to the Ripleys), a large carriage shop and also a large building housing a dry goods and millinery store operated by two Cook sisters. The building also housed the Selectmen's office. My father, Franklin Place, bought it for a wood working shop, but later sold it and it was turned into a garage. Oscar Sterrett, Ralph Eastman and Joe Walker operated it at different times until it caught fire and burned down some years later. Joe Walker was the only black man in town that I know of. He lived in town until his death. (Have post cards of these buildings.)

Charles and Ernest Goodwin had a large grocery store and Post Office and a grain business. The building is still standing next to the Goodwin house. His son Ralph bought the carriage shop across the road for a garage and later rebuilt his father's store for a garage.

The log dam held back the water to form what was known as Mill Pond which furnished power for the mills there (grist mill, saw mill and carriage shop.) When it was frozen over in the winter many of the towns people and their children would hold skating parties there. Someone would build a bon-fire so we could warm our hands. How pretty it looked at night. The Hislop family, the Bill David family, Lawrence and Grace Douglas, myself and many other enjoyed the good times we had there.

In 1925 my mother and father, Mr. and Mrs. Franklin Place and I moved in with Edger Paige, my great uncle, who then owned the house now owned by Mr. Maher. [Here insert handwritten page on back of page 5] They took care of him until his death. My mother Lyanna Hurd Place was a retired school teacher. My rather a building contractor found plenty of work around Crystal Lake until his retirement at 65. He was destined to do his best work in his later years. He bought a building in back of the stores of Arthur Chase for a wood working shop. At first he took in antiques to repair but soon gave that up to build reproductions of antiques.

He made 3 oak sunflower chests, hand carving the 3 front panels. They were exact reproductions which dated back to 1670 to 1690. He reproduced a Queen Ann highboy and a Queen Ann lowboy which was painstaking work shaping the fan on the front of them. They dated back from 1720 to 1750. He made many Hutch cupboards of different designs. They were very large and some were

reproductions. He made Winthrop desks, old fashioned cradles full size and miniatures, serving cabinets, a full dining room set of Captain table, chairs and cupboard and other items too numerous to mention.

He made altars for the Alton Catholic Church & L. St. Helens at the Weirs, and an antique reproduction for the Gilmanton Corner Church.

One winter when it was too cold to go over to his shop he decided to paint some pictures. He first were of houses before the G.I.W. fire. A picture of that one was printed in the newspaper. He later sold that one to a school chum of his who had moved to Chicago and was back for a visit to his home town.

And old fashioned salt box type house was his second one. One was of the home of his parents, Jesse & Grace Place looking over Crystal Lake to Belknap Mountain, a portrait of his mother, a dog that looked real enough to walk right out of the picture, and several more.

A famous retired artist who lived on Durrell Mt. Road by the name of B. Stafford Good, who had taken Norman Rockwell's place doing the covers of the St. Evening Post became interested in his work and coached him some but when he started the only experience he had was painting and designing signs. His most famous one still used today is the Wolfeboro town line sign, which have been copied and are still used today. They also have made a bronze medal of it.

Mrs. Irene Davis was his capable assistant and housekeeper in his last years. He lived to 87 years and was still drawing plans for things he wanted to make in his workshop.

[Letter to the Editor dated April 20 1981 (publication not noted) is clipped to the page.]

A little farther down from the dam was Oscar Giles cider press, almost across from where David Bickford lives now. Walking down for a drink of sweet cider, which was freely offered, was a real treat. How good it tasted!

Three people on Elm Street were named Frank. Fran Place, Frank Parsons and Frank Merserve. They were together a lot and called "The Three Franks."

Two other nice ladies on that street worked out in homes around the village when needed. They were Lena Parsons and Minnie Hurd.

The first Mrs. Geddes of Lower Gilmanton was called to act as mid-wife for the many babies being born at home. She was well liked.

Dr. Ballard had an office in his house on the Square. It was a very large house with barn attached which burned flat in the 1920s, and was located where the parsonage is now. Someone who had too much to drink went in the barn to sleep in the hay and fell asleep while smoking, setting fire to the buildings which all burned down. The Ballards moved out of town. I think

his son came back to Gilmanton and built a house many years later.

[Page 7]

Later Dr. Tuttle had office hours in Cora Young's house. He resided in Alton and had his office there. He made house calls in all kinds of weather, walking miles on snow-shoes when he couldn't get through any other way. He had the first Model T auto with large tracks on it to dig into the snow so he could get to his patients. It was the first one ever seen around here. The first snowmobile. Mr. Lawrence Beck of Alton was his chauffeur for many years.

[following on loose page insert]

Last Names of people living at G.I.W. Village in 1892

Connell, Coffin, Marsh, Dockham, Hill, Ross, Shannon, Cook, French, Parsons, Tuttle, Edgerly, Tibbetts, Lougee, Price, Trask, Huzzy, Paige, Pickering, Nelson, Hayes, Smith, Dr. S. A. Taylor, Hatch, Wilson, Smith, Sargent, Hatch, Gray, Dudley, Hill, Buzzell, Woodman, Emerson, Hurd, Blake, Hayes.

Gilmanton Corners (Village)

Holbrook, Hubbard, Greeley, Hutchinson, Bean, Peaslee, Wight, Merrill, Ayers, Moody, Robinson, Webster, Marsh, Haddley, Davis, Page, Blake, Lewis, Mudgett, Horne, Robertson, Folsom, Dearborn, Hawthorn, Prescott, Sanderson, Clifford, Wright, Morrison.

[following hand written on reverse of page 6]

Iron Works Fire

May 28, 1915 a fire destroyed most of the Iron Works Village which included 10 dwellings, a Post Office, 2 stores and the Baptist Church built in 1840 which was located at the site of the present Fire Dept.

The fire was set in two different barns at about the same time, destroying all of the houses from the bridge on Elm St. on both sides of the street to the Town Hall on one side including a library and Shannon's boarding house and O'Connell's store, also 2 stores, Post Office, school and church on the other side.

All they had in those days to fight fire was the bucket brigade. Frank Place (my father) nearly lost his life in this fire as he was on the roof of the Baptist Church wetting down the roof to try and save it with pails of water handed to him by men on a ladder.. Just as the building was about to collapse someone took the ladder away leaving him on the roof. He told me he went to the edge of the roof working his way hand over hand on the moulding and dropped to the ground just seconds before it caved in.

A Mrs. Keyes was under suspicion as she had all her silverware and valuables hid in the river before the fire started and during the faire she sat with her belongings and screamed. He house was a very large one on the lot where Mr. Maher's small house is now at the corner of Mill Road. It too was destroyed in

the fire. She was taken to the State Mental Hospital in Concord and remained there till her death.

Churches

There were three churches at the Iron Works Village. The first one was a Free Will Baptist Church located across from the cemetery that went with it on the lot that Leon Partridge has just built a house on. It was built from 1785-1790 by Benjamin Randall who also organized the one on New Durham Ridge June 20 1780. (The bicentennial of this Church was held June 1980.) Later after two other larger ones had been built, it was torn down and the lumber used to build the house just beyond Cora Youngs where the Hyslops reside now, on the other side of the road. Some of the velvet seats can be seen in an alcove in the house now. My great grandfather Smith Place lived there and Elmer Lord, the undertaker also lived there at a later time.

A large Baptist Church was built about where the fire house driveway is now in 1840. It was destroyed in the 1915 fire. The parsonage was built behind the church and is still there but was sold for a dwelling house and a new parsonage built next to the church, 19??.

The first ordained Paster of the Congregational Church was Rev. Stephen Greeley who graduated from Gilmanton Theological Seminary in 1838. The Church was built in 1826 at the Iron Works.

In 1951 the Lower Gilmanton and the church at the Corners and the Congregational Church of the I.W. became the United Town Ministry. The Rev. Arthur V. Dimock and Rev. Alberto A. Bennett were pastors within my memory. Rev. Alberto A. Bennett, our local pastor for many years was the last to occupy the parsonage. Marvin Bennett was his only child. His children were Adellman & Mary. Adellman and his wife still spend their summers at Crystal Lake and attend the Gilmanton Historical Society Meetings.

The Church wasn't open very often in the winter as it was heated with a wood furnace.

I remember an Easter service being held in the library. There were about ten people there including myself. That was when the college students were crying "God is Dead". But I am thankful that he is still alive and looking after his own.

When Rev. A. A. Bennett retired he built a house next to the parsonage, exactly like it to spend his retirement years in. He really must have liked it.

Rev. Dimock was our next minister. He bought a house across from Cora Youngs as they thought the parsonage would be too damp for them. He owned the Sheep Ranch at the top of Hall's Hill later known as Colonel Besse's Farm. He also operated a summer resort called Crystal Springs on the right side of the lake. He preached for many years.

Dot Wells bought the parsonage and still lives there.

My Sunday School teachers were Fannie Paige and Minnie Blaisdell.

Carroll Shannon drive the stage, with a beautiful time of horses from Gilmanton I.W. to Alton to meet the train and bring back the mail and the many passengers who came for the summer to our hotels and boarding houses.

[Page 9]

One trip I will never forget, when I was about 5 years old was coming into Alton on the train and taking the state to G.I.W. in a blinding snow storm with my mother. Over by the half-way house (Gilmans) the drifts were so deep that the horses floundered and were tangled up in their harness so they could not move.

Mr. Shannon wrapped us up in a large fur robe on top of the snow drift, while he got the horses out of the snow and back in the harness, and we continued on with some very cold hands and feet but no frost-bite. When we got to the Village, my mother took me into Dan Connell's shoe store, which was located in the old Fire house building and bought me a nice warm pair of boots.

[Following hand-written on the reverse of page 7]

Our Three Colonels were Mr. Conrad Snow who lived in the Hon. Thomas Cogswell homestead. He was a Rhodes Scholar and a prominent attorney practicing in his office in Laconia.

Col W. A. Emond who has been prominent in Town affairs.

Col. Harry Besse and his wife Olive bought the 450 acre farm from Rev. Dimock who raised sheep. It was called the Sheep Ranch and I have post cards of it. It is now owned by Kardinals. col Besse was a Boston investment banker and president of the Boston Stock Exchange from 1946 to 1962, being a member for 50 years, and a retired Colonel of the U.S. Air Force. He was a veteran of World Wars I and II. He had is own plane and airport on his farm, flying to Boston daily when weather conditions permitted. I used to watch him when he circled over my house before landing. He was Town Moderator for 22 years and very active in Town affairs. It was the only airport in Town. After his large barn full of cattle and sheep were destroyed by fire he built a smaller house nearby. He was buried in his dooryard overlooking his airport. Three large barns were burned flat that night by arsonists in nearby areas: Waples, Mel Drews and Mr. Mutzbauer a short time before. [See Besse obituaries pasted onto page. Undated--c. 1979??]

[Following is hand written on the reverse of page 8]

Gilmanton N.H. Brass Band

Harien
Director Haven Gilman 420 pounds
John Warburton
Roland Stevens
Bob Osborne
Fred Stone
Gordon Weare
John Page
Morse Brown
Wm. Webster *← Frank Page*
Ralph Page
Charlie Weare
Joe Page

Fred Stevens
Jesse Place (my grandfather)
George Webster
Aaron Stevens

Gordon and Charles Weare were brothers. Fred, Roland and Aaron Stevens were also, John and Joe Page were and Wm. and George Webster.

Haven Gilman was a former owner of the Ed Ham farm. John Warburton owned the farm now owned by his son. The three Stevens brothers lived on the farm formally owned by the Cockerans. Bob Osborne lived near the foot of Sanborn Hill, Lower Gilmanton. Wm and George Webster's homestead was at the end of the Potter Road. John and Ralph Page resided at the top of Dixie Hill in the house now owned by George Roberts, Smith Meeting House Rd. Morse Brown lived on the large apple farm on Frisky Hill. Jesse Place and Charlie Weare both owned farms about 1 mile out of G.I.W.

[Page 9 continued]

The Pines Hotel on Crystal Lake was very famous. Many coming from Boston and other cities, and were always booked full. It was owned by J.W. Blackey and his sons in 1907 and Harold Blackey at a later date. It burned to the ground in the 40s but there are still lots of postcard pictures of it, as many were sent out by the ones spending their vacations there.

The Glen Echo was another large hotel on the lake owned by Fred Merrill. They had bowling alleys, tennis courts, dance hall and a recreation hall. Also beautiful Sandy Point Beach. A large field in front of the hotel held the 4th of July celebra-

tions which were open to the public. Band concerns, baseball and entertainments. The first fire works I had ever seen were held there. This was located near the present Park.

[Page 10]

Other boarding houses in the Village were Cora and Even Youngs which was called Highland Farms. She had so many guests that she went to the local homes and asked if she could put some of them in their guest rooms. Many did. My mother was one of them as we lived close by. One morning Cora met a local man coming down her front stairs. She asked him. "How long have you been boarding here?"

Even Young owned a team of mules to work the farm. They were quite a sight to see and became very frisky at times, giving him plenty of trouble. Mules are noted for being temperamental.

Hervie David their hired man loved to visit the neighbors and play the harmonica and chopsticks. My mother (Luanna Place) would accompany him on the piano. He was an expert at it and would expect some money to buy chewing tobacco, as all he received for his work was board, room and clothes. He was from the State School. The Youngs took care of him until he died.

In those days the street lights were all kerosene lamps, enclosed in glass on iron posts. The ones living nearest to it had to tend them. Washing the glass chimney, trimming the wick and filling it with kerosene so it would last through the night. Lena Parsons faithfully kept the oil in the one near where I

lived on Elm Street and the chimney clean, lighting it every night and putting it out.

Alma Lathrop had boarders, turning her barn into rooms and later moving in a large building for a guest house.

The Shannon Hotel on the Square was burned in the 1915 fire. It was located where the library is now.

[Page 11]

Another Tavern on the Square was the house recently bought by Robert Tibbetts. It went by several different names, "Central House" and "The Old Inn" were some of them. The Post Office was located in two different places in this building. Also a store at one time.

The main road went by there and up over the hill by Dot Lowerys and the Mansfield house straight up over Hall's Hill to Alton. Not as many curves then as there is now.

"Elmdale House" as it was called because of the many beautiful elms surrounding it, and it certainly was in a dale, just below the bridge on Elm Street. It was large and could accommodate many as it had been a tavern and livery stable for the stop-over of the Concord Coach when it went through. It was last operated by Al shaw a lumberman and for a short time by Herman Kardinal.

A secret wine cellar was located in one of these hotels. Boot-leg liquor was stored there in prohibition days to be distributed to at least one other hotel in town.

There also were plenty of places where you could buy hard cider and home brew (beer) was very popular.

There was a fire May 28, 1915 which wiped out all the houses from the bridge on Elm Street to the Town Hall and on the other side from the bridge 10 dwellings, the library, 2 stores, the Baptist Church, and the school leaving most of the square empty.

Mr. Fred Terrill owner of Glen Echo had the building where the Post Office is now [Page 12] constructed. Dockham's store was located there before.

The new building also housed the Post Office, a lunch room and ice cream parlor operated by Mary Kenney and 'Ruth Thompson. There was a barber shop on the second floor. Dances were held in the hall on the second floor until it was considered unsafe, as the building swayed while they were dancing. Those old fashioned dances must have been really something! After that it became a movie theater.

I saw "The Hunchback of Notre Dame" there. That was back in the days of silent movies when you read on the screen what they were saying. Clyde Douglas tended the projector and nearly dropped a tool on someone's head as he climbed the ladder to the projection booth.

After Ernest Goodwin's father died he bought the Terrill building and moved his grocery store up there. They also had the Post Office at one end of the store. His wife Florence Goodwin was Post Mistress until she retired after more than 20 years.

Marvin Bennett was the Rural Route carrier for over 29 years at the same time which was from Jan 3 1928 to 1957, He lived where the Connell house was before the 1915 fire, having moved from his farm on Rt. 140 owned by Mrs. Virginia Yahnle. Mr. Bennett retired in 1957 after traveling Gilmanton roads through mud and snow when most of the roads were dirt and not graveled.

The Connell brothers owned a grocery store that used to be where Mrs. Yahnle's door-yard is now. That also burned in the 1915 fire. After the fire they had a paper store across the street (where Bill Clough lived at a later date) They sold tobacco and penny candy. I used to like to go after the paper and buy some candy.

Nutter's store also was destroyed in the big 1915 fire. Arthur Chase rebuilt on that location and ran a grocery store for many years. It is now the Village Store.

[Page 13]

He also ran a saw mill which sat on the location of Frank Place's cabinet shop. One day Arthur was shaking a bottle of tonic and it exploded blinding him in one eye. Dances were held upstairs in that building for a while, but was turned into an apartment when it was sold for the new owners to live in. A. L. Perry owned it for many years until he retired and built a house near Crystal Lake. There were several owners after that including the Yahnles.

A. L. Perry organized the Gilmanton Hills Fire Department. The name was on the front of the old fire-house. Mr. Perry tried to change the name of the town to Gilmanton Hills as the people might think it was still a mining town. IT was entered in the warrant at Town Meeting but was voted down, so our town still has the name that made it famous. He also operated the Village Store for many years and raised mink in pens out back of the store to sell the pelts for fur coats. Only the very rich could afford a mink coat.

[reverse of page 12] Perry's Minks

Some used to escape from their pens and some would get caught in the traps Bill Clough set down by the river for otter pelts.

The Rev. Meader and his wife have recently seen a mink run across the road by the bridge on Elm Street. It must be a descendent of the original ones raised near there.

[return to page 13]

The Odd Fellows Hall (Town Hall) as it was called then, had their meetings upstairs. Also the Rebekahs. My grandparents Jesse and Grace Place held high offices and were active members for many years. It was later the Grange Hall. My mother Luanna Place was lecturer for a time. Harold and Caroline Prescott were both Master for many years and held all the other offices at different times. I wonder if the beautiful Chairs of Office used are still there. Whist parties were held every Saturday night

downstairs and how everyone enjoyed them. We played whist until 10:00 P.M., awarded the first price and the booby prize, served refreshments, and then danced till mid-night. Music was furnished by our own dance band. Florence Goodwin played the piano, Charlie Stone the violin and Harold Gooch the drums. They were very good. The Victory Waltz was the most popular.

All hands around in a circle and when the music stopped the [page 14] one whose hand you held was your partner. Another one that was a great hit was having all the men line up on one side of the hall and all the women on the other side. Then all the women took off one shoe and threw it in the middle of the floor. The men had to grab a shoe, find the lady it belonged to, put it on her foot and dance with her. Some of the ones who were usually there were Daisy and 'Arthur Chase, the Sturrocks (Lived on the Fred Young farm), Bill and Bea Davis, Harold and Caroline Prescott, Herb Stock, Frank and Gladys Parsons, Marvin and Velena Bennett, Florence Partridge, Florence Bordeau, myself, and many came from surrounding towns. The hall was always full.

We had one Town cop, as they were called then. The ones I remember were Walter Tukey, Seldon Rollins and Frank Doust, each holding long terms. Their duties were not as dangerous as they are now. There was very little crime as we know it today and not much traffic. A few drunken brawls, someones cow jumped the fence and ate someone's garden, reports of wood being stolen, or cucumbers missing out of a garden, all of the grapes missing off

a large grape vine, halloween pranks, a suicide by hanging, another shot himself, and one murder.

One year on Halloween one of those little houses out back was hauled to the center of the Square and left. Whodunnit?? No one knows.

We had nice tarred sidewalks then from the lower end of Elm Street, through the square and up High Street almost to the dam. Someone ? left the money to the town to construct them and tar them every year. After many years the money ran out and so did most of the sidewalks.

[Reverse of Page 14]

Harold Fellows married Janet S. Edgerly of G.I.W. in 1919. They had two daughters. In 1932 Mr. Fellows joined the staff of WEEI radio station. In 1936 he became manager of CBS. From 1951 to 1954 he was president and chairman of the board of Radio and TV Broadcasters and represented about half of the nation's TV and radio broadcasters. He died suddenly of a heart attack in March 1960 at age 60 and is buried in the old cemetery in back of Bickfords near his widows beautiful home. The caretakers are mr. & Mrs. David Bickford.

[Page 15]

Joe Leland, who was blind, lived in the small house at Mrs. Fellows. He used to walk from there to the Post Office on the Square to get his mail every day alone, tapping his cane on first one side of the sidewalk and then the other to guide him.

Mr. Harold Fellows was president of the National Association of Radio and TV and owned stations in Boston.

Who can remember "Arizona Bill Clough" sitting on the steps of the store with Frank Parsons and Frank Doust, watching all the girls go by. Bill spinning tales of his years in Arizona where he had gone to be cured of his lung trouble.

I guess he was, as he kept many hives of bees and sold the honey. He lived many years after he came back. We used to buy a lot in the honey-comb. Was it good! He used to go all over the State to tend beehives and take off the honey. He could let bees swarm all over his body and they never stung him. There aren't many people that could do that.

When I registered to vote I had to go upstairs in the Town Hall to the Selectmen's office and read part of the Constitution, then write part of it, as you could not vote unless you could read and write. Women did not have the right to vote until 1915 and then could not vote until they were 21 years old.

Arthur Durgin was our selectman and road agent at different times over the period of many years. His farm was where George Roberts Sr. lives now. He had a large milk route and sold vegetables from his farm to the hotels and private homes in Town. He was very famous for his special brand of butter and sweet corn, with tender pearly sweet kernels. People came from miles around to buy it.

His wife, Florence durgin, our beloved school teacher and holder of many offices in town for 67 years. She was Town Treasurer from 1942 to 1968. School teacher for 34 years, auditor for 14 years and town librarian for many years. (Mrs. Charles "Aura" Price was also town librarian for many years) (More on Price family). So many of us were influenced in later life by her wonderful teachings. She passed on at age 93 bringing to a close her very active life. April 22, 1977.

The names of my school chums of 1923 (opposite page) [reverse of page 15]

My school chums were "1923" Clarence Alice and Doris Perkins, David and Annie Bickford, Everett and Louise Rollins, Donald and Eleanor Hislop, Harry, George, Willfred and Alma Forsyth, Myrtle Davis, Nellie, Emily, Leon and Joe Fogg, Gordon, Dennis, Ralph Goodwin, Robert Carter, Walter Green, Noel Tukey.

This was all eight grades in one room with one teacher. Louise Rollins and myself were both named Frances Louise and both of us were called Louise. To tell us apart we were nicknamed Louise which and Louise what.

David Bickford, Wilfred and Harry Forsyth, Ralph Goodwin and Eleanor (Hislop) Nelson are still living in Gilmanton 60 years later. [Transcriber's note: This puts the date of these memoirs in about 1983.]

How many of the one room schoolhouses can you remember? Gilmanton I.W. (Avery Town), Gilmanton Corner (Peaked Hill),

Jones Mills, Foot of Sanborn Hill, Lower Gilmanton at Kelly's Corner. Potter school, Smith Meeting House school, Gale School, Page Hill school (Middle Route), Guinea Ridge near the cemetery, Durrell Mountain Rd., King Little Rd. on 4 corners just below where he used to live. Three of the roads discontinued now. That was where my father went to school. There wee 16 at one time. Can anyone give the location of the other (three?). "I have" 1 - Once at the top of Sanborn's Hill was made into a house. 2 - A School house near the Griffin's road, and one at 3 - Rocky Pond where Greeley's Mills were. There is a Club House at that location now.

[return to page 16]

That was back when you could start school by singing hymns, reading a few scriptures from the Bible, and saying prayers. It was not against the law then.

On Memorial Day all school children formed a parade at the Square and marched with Florence Durgin at our side, one mile over a very hot, dusty road to the Pine Grove Cemetery to decorate the Veterans graves with wreaths of evergreen. Flags had been placed on each grave before and each child held a wreath and placed it over the flag as the band played. Many people also followed us on foot for the ceremony.

Our oldest veteran of the Civil War was "Big Ed Nelson". He had the honor of riding in a care, leading the parade with the

other dignitaries. There was no ice cream and cold drinks waiting for us after we had walked back to the Square.

Just before Memorial Day a group of school children had to go out in the woods to pull evergreens to make wreaths. Annie and David Bickford, Clyde Douglas, Noel Tukey, Walter Green, Louise and Everett Rollins, Myrtle Davis and myself went out in back of Bickford's house and down toward Night Hawk Hollow, after school to pull evergreens. We filled a lot of burlap bags and started back. We walked a long way and came back to where we had picked the evergreens. We had made a complete circle without realizing it. It was almost dark and we were lost. The girls stood still while the boys scouted around till they found the stone wall. Then we followed the wall and finally came out on the road about dark. Our parents were getting anxious about us and were glad to see us come out. They were about ready to send out a search party, and we were glad to find our way back as it was a frightening experience to be lost in the woods at dark.

[return to reverse of page 15]

Mudgett Murders

My father's school teacher was Mr. Mudgett a descendant of the first family to arrive in town. He loved to kill and dissect animals more than teaching school so he decided to go to Chicago to learn to be a surgeon. After arriving there he met and married a wealthy woman, persuading her to put all her money in his name. She soon disappeared and he married another woman of

wealth. Soon after his 3rd marriage the neighbors became suspicious of the large amount of cement being delivered to his house and called the police. They searched the house and found the dissected bodies of several women buried in cement under the floor of the basement. He was arrested, tried and found guilty of murdering them for their money.

[return to page 17]

There were two Nelsons living on High Street only three houses apart. They were no relation so to tell them apart the fattest one was called "little Ed" and the thinnest one was called "Big Ed" (Our Civil War veteran).

Florence Bordeau and Minnie Edgerly both had long terms as Town Clerks. Amos Price was Tax Collector for many years. His father Charles was road agent. He built the road now Route 140 which by-passed Hall's Hill. He married Aura Emerson of Alton who was librarian for many years at G.I.W. His brother was Osborn Price who never married.

[Reverse of page 16. Note: The Fellows part repeats the reverse of page 14 and is not re-transcribed.]

Richard Price now operates the farm with his family which is the 6th generation. We all know of the nice maple syrup he makes every spring. The steam from the sap house brings many people to buy the excellent product. Richard had two sisters who married brothers. One of them, Doris Jones, now lives in town.

[return to page 17]

"Little Ed" Nelson and Charlie Batchelder lived next door to each other and both had a team of oxen which were a familiar sight around town. Many a person came after them to haul their heavy wagons or Model T Fords out of the mud. There were very few tarred roads at that time.

Labor Day band concerts were held on the Square every year. A stand was put up for the occasion in the center of it. From 10:00 to 12:00 they had vaudeville acts for entertainment. Some very nice ones.

Mayor Curley of Boston, who was visiting Judge Charles Flynn at Crystal Lake, announced the engagement of his daughter from the stand one evening. Then a group of their friends joined in a circle and danced around the band stand. That was a special occasion. Then the midnight dance at the Town Hall. Could that have been me that danced till 4:00 AM? It was!

The summer residents left soon after that the saying was that we pulled in the sidewalks after that. (Not quite.)

Box parties were held at the Town Hall. The ladies made beautiful decorated boxes and filled them with goodies enough for two people. They were auctioned off to the highest bidder and the man who bought it had to eat with the lady who prepared it. The most beautiful box won a prize.

Harold and Etta Page were married at her parents home "The Osborne House" on High Street. A group including myself waited outside to throw rice on them, tin cans having been tied to the

back of their car to make a lot of noise when they drove off. But we were the ones who were fooled, as they left by the back door, going over the steep hill to a car left for them down on the Mill Road. Were we disappointed! Someone must have let the cat out of the bag, as the saying goes -----

Three sets of twins born in the Village not far apart. To the Donald Hislops, the George Nelsons and the Kelsons. Someone remarked that it must be catching.

[page 19]

There is a tomb built in the side of the hill near Dorothy Osborne's house (Can't remember the names and dates on it.) Some children were playing near it and one fell through falling into a pile of bones. I'll bet he didn't play around there any more!

Cutting ice from the lakes and ponds was a flourishing business in the winter, before people had electricity. Cutting it into c]large squares with a saw on top of a lake, lifting it out of the water with tongs. Many a man slipped into the water in below zero weather and had to be pulled out by the ones working with him. His clothes must have frozen right onto him before he could get home to change.

After that it was hauled to large ice-houses and packed in sawdust to keep it until summer. In the summer it was dug out of the sawdust and delivered to homes to be sold. The top lifted up on the wooden ice-boxes in homes, the large piece of ice lifted in with tongs. On the back was a tube for the water to drip down

as it melted and a pan was placed underneath to catch the water. Someone or other the pan used to run over quite often! The food was kept on shelves below the compartment for the ice.

Harry Forsyth had the first power rig to cut ice around here. It was one he rigged up himself with a motor from an automobile. All the men gathered around to watch it operate.

There was a huge ice cutting operation at Mount Major on Lake Winnepesaukee. Many local people worked there in the winter.

[Page 20) Kenneth and Maro Thompson, Jake Bordeau, Frank Merserve, Fred Sweet, Fred David, Ernest Davis (no relation), were some of the ones who worked there.

It was owned by Mr. Curtis of Winthrop, Massachusetts, brother of the Mr. Curtis I worked for. It was shipped on the railroad to Boston in the summer. He is still living but is in his 90's.

Harold Prescott had a double runner holding 10 to 12 people. A group used to go to the top of Hall's Hill and slide down to where Mrs. Fellows house is now. There was plenty of snow on the roads then as it was rolled down with horses, not plowed. I was too young to go on those rides.

I would go to the top of the Iron Works Hill and slide down to the end of Elm Street. Once it was icy and I couldn't steer my sled. I hit one of the iron lamp posts, breaking the runner

on my sled while I kept going on my stomach, getting quite badly scratched up., That was the end of my sliding.

Later I took up skiing on a lovely pair of skis that my father (Frank Place) made for me, bending up the front of them by steaming the wood.

One sight I will never forget was seeing Sylvester Roberts coming into town in a covered wagon pulled by a team of horses, with his family and a very large Saint Bernard dog. They had come all the way from New York state to a farm head bought near the village. I had never seen a real covered wagon or a Saint Bernard dog before, so the memory remains very clearly.

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Later his three brothers moved into town. Ernest bought the house next to him. Charles bought the large farm the Skantzses live in now. George Sr. moved in with him to help operate the large farm.

Singing carols and hymns at Christmas at Harold and Caroline Prescott's house with their children and my Aunt Abbie. My mother (Luanna Place) playing the piano and Harold the violin.

Decorating the tree with strings of pop-corn, making rings of colored paper and candy baskets. The presents were usually something small. Hand made items, pot holders, aprons or clothes that we needed. They were not loaded with the luxury items of today. The Christmas spirit was what counted, not how expensive the gifts were.

The first radio I had was bought from Morse Brown. It was a beautiful cabinet with legs and powered by a large battery inside the cabinet. The reception was mostly squeaks and squawks but you could hear a voice and a little music once in a while.

Morse Brown was a Selectman for many years and also owner and operator of all the orchards on Frisky Hill. The earliest orchard had many rows a mile long. Nearly all the trees have been cut down now. It was the parade ground for the soldiers in training for the Revolutionary War with Lieutenant Ebenezer Eastman at their head.

There have been three tornados that started near Loon Pond [Page 22] taking nearly the same route to Smith Meeting House area. The latest one July 3, 1972, wiping out most cottages on one side of the pond and coming out on Route 140.

One did a lot of damage to Bill Page's two large barns. One of them was picked up whole and set down in the field. On the other one it tore off the sides and roof leaving just the beams which were put together with wooden pegs and was strong enough to stand. His newly built garage was swept off its foundation. Pieces of it were later found over a mile away. Another one didn't touch any houses but laid down huge lumber lots on farms in Smith Meeting House area in back of George Roberts Jr. lives now.

Bill Page owned a grocery store near his home. I can still picture him driving around in his 1913 Ford car until about 1930.

His wife Sadie had a Model T. Ford. She wasn't a very good driver and had quite a few mishaps including hitting a man who was walking on the side of the road. That cost them some money.

Ed Ham who lived next to Bill Page, invented the lightning rod, becoming very rich and went into farming in a big way, buying up all the farms and land that he could in the Smith Meeting House are. He hired a large number of men to work them, planting many acres of potatoes and corn. He had a large barn full of pure bred cattle. Every farm in the area had large green fields of grass for hay to feed his cattle. What a beautiful sight it was. Most of the fields are now growing up to bushes. [Page 23] He lived on the farm where Daigneaus live now which still has lovely green fields. Mr. Ham wandered outside one cold night in the snow in his later years and his housekeeper found him the next morning frozen to death in the yard.

[clipped to reverse of page 21]

Robert Potter Farms

The Robert Potter Farms have been operated by seven generations of Potters over a period of 200 years. The Dept. of Agriculture were asked to select model farms throughout the U.S.A. to photograph an hour by hour work record to be forwarded to the Soviet Union. One was a large scale citrus farm in Florida, a beef cattle ranch in Texas with a herd of 1000, a dairy farm in the mid-west milking 300 cows, a diversified family farm producing a variety of crops as well as other farm revenues.

After an intensive search through New England the agriculture representative agreed that the Potter Farms were ideal

Bob Potter agreed and a photographer was flown there to spend a night and day with his family and farm employees, shooting an extensive pictorial record of activities. At breakfast they enjoyed bacon from home grown pigs, eggs fresh from the chicken coop, bread, butter, jams, jellies, biscuits all home produced. Then came the milking chores with Bob's sister Bernice and the 4 Potter children, Joan, Janet, Bobby Jr., and Dicky pitching in.

The lens of the photographer captured pet ducks, 2 ponies, a pet rabbit, sheep, and 30 head of mixed cattle mainly Guernseys. Pictures of the separator were shot as well as the old fashioned butter churn and the butter making that followed.

There is no energy shortage there as all stoves are wood burning, 15 cords for Grams house, 20 cords for Bob's house and several cords for maple syrup in the spring.

At lunch time everything edible was home grown. Roast beef and all the fixings. More shots of the twin farms, the buildings, sugar house, sawmill, with views of their daily chores. Felling trees, cutting them into logs, Bob loading them onto a ten wheeler and carrying them off to a saw mill where they were sawed into house framing lumber and many other types which is delivered throughout New England by Bob at the wheel of an 18

wheel tractor trailer. 360 pictures were taken by the end of the day.

The Potter Farms are a good example of the manly farms of the early settlers in this area. Too bad so many have grown up to trees and bushes as many of the younger ones left the farms to go to cities to make their fortune in easier ways.

[return to page 23]

There were dances at Night Hawk Hollow Club on the Smith Meeting House grounds, now used as a kitchen for the dinner served there on Old Home Day. Music furnished by the Geddes family. It was named for the first settlers of Night Hawk Hollow. That now is the name of the Senior Citizens group in Barnstead.

There were 2 people in the area by the name of Frank Page, one called C. Frank Page who lived next to the Gale School, and Frank J. Page who lived at the top of Dixie Hill.

Can anyone remember Ava Weare and Owen Flanders haying around the Iron Works? Haying in November! I pitied the poor cows that had to eat that kind of hay. I hope she had enough milk to feed her 20 to 30 cats.

Al Smith had a dance hall built where the Crystal Lake Park is now. Uncle Abe who was blind) and his orchestra furnished the music. Just minutes before the doors were to open for a dance the hall collapsed under the weight of snow. His wife was the only one inside but got out just in time. It could have been

a disaster if it had happened a little later. Mrs. Smith later broke through the ice where the bathing beach is now and drowned on Town Meeting Day. They lived near the lake at that location. [Reverse of page 22]

Grace Metalious

Grace Metalious of Jones Mills put Gilmanton in the spotlight which many natives didn't care for when her book Peyton Place was published about 1950 as many thought she was writing about people in Town.

The book sold 300,000 hard cover copies and 8 to 9 million paperbacks becoming the largest selling novel at that time.

It was made into a movie in Hollywood and shown all over the U.S. I saw it at the drive-in-theater in Alton located where Mcgraphs store is now. I thought it made a nice movie.

Grace was soon divorced from her husband George and married a local radio announcer. That marriage failed and she re-married her first husband in 1960 but they soon separated and he was left with the responsibility of raising their three children.

Grace's second book, "Return to Peyton Place" sold 4 million copies; her third book was "The Tight White Collar"; her fourth was "No Adam in Eden" published in 1963 only a few months before her death in a Boston hospital Feb. 1964 of cirrhosis of the liver brought on by her drinking.

Barbara Walters, news commentator of the "Today" show on Channel 4 Boston arrived in town to interview people in connec-

tion with the author and had her picture taken in front of the Town Hall for the newspapers.

Even though she had earned many millions of dollars, she had little of it left when she died. Fame and fortune did not bring her happiness. She willed her body to medical science at the Mary Hitchcock Memorial Hospital, Hanover, N.H. but they wouldn't accept it so it was a long time before the Courts would allow her body to be buried. She was finally laid to rest in the Smith Meeting House Cemetery, Gilmanton.

It makes me very sad to see all the beautiful elms and maples that once lined both sides of Elm and High Streets, and the two horse chestnut trees on High Street gone.

I also miss the white picket fences that used to be around many of the houses. The last one to go was at Frank Parsons homestead.

[Reverse of page 23]

Can anyone remember the sawmill powered by steam boiler that blew up at the end of the long field now owned by the Daigneaus? I walked down to see it during World War II when people were looking for scrap iron for the war effort. Huge chunks of iron were scattered over a large area. Some were as large as a car. Only one man was there when it happens. He was there at 6 A.M. to fire up the boiler. HE realized it was going to explode and ran for his life, being badly burned by the steam. It was luck

the whole mill crew hadn't arrived as they would have all been killed.

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I hope you have been reminiscing along with me. Any who remember those days.

[Transcriber's note: I have made some spelling and grammatical corrections where her intent was clear. She consistently mis-spelled Osborne as Orsborne. There are some factual errors, but I have not made substantive corrections or changes in her text. Carolyn Baldwin, December 2001.]