



# G·A·L·W·A·Y PRESERVATION SOCIETY JOURNAL

## *A Genealogical “Goose” Chase*

I'm related to a goose!

~ Bonnie Donnan



My DeRidder grandparents, George and Gladys, were ardent genealogists. I remember a pedigree-style chart, with my name in the left end of a roll of paper. As the paper unrolled, we travelled back in time, back through generations, back through centuries. The names on the top of the chart were familiar to people who grew up in this area: Donnan, Bunyan, Ennis, Smeallie, McKindly. The bottom of the chart, my mother's line, held Dutch names. One name, back in the mid 1600s, caught my interest; **Goosen** Gerritson Van Schaick. The rhythm of the name, and the recurrence of the surname in street names and an island has fixed it in my memory. I learned that the ending of a name in “en, se, ze, or sen” referred back to a parent's name in many Dutch settlers. Therefore, with a wry smile I write to inform you that “Goosen” means “son of a goose!” You never know what you will discover!

Variations in spelling in records can confound researchers, including my grandparents. My curiosity started a recent exploration of this early ancestor. The Galway Public Library's access to the library version of Ancestry.com was my first stop. Our library can be of help to you as well in a search! This led to Geni.com, and the Schenectady Digital History Archive, and brief passes through other sites.

### Upcoming Dates

#### **Dec 2 -Next Member Meeting at Town Hall**

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

#### **Jan. 8 – Next Board Meeting at Town Hall**

7:00 pm

Exploring Goosen online, a luxury not available to my grandparents, who must have spent many hours searching out written records, all kinds of connections came to me. One query landed me on General Goose Van Schaick, an officer exchanging letters with George Washington in the summer of 1780 on the difficulties of defending and supplying the Mohawk frontier. Ah! A descendent! Another search explained the repetition of the surname in the region: Goosen, the original with the musical, rhythmic, name who arrived in 1637

under contract with the Van Rensselaers, had many children; Geertje Goosen, Gerrit Goosen (who married a Schuyler) Sybrandt Goosense, Anthony Goosense, Gerritje, Engeltie Goosense, Levinus, Cornelius, Margrieta, Barent, Catherina, Anna Maria.

Captain Goosen Gerritse Van Schaick (1633-1676) was a brewer in Albany. His first wife, Gertie Brantse Peelen, died in 1656. In 1657, about to marry his second wife, he set aside, in a contract, 6000 guilders for his four eldest children, that being Gertie's estate. A joint will with his second wife, Annetie, in 1668 names ten children.

Van Schaick Island was granted to Goosen Van Schaick and Philip Pieterse Schuyler from three

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Mohican Native Americans. The “Halve Maan” patent included other islands at the mouth of the Mohawk River, and a large piece of land to the north, including the now village of Waterford, originally called Half Moon. Wow. He owned Waterford? Philip Pieterse Schuyler turned his part of the title over to Goosen, who willed the land to his wife Annetie. She passed the title to Goosen’s son Anthony, one of his four eldest, for “550 good marketable beaver skins.” The beaver skin economy was instrumental in the early settling of this region.

Anthony lived on the island. In his will, he specifies a spot in an orchard to be set off as a burying ground that is to be kept fenced to keep out cattle. He wished the plot to never be sold, but to remain a place for his and his wife’s posterity. He also willed that none of his land on his farm on Anthony’s Island, now Van Schaick Island, be sold to strangers, only sold to his descendants. This was respected for almost two centuries, but now the only part not owned by said strangers is the burial plot. His house, built before 1737 (the date of his will) still stands, marked on the grounds with many plaques and historical markers.



For a period during the Revolution, his home was occupied by many “strangers.” In this house the plans for the battle of Saratoga were formulated and it was used in August of 1777 as the New York State Capital.

Genealogy is a delightful step into history, your personal history! There are many resources to discover your roots. My exploration of Goosen and his descendants continues. I know I will enjoy the journey.

### ↻ *GPS Update* ~ Wayne Brandow

A news item of interest to lovers of local history has recently come to our attention. Brookside Museum is in danger of having to close its doors due to a lack of funds. According to an October 25<sup>th</sup> article in the *Daily Gazette*, the Brookside Museum in Ballston Spa needs to raise \$50,000 by the end of this year and a similar amount next year to remain open. Built in 1792 as an inn, it is believed that James Fenimore Cooper stayed there while writing *The Last of the Mohegans*. Nearby locations are described in his famous book. The museum is also the present site of the Saratoga County Historical Society. Hopefully, this valuable repository of local history will be sustained.



On the home front, Phyllis Keeler, Galway’s Town Historian, has reached a milestone in serving our community. Phyllis has completed fifty years as our Town Historian. Congratulations, Phyllis, on such a remarkable achievement!

The December program of the Galway Preservation Society will feature a presentation on “Looking at that Antique Christmas Present: A Survey of 19<sup>th</sup> Century Decorative Arts.” The speaker will be John Cromie, Ballston Spa Attorney and history buff. You will not want to miss it! The meeting will be held Monday, December 2 at Galway Town Hall at 7pm.

Christmas gift? Why not purchase a book of local history, *Galway 1900–1949, A Photographic History of Life in the Town of Galway, Saratoga County, New York!* It is for sale at the Galway Public Library, Galway & Providence Town Halls, Waterwheel Village and Brookside Museum.