

## Alice Dugan's Christmas Village

I recently read 3 old newspaper articles on Alice Dugan's Christmas village and the memories came flowing back! Alice lived on the Flat Creek Road at what is called "5 points". At this intersection is Flat Creek Road, Guinea Road, Ely Road and Hubbard Road.

Alice was born in Greece in 1909. I remember her telling me that there was a "Turkish uprising in 1909. Her father carried her in a blanket held in his teeth while climbing over the wall". This was also stated in the Stamford Mirror Recorder in the December 25, 1986 edition. It took two and a half months to reach the United States. The family settled in the Bronx. Alice married in 1927 to Michael Dugan raising a family of five children. They moved here in the mid 1950s.

Alice began her Christmas village on a small table in their cramped Bronx apartment, with her five small children. Her love of doing this village kept growing when they moved to Gilboa. It would take her two and a half months to set it all up and another two and a half months to dismantle it. Many Church groups and Sunday School classes would be amazed at seeing this village. It started out as a Christmas theme but became so much more. First Alice moves all the furniture out of the living room to set up seven large tables. Her earlier pieces were made of metal. The later additions were made of plastic. All aspects of life were shown, meant to look as close to life as possible. From life's beginning to the end -- a couple leaving a hospital with a baby; a wedding party of bridesmaids and ushers outside of a Church; and a funeral home with a cemetery are just a few of the many scenes. There is an airport, hotel, grocery store, farms, Burger King, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Howard Johnson restaurant, ranch style homes with furniture and food on the table, police department, fire department, and a house on fire with firemen using a hose to put out the fire, school, bank, circus, greenhouse, flea market, houses under construction, castle, a Hawaiian scene, Oriental scene, a home from Germany. Even a Burlesque theatre! Around the outside of the tables, Alice sets up the electric trains which were lighted, buildings and streetlights. At the flip of a switch, the living room darkens and everything comes to life!

During the Christmas season, there was a large boot holding many small, wrapped gifts for each child, so they did not leave empty handed! Santa on the mantel and a live Christmas tree.

In the summer Alice had a garage sale in the garage, on the porch and a table set up in her kitchen.

Alice lived a good, long life. She passed away in 2003 at the age of 94.