

From the Manor to Argentina and back

Florence Good shares her hamlet memories

By Emily Ball | Manor Ink

Florence Good was born in 1946, one of four children, in Philadelphia. She lived in Oneonta and Schenevus, NY, before she moved to Livingston Manor with her mother in 1956, when she was in the fifth grade. She went to the Catholic school, which was behind the Catholic Church. There was also a nunnery there. When she was graduated from school at fifteen, she started work at the chicken plant in Livingston Manor. The company employed about 200 people, and had chicken plants in Swan Lake and Fallsburg where Florence worked at certain times, but her primary employer was the Livingston Manor plant.

She had a room in a rooming house and rode her bicycle to work.

100 CLUB PROFILE

She describes herself as a laborer when she started.

She stood on the assembly line and when the chickens came down the line her job was to “gut them” – pull their innards out with her bare hands. There were no machines. Then she was promoted to packer, where she would roll chicken carcasses up and pack them. She then studied to get her license as an inspector and soon had a job carefully going over the chickens hung on the assembly line for inspection. She had to make sure none was diseased or had broken bones.

Everyone worked hard because they wouldn’t let anyone out of work until they were finished with the chickens.

In spite of the hard work, Florence said, “Actually, working at the chicken plant wasn’t at all bad. There was a sort of community there of people working together.” But there was another time when Florence found the work too difficult.

“I was once asked to inspect cattle and they took me to the Chester slaughter house, but I couldn’t take it,” she said. “I would see those cows’ innocent faces, with their big brown eyes, I couldn’t do it. I ended any cattle inspection even if the pay was higher.”

Florence worked at the chicken



BEHIND THE COUNTER Livingston Manor resident Florence Good shared her memories of days past while working at the general store in Lew Beach.

plant for about 20 years.

In 1971, she married a man from Argentina and moved there with him. They lived with his parents who had “quite the house.” They also had a parrot that was vicious. He was a “one-man bird.” She later had trouble with her mother-in-law, so Florence came back and lived in the trailer park on Main Street where Peck’s Market is now located.

Florence then described Livingston Manor in the 1950s and ‘60s.

“The Manor was a rough town. I can’t remember how many bars – there were so many. Up Shandeleer and old Morrston Roads, two or three bars in hotels, five in town here, and the Robin Hood – eight in all!”

“The Manor had Tom Quick’s big lumber yard – where the Dollar Store is now. We had Johnston’s Granary, and Siegel’s Department Store. There was Hoos Bakery that had delicious sugar donuts, as well as the Victory Market, where Morgan Outdoors is now, and the A&P. The last movie

to be shown at the movie theater in town was ‘Chitty Chitty Bang Bang.’”

In 1979, Florence got a job in Lew Beach. She described the town.

“There were only a few families living in Lew Beach; Cecil Stuart and his family, and his mother Florence, who ran the gas station and store. The Cohanes lived next to the post office, where five different families shared that house. The Meyerhoffs, who were musicians and sang with the Carlyles, lived in the big white house across the street. They broke off from the Methodist Church on Shin Creek Road. It’s never been the same.

“The Irving Berlins were up a lot and hunters drank in the bars. The Shavers had their hatchery and the Hoags were caretakers of the Balsam Lake Club.

“There were two bars in town and people would go from one to the other, drinking – back and forth, back and forth. I worked at Pat and Eileen O’Brian’s bar. People came in to have dinner then drink until 3 or 4 a.m. I

This interview is one in a series called the “100 Club Profiles,” published at irregular intervals by *Manor Ink*. They feature senior residents of Livingston Manor reminiscing about life as it used to be in the hamlet and surrounding area. To see other interviews, please visit manorink.org.

would keep them in line, however.

“That bar was where the Beaverkill office of Larry Rockefeller is now. It had a long bar in a huge big room. There was a small stove, with seating along the back wall.

“Even then the Fire Department had terrific barbecues on holiday weekends – with a live band.

“There was a big fire in the early ‘70s. The fire was so intense, the fire truck couldn’t go over the bridge because it was a wooden bridge and had caught on fire.

“When Larry Rockefeller bought the bars from the O’Brian’s, there were complaints and worries because no one knew what was going to happen, but they knew there would be a change. But it turned out just fine.

“In 1986, I had a car accident while working at the pub and crushed my ankle and foot. I’ve had to have a prosthesis since. Larry hired me to go across the street and work at the little store while it was being renovated. At first there was only gas and newspapers. I sold the papers out of my car. I’d get 50 *New York Times* for Sunday, but had to put the papers together.

“Dino Bradley and his wife Leslie lived here in Lew Beach. They had three children. One of their twin girls, Josie, sometimes helped me in the store.

“I fell and bruised my leg last year and almost went crazy being stuck at home for six months. Now, after recovering I’m back at the store. I have a sister in the Manor and another in Fallsburg. One of my favorite hobbies is bowling. I still bowl but they closed the bowling alley in Liberty, so I have to go to Kiamesha.”

Remembering her days working in the chicken plant and then in Lew Beach, Florence says, “I didn’t have high-paying jobs but I’ve enjoyed my work and I bought my house and it’s free and clear. You don’t need big bucks to have a good life.”

Patricia Adams contributed to this story.