

Triangle of Bad Luck

by Frederick Wickert



After the fire



After the fire



After collapse in a thunderstorm

I'm sure you have heard of the Bermuda Triangle and the mysterious things that go on there. Those things are certainly episodes of bad luck for those who experience them and the survivors of those lost there.

I have heard of other triangles in the world with similar occurrences but none as famous as the Bermuda Triangle. I find myself wondering sometimes about other triangles, smaller in nature, that are just plain bad luck places. Not so much mystery as in the case of the Bermuda Triangle, but bad luck just the same. I can think of one that seems that way to me.

In the town of Gilboa, New York, there is a small triangle formed by the South Gilboa Road running at an angle into a curve on State Route 23. Most of the triangle is empty and too narrow to support much construction. At the wider end of the triangle, formed by a short road named Lumber Road, there is a spot where years ago a hardware store and lumber business was built. The hardware store was built to face traffic on Route 23 heading east. The rear of the store was on Lumber Road. The other buildings of the lumber business are on the other side of Lumber Road and not part of the triangle.

Friends of my family had owned and operated the store and lumber business for many years. In the early 1980's I became employed by them as a carpenter as the owner had a small contracting business as well. His wife ran the hardware store and sold the lumber.

During the time I was employed there, we were working on a barn roof and it began to rain heavily. We were soaked to the skin and stopped work. I went home to change in to some dry clothes. Before returning to work, I went to nearby Stamford to pick up some parts I needed for repair of my vehicle.

When I returned, I slowed to a stop with my turn signal on. Two cars were coming from the opposite direction and I had to wait for the oncoming cars before completing my left turn on to Lumber Road. The road dips right there and the entrance for the road is partially hidden so the speed limit is reduced to 45 mph in that zone. A young man with a pick up truck was coming at 55 mph and being distracted by girlfriend and baby, failed to notice the change in speed or my car waiting to turn. He hit my car in the rear at 55 mph. It ended in a five vehicle pile up. My car was totaled and I had a severe concussion. I was unable to work for the next two weeks.

In that incident, it was bad luck for me, for the young man driving the truck, for his girlfriend who owned the truck, and for others who had vehicles damaged and received injuries.

In a few months I left my employ there and went on to something else. My former employer had diabetes and began to go blind. He got an infection in his foot and lost the toes from it. A few months later, another infection resulted in the rest of the foot being removed. In a few months, he died from his diabetes and his wife was left alone. All of these things being bad luck.

After some time his wife managed to liquidate the inventory. Then the property was divided and sold in separate packages. The new owner of the hardware store remodeled it. A real Estate office, an antique store, and a third business I don't recall.

In a few years, a young man with wife and two or three small children worked three jobs to support his family. All who knew him spoke about what a great guy he was. One morning at about 2:30 A.M. he was on his way home from his third job. As he rounded the curve headed East on Route 23, he fell asleep and drove his pick up truck into the building. The truck exploded and burst into flames. The truck and building burned and the young man was dead. More bad luck for this triangle.

A couple of years after the fire, the mess got cleaned up. A year later a new basement was poured. After another couple of years, a new building began. All of the framing was built, and this time it was to be a taller

two story building. A new metal roof was installed on the top of the frame. Now the builders could concentrate on the walls. The weekend after the roof was finished, a terrible thunderstorm passed through and leveled the new construction to the ground. Once again, bad luck had occurred in the triangle.

Again, the mess was cleaned up and construction began anew. Measures were taken to strengthen it to prevent another such catastrophe. Now, for two years the building stands up and complete with sheathing. Construction has halted and now a for sale sign adorns the property. The new owner, once it is sold, can finish it the way they want.

What will be the next bad luck for this triangle? Will the spell be broken with the new building?