



G·A·L·W·A·Y JOURNAL

PRESERVATION SOCIETY

GPS Update

by Richard English

Welcome back to a new year, with a full schedule brimming with programs to spark every member's interest. Our program committee was busy over the summer lining up speakers and topics for each of our monthly meetings. Many thanks to Mary Cuffe Perez, Virginia Sawicki, Carol Schweizer, and Bonnie Donnan for their commitment to bringing history to life throughout the year.

The start of the year brings several items of administrative "housekeeping" for our organization. Members are invited to renew their annual membership at the September meeting, where forms will be available at the front table. During the meeting we will also present our annual budget, where we seek member input and approval for our 2016-2017 spending.

Another request we will make during our first business meeting is to solicit volunteers for the Archive Committee. A major objective of GPS is to gather, preserve, document, and share important materials related to the history of the Town of Galway. Now that the photographic history book is complete, Arlene Rhodes has defined several initiatives related to this mission that require the active participation of historically-minded members. Arlene will describe these initiatives during the meeting and answer any questions you may have about how you can become involved.



The victorious "Chuctanundans"

We had a great turnout for our annual picnic, held at Town Hall on June 6th. After the picnic, members participated in a rousing game of "Jeopardy!" based on local Galway history. After some exciting back and forth between the two teams, the Chuctanundans (led by Dusty Rhodes) narrowly defeated the Joseph Henry's (led by Bonnie Donnan) for bragging rights and the honor of having their picture featured in our monthly newsletter. Thanks to everyone who made the picnic and the game a memorable event to wrap up our calendar year.

Our next meeting will be Monday, September 12th, when four retired Galway teachers will discuss their fond recollections of "Galway School Days in the 1950s," a period when several of our members were attending Galway public school. If you were part of the student body at this time, or if you recall other memorable moments from your time at the school, please share your thoughts during the discussion.

Upcoming Dates

Sept 12 – Next Member Meeting at Town Hall

7:00 pm Social Gathering
7:30 pm Business Meeting
7:45 pm Program

Oct 12 – 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.

Keeper of the Family Tradition

A Talk with Christine Donnan

~ Mary Cuffe Perez

When Christine Donnan offered an old family recipe for the GPS journal, along with a little note on its origins, I caught a glimpse into her own personal history. Chris prefers to learn about other people's lives, but I convinced her to share a little about her own.

Chris and Hume Donnan celebrated their 61st wedding anniversary this July. Chris has been a part of the Donnan family for so long few people know much about the girl, Christine Manas, born in 1933 to Czechoslovakian parents. She was the first child to be born in this country on her father's side, and the second to be born on her mother's side.

Chris grew up in a Czechoslovakian community in Rotterdam, where families shared the same traditions, language, church and recipes. She was brought up on Czech cooking and an amalgam of English and Czech languages. When she entered public school at age four, her teacher reported that Chris had a speech impediment of some kind and couldn't be understood. "My mother realized after the teacher called her, that I must have been speaking Czech mixed with English," Chris says, "as we did at home."



Hume and Christine Donnan on the back porch of their home built by Chris' father, Joseph Manas.

~Photo by Patricia Kay, as part of her project, Who are You, Galway, NY, funded in part by the Saratoga County Council for the Arts.

Her father, Joseph Manas, emigrated from Czechoslovakia in 1920 when he was just 17 years old. He brought with him superior carpentry and building skills and was soon establishing his own business. Testament to his craftsmanship is the house that Chris and Hume live in today, which Joseph built for them a couple of years after they were married.

Chris' mother, Anna, was born in Schenectady and was working at GE on the radio assembly line when she met Joseph. After the couple married, Anna became partners with Joseph in his business, doing his

bookkeeping, secretarial work, drawing up contracts, as well as caring for a growing family. “Starting a business during the Depression was an ambitious undertaking,” Chris says. “My parents were very hard workers.”

When Chris was 14, the family moved from Rotterdam to West Charlton to a small farm, not far from the farm where Anna lived as a little girl. “My father wasn’t really a farmer,” Chris says. “He made his living as a builder, but he’d always wanted a farm in the country.”

It was a small farm, she says, with one cow, a few chickens and garden. Just enough to provide extra food for the table. It was nothing like the Donnandale Farm Chris would one day become part of, a 300-acre dairy farm owned and operated by the Donnan family since 1836, when James Donnan purchased the first 125 acres from John Newland.



Chris at four years old

Christine first met Hume when she was 15 and he 20 at the West Charlton Presbyterian Church (Scotch Church). Even when Chris graduated from Scotia High School and moved away to attend Cobleskill College, she never forgot Hume (though, as she recalls, he was a “bit of a rascal.”) When she returned to the area after college, they found one another again, and after a two-year courtship, were married.

“Hume’s father wanted us to move into the Donnan house,” Chris says, “but there were already two families living there and Hume thought we should have a place of our own.” They lived in the village of Galway for the first two years, then moved into the split level built by Joseph Manas on the Donnan property. Hume worked the family farm with his father and brother. Chris took of the position of cafeteria manager for Galway Central School which she held until they started a family of four children.

Chris assimilated easily into the Donnan family. Matriarch, Agnes Donnan, was a kind and capable woman who ran a tight ship, Chris says. “She was very strong and a big influence not just in the family but in the community.”

Though Chris was one of the Donnan family, she also belonged to her own Czech family traditions, which were passed down to Chris from her mother and grandmother, then from Chris to her own four children and grandchildren through stories and recipes. For years, the Manas side of the family and the Donnan side of the family held two Christmas celebrations – a Czech Christmas with all Czech food on Christmas Eve, and a Donnan Christmas celebration on Christmas day. There would be more than 25 people gathering on the Manas side of the family -- her mother and her sister and brother’s families plus Hume and Chris and their family. The celebration was held at the old family farm in Charlton where her mother still lived.

Today, the Manas Christmas celebration goes on, alternating at different family members’ homes, and drawing young and old from locations throughout the northeast. Because the families have grown so large and each has their own way of celebrating Christmas, the big family celebration is held near but not on Christmas Eve, as it had been. But the food, a key part of the Czech culture, is still the center of the celebration.

Chris 'daughter, Debbie, prepares the black fish in raisin and prune sauce served on yeast dumplings. Cathy bakes the vdolacky, three-layer sweet biscuits filled with prune jelly and cottage cheese and topped with whipped cream. Cathy also bakes the celestial crust, a deep-fried dough sprinkled with powdered sugar. Another favorite is Houska, a braided sweet bread, made with yeast and lots of raisins and almonds, that Chris says is too labor intensive for most.

“Most breads and crusts were made with yeast,” Chris says, “but people don’t have time for that anymore.”

Chris still has her mother’s recipes, written in Czech. The recipe below for Bublanina is one of her mother’s translated into English and, unlike many of the Czech recipes, requires very little preparation. This one comes with the note Chris attached to it:

“Saturday morning was baking day. You always wanted to have fresh baked goods on hand for the weekend. Saturday or Sunday afternoon was visiting day and baked goods usually were served with coffee. I remember we would sometimes take a ride to visit friends and of course we would be fooling around and talking. My father would say: ‘Watch the road signs so you know where you’re going,’ and we’d quiet down. When we arrived, there would be time around the table visiting and coffee and buns or sweet dough served. Many times it would be something made with yeast dough. You didn’t call ahead, just dropped in. Nothing was thought of it. Good memories.”

Bublanina (fresh fruit squares)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

1 cup flour	½ cup sugar	1 tsp. baking powder
¼ pound of softened butter	4 eggs, separated	¼ tsp. cream of tartar

Fresh fruit in season (blueberries, peaches, pitted cherries, halved and pitted plums (my mother used Italian purple plums), or apples peeled and cored.

Cream together butter and sugar, then add egg yolks, one at a time.
Sift together flour and baking powder; add to butter mixture.

Beat egg whites until stiff. Gradually add sugar and cream of tartar and continue beating until whites form stiff peaks. Then fold into the flour mixture.
Spread into greased 9” x 12” pan. Top with fresh fruit.

Bake at 350 degrees for 30-35 minutes. When cool, sprinkle with powdered sugar and cut into squares.

Looking Back

Here's a poem from *Story Quilt: Poems of a Place* written from a story told by the McChesneys and Paul Close. It is printed here with permission of the publisher, the Galway Public Library.

Firemen's Field Days

Story by Shirley McChesney, Mary Jane McChesney, Mary McChesney and Paul Close
Poem by Rhonda Pray

The whole town turned out, everyone you knew.
Stangles, Suitses, Shermans,
Denisons, McChesneys and more.
Fire trucks and marching band paraded
all the way from Hudson Drive, where only the cows
watched, on down East Street to the Town Barn.
The band's last boom boom boom
had barely faded when the first penny was pitched.
Darts, ringtoss, roulette,
all played for a nickel or a dime beneath
a tent set up a week ahead in the Village Park.
Bingo was the big draw
played for prizes
Indian blankets
Coleman camp stoves
cutlery sets.
Men congregated just beyond the park
in the coolness of Crandall's shed
for draft beer. Utica Club,
cold suds washing away
the onion relish mustard taste
of hot dogs and hamburgers served in the shade
by the Ladies Auxiliary, until, at dusk,
pony rides over, prizes packed away,
the strains of a fiddle could be heard,
an accordion unwinding,
starting up "Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight"
over at the feed store.
Parking lot swept,
loading dock cleared,

Paul Close started his call
"Swing your partner"
and the squares began to form.
"Do-si-do"
Allemande left!"
Women showed their best slips
as they twirled
and turned
until midnight.



~ McClelland House and Store

Historical Marker Profile #4

Galway is home to eight New York State Historical Markers. One of these markers commemorates John McClelland, one of Galway's original settlers and a founding father.

John McClelland was born in Scotland in 1754 and settled in America in 1774 in what would become the Town of Galway. He established his family homestead along Scotch Street (now State Route 147) and opened the town's first store in 1780. He served as Galway's first Supervisor from 1792 to 1794 and was subsequently elected to the New York State Assembly. He served several terms as a justice of the peace and was a founding member and elder of the first Scotch Church (now the West Charlton United Presbyterian Church). John McClelland died in 1819 and is buried in Galway Village Cemetery.

The historical marker is located on the northeast corner of the intersection of State Rte 147 and Donnan Rd., site of the McClelland house and store.



Thanks to Phyllis Keeler and Tom Cwiakala who published a detailed write-up of this historical marker in the Spring 2011 issue of the Galway Reader.

Galway Preservation Society

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