



G·A·L·W·A·Y JOURNAL

PRESERVATION SOCIETY



~ *GPS Update* ~ Wayne Brandow HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL!

The above photo was taken on Tuesday, December 3, 2019 of East Street, Galway. It was the day after a two-day snowstorm that prompted us to cancel our December Galway Preservation Society (GPS) Meeting. One never knows what a day will bring forth in the snowy Northeast. Which brings us to a reasonable question. If the weather is looking a little threatening, how is a person to know if a GPS Meeting will be cancelled or not?

Depending on the forecast, if it does not sound like good weather, we will cancel and notify members by phone, or e-mail. We will also post it on our website and the Galway Get Together Facebook page. If you are in doubt and would like to know, just call me or text me, Wayne Brandow, at (518) 488-4153 and I'd be glad to help you out.

THE GREAT SACANDAGA LAKE

The next GPS meeting is on Monday, January 6, 2020 and the topic is *Harnessing Nature: Building the Great Sacandaga*. This is an eye-opening documentary movie about the reasons for damming up the Sacandaga River, the displacement of the people who lived in the valley, and the vacating of small hamlets that would be inundated once the dam was built to make the lake.



The last time this was shown at GPS we had an overflow crowd. On the bottom of today's Great Sacandaga Lake were communities that are no longer extant. You will not want to miss this telling of an event that permanently changed the local landscape. We hope to see you there.

Galway Preservation Society, Post Office Box 276, Galway, NY 12074
Contact us at galwaypressociety@gmail.com or visit us at
<http://www.galwaypreservationsociety.org>

Firewood ~ Bonnie Donnan

At this time of year in grocery and convenience stores, among the seasonal merchandise such as snow shovels, ice scrapers, rock salt, and gloves, often a neatly packaged bundle of firewood is offered. The wood has been split, kiln dried, and encased in plastic. No shreds of bark on the floor, no splinters when you carry the sealed package to your car. Some packages even include a handle, enabling transport with one hand like a piece of luggage.

In the past it wasn't so easy. William Lendl wrote about cutting wood his first year on the farm in *The Glowegee Scroll*, a publication of the Galway Senior Citizens. "I remember it was six degrees below zero and we were out of firewood. To cut wood the only thing I had was a split axe and a two-man crosscut saw. I hitched the horses on the bobsled and drove to the timber less than a half-mile away. I took the two-man saw and one end of it I tied with a clothesline about eight to ten feet high to a limb, and with this I was able to fell some trees. It took three to four hours to make a small load of firewood, and of course the wood was green and didn't burn very hot. I had to do this at least once a week. We never had enough firewood, and most of the time only the kitchen was warm."

I recall on the Donnan farm wood was hauled on a horse-drawn sleigh, and as a child, I always wanted to go along for the ride on the sleigh to the woods, but having a little one to look out for during the serious and dangerous work of felling trees restricted my opportunities for this. One day I was permitted to tend a small bonfire, and keep the wedges warm that were put into the partial cuts in the trunk of a standing tree to guide the direction of the fall.

My memory of the high-pitched song of a big circular saw cutting cord lengths down to stove lengths in the cold days of winter is indelible. The sawn pieces were tossed into the woodshed for the kitchen stove, or into the cellar for the furnace, and later stacked. The kitchen wood box was always in need of filling. The cook stove burned more days than not, in spite of being a hybrid with four electric burners. The stove stood out from the wall, and the stovepipe went through the ceiling, and was the source of heat for the bedroom above the kitchen. The open oven door was also a source of life-saving heat, with many a chilled small animal wrapped up in old towels and placed in an old pan or box to be brought back from near death. Kittens, puppies, lambs, chicks, and piglets were usually brought back from the brink with a thorough warming.

My father, Jim Donnan, heated the house on Sacandaga Road with wood. He used the fireplace, and for a while, a wood-burning furnace. I volunteered to keep the home fires burning one year when he was away at Christmas because you can't take a vacation away from your sole source of heat when you are burning wood. He could manually split wood with a maul with a skill that made it look easy. The ease depended on the type of wood and the grain. A nice hardwood, like Ash could cleave very nicely. Elm, on the other hand, resists. It was commonly used for wagon hubs due to this property. One day, his truck heavily loaded, his travel on Crane Road was marked with a dotted line of Ash chunks on the shoulder of the road. Jim Mansfield, spotting the fallen wood, picked it up, took it home, and put it beside his splitting block. On another day, he returned to see a note fluttering on top of his splitting block. "Yes, it's true, the Lord does provide, but this time He's providing Elm, not Ash." Sure enough, the Ash chunks had been replaced with gnarly, knotted, Elm. Jim Mansfield related this story several years after my father had passed.

Upcoming Dates

Jan 6 -Next Member Meeting at Town Hall

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

Jan 22 – Next Board Meeting at Town Hall

7:00 pm