



G·A·L·W·A·Y JOURNAL

PRESERVATION SOCIETY

↻ GPS Update

by Richard English

We had a tremendous turnout at our April meeting, where the program was a tribute entitled “The Corner Store: Galway Market, Then and Now.” Mary Cuffe Perez started the evening by chronicling the history of the store starting in 1923 when Arthur Denison purchased what would one day become the Galway Market from the Willard Brothers. The old store was situated on the northwest corner, one lot north of where the new market was constructed in 1966. The market was always more than simply a store -- it served as a vital hub where residents socialized and kept up on community activities. After Mary’s presentation, several GPS members related anecdotes about the store and recalled the generosity of the Denison family in serving the needs of Galway residents. They also commended Diane and Ted Lovelass, who purchased the store from the Denison brothers in 1977, for continuing the tradition of serving the community and supporting local groups. After the program, members enjoyed an exhibit compiled by Phyllis Keeler, our Town Historian, containing photographs and memorabilia showing how the market, and the Village, evolved over the years. This was a wonderful program with great audience participation that reinforced the sense of closeness and community that is the essence of life in Galway.

Our next meeting will be Monday, May 2nd, when Courtney Burns from the New York State Military Museum will present “The History of the New York State Military Museum.” In addition to the program, we will elect three officers and one trustee for the coming year. The nominating committee submitted the following names for consideration: Richard English for president, Mary Cuffe Perez for vice president, Martha Brandow for secretary, and Linda Bobar for trustee. We need a quorum of at least 20 members for the vote to be official.

Memorial Day festivities will take place on Monday, May 30th. GPS will decorate the gazebo, march in the morning parade, staff a booth to sell GPS publications, and promote the organization to new members. Volunteers are needed, so please contact Virginia Sawicki at 882-1898 if you can participate.

Looking forward, we will hold our annual picnic at Town Hall on June 6th starting at 6:00 pm. In lieu of an auction, we will conduct an activity that should delight all of our members -- a Galway historical trivia contest modeled on the game show “Jeopardy!” Phyllis Keeler, Arlene Rhodes, and Tom Cwiakala worked with me to create a challenging and diverse set of questions across a variety of categories, tailored for the casual purveyor of local trivia as well as the most diehard history buff. The game should be a lot of fun, so please put this on your calendar of must-attend events!

Upcoming Dates

May 2 – Next Member Meeting at Town Hall

7:00 pm Social Gathering

7:30 pm Business Meeting

7:45 pm Program

July 13 – Next Board Meeting at Town Hall

7:00 pm

Contact us at galwaypressociety@gmail.com or visit us at <http://www.galwaypreservationsociety.org>

Please get in touch if you have an article to submit or an idea for an article: mcuffeperez@gmail.com or call 944-5843. We reserve the right to edit submissions, with the author's approval.

➤ Heritage Hunters History Faire on April 30th

The Saratoga County Heritage Hunters will hold their annual History Faire on Saturday, April 30th, from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm at the Clifton Park-Halfmoon Public Library at 475 Moe Road in Clifton Park. Town historians, local museums, and historical societies will staff tables containing exhibits about their organizations. There will also be lectures, workshops, and activities for children. For more information, contact the CP-H Public Library at 371-8622.

➤ The Preston House

by Alan Maddaus

A Photographic History of Galway 1900-1949 mentions my childhood home in Galway and renewed my interest in it. Formerly known to me as the Brundige house, it is located on East Street between the Baptist and Catholic churches. Starting with a copy of the Elizabeth Robb Quinby's Historical and Genealogical Notes, ca. 1922, provided by Arlene Rhodes, I began a journey into history that revealed interesting details of the property and the remarkable family that lived there in the mid-19th century.



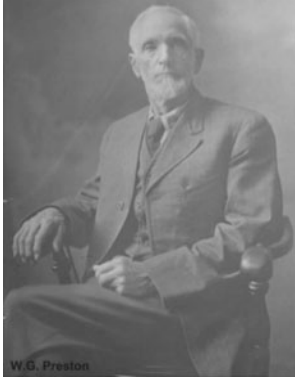
*The Preston house, September 1950
(Photo by: Elsie Maddaus)*

The house was built for Dr. and Mrs. Calvin Preston by George Hanford. An 1838 deed states that title to the property was transferred to the Prestons for the sum of "one thousand dollars lawful money of the United States". The doctor was a devout Presbyterian, a factor in the move to Galway village from Antwerp, NY in 1830, as the Church in Galway had a thriving congregation with Eliphalet Nott, President of Union College, supplying the pulpit in 1820, and on occasion thereafter, his brother Samuel, pastor, until 1829.

Dr. Preston's first wife, Margaret McAllaster Preston gave birth to 6 of their 7 children in Galway, sadly passing away in 1848 at the age of 43. Dr. Preston's second wife was

Sarah J. Anderson. The Federal census record of 1850 shows Dr. Preston, age 50, wife Sarah, 40, and children, ranging in age from 5 to 22 as household members, a total of nine. Sleeping accommodations consisting of 4 second floor bedrooms, crowded for a family of nine by current standards, were probably considered more than adequate at that time.

Dr. Preston was a community leader as well as a church deacon, and his signature is on the Village incorporation documents of 1838. He maintained a medical office in the house; the small, one story shed addition just behind the two story front section was his waiting room. He continued to live there until his death in 1885 at the age of 85 and practiced medicine in Galway for 47 years. Five years prior to his death, he transferred the property to his daughter Sophia Preston Hays, who lived with her husband, John Hays, on the other side of the Baptist church. Sarah Preston occupied the family home until her death in 1893. At that time Sophia was the only one of the seven Preston children remaining in the area, the others



*William Preston,
Patriarch*

having moved to far away locations of Canton, China; Galveston, Texas; and Waitsburg, Washington. Adventurous, energetic and talented, their destinies were influenced by major events of the 19th century and are the subject of part 2 of this article. William, who became the family patriarch, was a founding father and wealthy mill owner in Waitsburg. Eventually siblings and relatives joined him there.

Dr. Preston and his two wives are buried in the Galway Village Cemetery. An additional name, John Preston, is on the obelisk monument, but no dates are provided. John Preston was Calvin's brother, a well-respected physician in Schuylerville, NY for half a century. He is buried there at Prospect Hill Cemetery.

When my parents bought the Preston house in 1950, there were several, connected outbuildings behind the house, including an L-shaped, two-story barn suitable for 5-10 head of livestock. Their purpose on a lot of one acre puzzled me; the answer came while researching the chain of title. In addition to the house, during the same year Dr. Preston purchased a 50 acre parcel from Eliphalet Hanford at the east boundary of the village, extending eastward to the Mead residence, on the south side of the road, more or less across the road from the house and barns. Evidently, Dr. Preston operated a small farm. The barns, probably built at about the same time as the house, were primitive in construction, and in a dilapidated condition in 1950. While exploring the second floor with my brother and I, my father broke through the floor. Sinking through the floor boards up to his waist he instinctively yelled for help. He was over 6 feet tall and weighed about 200 pounds; at ages of 5 and 7 our immediate response was to stare in horror at his predicament. Fortunately, he was able to quickly extricate himself and shortly afterward made a decision to demolish the barns, which the bank mortgage loan officer quickly endorsed. When I hear the phrase "dry rot" I immediately think of that incident.



*Partial front and back of
barns, 1950.
(Photo by: Paul Maddaus)*

Following Sarah Preston's death, in 1894 Sophia Preston Hays sold the house and 50 acre parcel to Eugene Brundige who ran a stage coach from Galway to Schenectady, Ballston Spa and Amsterdam. My mother found a ledger left in the walls during a renovation indicating that the house was used for boarding passengers overnight with as many as five in one bedroom. A telltale sign of stage coach use was an elongated U shaped driveway shared with the Baptist church which made a graceful 180 degree turn at the furthest point from the street, ideal for reversing direction and dropping off/picking up passengers. A discovery of a macabre nature was a human skull on the second floor of one of the outbuildings. The county sheriff made a visit to collect it but nothing sinister was reported to us.

The stage coach gave way to a motor coach operated by Eugene C. Brundige, Eugene Brundige's son. Title to the house was transferred to him in 1924 but the 50 acre parcel was not included, no longer required to support the coach business, now horseless. He later became Saratoga County Clerk and paid us a visit when my father and a carpenter were doing renovations. I remember him as an elderly gentleman in a gray suit who was interested in the work being done and politely listened to my father's explanations during a house tour.

After electricity became available, perhaps in 1930, the house was modernized. Indoor plumbing was installed (the privy was still there in 1950) and a central heating system and chimney with a flue for a fireplace was added. Several second floor chimneys for wood burning stoves, supported by robustly constructed closets, were removed. One such chimney remained in the master bedroom during the time we lived there, with a lightning rod attached. Ironically, lightning never struck it, instead hitting the locust trees next to the house, knocking off some bark, and causing minimal damage. Downstairs, hardwood floors replaced wide pine planks.

Eugene Brundige sold the house in April of 1946 to Percy and Mary Lackey. Transfer of title to George and June Becker followed quickly in July of 1946. The Beckers sold the property to my parents, Ingo and Elsie Maddaus in September, 1950. They purchased property based on space required for a growing family, a public school within walking distance and the attractive atmosphere of the village. My father was a mathematics professor at Union College; at that time there were two other Union College professors living in the village, Winfred Schwarz and Richard Weeks. From a child's viewpoint the property was attractive because of the large front lawn for sports activities. However, it quickly became apparent that the house required major repairs. First was replacement of the main roof, followed in rapid succession by replacement of the septic system, furnace, hot water heater, addition roof, siding and a new, much deeper, drilled well. I remember cold winter nights when the furnace was malfunctioning, and the need to transport water in drums from the Glowegee Creek, using the family station wagon. To provide funds for repairs my father took a second job as the night clerk at the Hotel Peter Schuyler in Amsterdam where he used time during slow periods to grade homework and exam papers. He also made friends with an assortment of interesting people, among them police officers, gamblers, waiters and waitresses. They visited our house from time to time and I have pleasant memories of them.

Following major repairs, my parents invested in a number of home improvements. The majority of the work was done by Walter Slade, industrial arts teacher and skilled carpenter, who also built a china cabinet for mother's glassware collection. When remodeling was done, the house was much more comfortable and attractive. In 1967, the year I graduated from college, my parents sold the property to the Christiansens and moved to Scotia to relieve my father of the daily drive to work. As we completed the final cleanup of the interior, he said to me: "we've worked so hard to improve this place, I wonder if we're doing the right thing". I agreed with him and must admit, a half century later, that I still miss that old house.

To be continued in part 2 ...

Acknowledgement: Contributions to research for the article were made by Arlene Rhodes; Phyllis Keeler, Town of Galway, NY Historian; Joe Malinowski, Town of Deerfield NY Historian; Pat Sanders, Irene Wooten Research Library, Brookside Museum, Ballston Spa NY; Mark Zabella, current co-owner 2103 East St., Galway, NY, Gail Gwinn, Waitsburg, Wa. Historical Society; Sean McConnell, Rosenburg Library Archivist, Galveston, Tx; Sandra Torres, Author, Waitsburg, Wa; David Hassler, Preston Family Descendent, Ventura, Ca. Use was made of ancestry.com, findagrave.com and Google for research purposes.

George Fuller's Worst Day

by Bonnie Donnan

One mind movie still replays clearly to this day. I was riding the bench on the combine next to my grandfather Donnan. My uncle Hume was driving. My father was at the farm across the road helping the neighbor, George Fuller, put in hay. I loved riding the combine. The oats or wheat would come out of an upside down Y-shaped chute. As the burlap bag on one side of the chute filled, my grandfather would flip a lever diverting the flow to the other side, tie the full bag with a piece of twine, and toss it across to a dump platform. There was a third bag that contained weed seeds. I wondered "How does it know? How does it separate weeds from what you want to keep?"

I probably asked these, and many more questions: "When are we going to dump the full bags? How many do you save until you dump them? Can I step on the pedal to make them dump? Why doesn't the weed bag fill up faster?" Then we heard shouting, and a sharp, attention-getting whistle above the noise of the tractor and combine. My father was running down the road, making an arc of a turn into the farm lane, headed for home faster than I thought he could run, faster than I had ever seen him run.

There was a hole in the side of George Fuller's barn. His tractor, an ancient steel lug wheeled beast, was tilted at an angle with the rear wheels propped against the barn, the nose in the manure pile next to the barn. What we didn't see from the hillside was that George was under the front of the tractor, squished down into the manure pile and pinned there.

From this point on most of what I know was from adult conversation rather than direct observation. The last thing they needed was a small, perpetually questioning child around during the rescue operation. I do remember watching from the house, seeing people gather, a tow truck arriving. Don Suits' truck couldn't lift the tractor, but was able to hold it while George was dug out. This whole episode started with George starting his old tractor, standing in front of it and cranking it while it had been left in gear. When the engine caught, the tractor plowed forward, pushing George through the side of the barn and landing on him. I assumed as an adult, recalling this episode from my childhood, that George, even though he was cushioned by his sloppy landing, must have suffered some serious injuries. I asked my uncle Hume recently how badly George had been hurt. He said that my father, Jim, had milked George's cows for a week, and when he said he couldn't continue, George got up and resumed milking the cows himself. Farmers are tough.



Can you identify the tool on the left from an earlier era? Send your best guess to mcuffe@gmail.com or tell us at the May 2nd meeting. Thanks to Don Carpenter for letting us have fun with his tool collection and thanks also to Patricia Kay for photographing them.

Nobody guessed last month's mystery tool (right). It's a Pin Vise – used to hold multiple shaped objects to build or repair, self-standing, brass, ideal for engravers.



~ Parkis Mills

Historical Marker Profile #2

Galway is home to eight New York State Historical Markers. One of these markers commemorates Parkis Mills and its role in the early development of Galway.

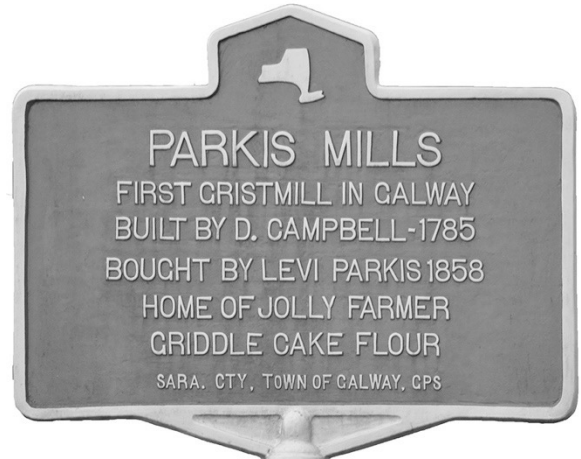
The property was originally owned by Daniel Campbell, who built a water-powered grist mill that capitalized on the elevation drop along Glowegee Creek. After Campbell sold the property, it passed through several hands before being purchased by Levi Parkis in 1858.

Parkis ran the mill as a one-man operation, grinding corn, wheat, oats, rye, and buckwheat into flour. His son Edward took over the operation before it burned to the ground in 1888. Edward rebuilt the mill as a three-story structure with an attached store, selling a variety of products in addition to a pancake mix called Jolly Farmer Griddle Cake Flour.

After Edward died, his son Henry continued the business until it finally closed in 1931. The vacant structure was burned by the Galway Fire Department in 1980 to eliminate it as a target for vandals.

The historical marker is located at the intersection of Alexander Road and Parkis Mill Road, next to the bridge where Parkis Mills Road crosses the Glowegee creek.

Thanks to Phyllis Keeler and Tom Cwiakala who published a detailed write-up of this historical marker in the Winter 2012 issue of the Galway Reader.



Galway Preservation Society

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