



~ March Meeting

~ J.B. Sanders

The number of new Covid cases in Saratoga County have come down to the levels of last October, therefore we will resume in person meetings. Our next meeting will be held at 7 pm on March 7, 2022 at the Galway Town Hall. No refreshments will be provided and social time will be limited due to Covid concerns. The March meeting will start promptly at 7 pm with the program for the evening. "Nathan Packer of Barkersville, Civil War Veteran and cabinet maker" presented by Robert Wemple Town of Providence Historian.

We are working to jointly present the program live at the town hall and via Zoom for those who may wish to view the program remotely. Anyone wishing to join our meeting via Zoom should sign-in to the waiting room about 6:50 pm as the presentation should start promptly at 7:00 pm. The Zoom meeting number is 294 161 5132. Logging into this meeting number will admit you to a waiting room until I connect you to the meeting. I will send an email to everyone that I have email addresses for with a reminder of the upcoming Zoom meeting the week before and the day of the meeting. I recommend that anyone wishing to install Zoom on your computer should go to Zoom.com and download the free version of Zoom. If you would like information about accessing the Zoom meeting you can go to <https://www.seniorsguide.com/technology/a-step-by-step-guide-to-zoom-meeting/> or the Zoom website. If you still have questions or need additional information, please contact me on 518-882-6239.

~ Uncle Will's Papers

~ Bonnie Donnan

I am still digging through a box of old papers, seeing what would be of value and interest to others. The papers belonged to William Donnan, uncle of my Grandfather James George Donnan. In my exploration of this informal collection, legibility raises priority. Everything in the box was deemed important enough to still exist by four generations, even if it was just not wanting the responsibility of discarding.

Continued on page 2

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

There are letters, some neat, tidy, very legible. I have passed over scribbles, perhaps to return when I have more time or more patience. A card, printed on very nice stock, lists the graduates of the Union College 71st commencement. William's brother, George Donnan, was a member of that class.

A list of communion implements and their cost, is written on the back of an invoice form from Dye & Robertson, glove manufacturers in Broadalbin. The invoice, a handy lined form, was apparently used to list the donors and amounts gathered for the purchase of the communion supplies. It had nothing to do with the glove company. This frugal use of available paper was something I recognize in other generations of my family. My grandmother saved envelopes to make lists. There is also an invoice from the Sanitary Communion Outfit Co. in Rochester, close in dollar amount to the list of donors, and a pamphlet from the same company on the advantages of individual over the common cup. It counters possible objections to breaking the tradition of the common cup by pointing out that each person depicted in DaVinci's "Last Supper" has their own cup and bread plate. All of this in 1903, more than 115 years before Covid.

Two very interesting invoices are from Dr.N.A. Caldwell of Hagamans Mills from late 1893 and early 1894. Office hours are listed as 9 A.M., 1 P.M., and 7 P.M., one hour each. Charges are listed as Bottle Medicine .50, Pills .25, Heart Tablets .35. Visits cost 1.50, nothing to specify whether they are office or home visits. The most curious listing is "Box Little Devils .35." Before we envy the cost of health care in 1894, an internet search revealed an image of an ad in the Pittsburgh Press, September 22, 1910. "Little Devils' Our chocolate coated pills of aloin, belladonna, strychnine and cascara are affectionately known as 'Little Devils' by many thousands who use them for constipation, sluggish liver and to counteract the effect of overeating and late suppers." (!) "Little Devils" is an accurate term. Aloin is derived from several types of Aloe Vera, being the membrane enclosing the gel inside the leaf. Aloin is a powerful laxative and is banned for sale for internal consumption. Belladonna, Italian for beautiful lady, referred to the dangerous practice of taking it to dilate the pupils, and make the eyes look attractive. While it is no longer used medicinally, it was used historically in small doses to strengthen muscle contractions, such as a heart and bowel stimulant and performance enhancing drug. The idea of taking strychnine medicinally is about as frightening as it gets. Cascara sagrada is from a North American tree bark, another drug that was popular as a laxative. In 2002 the FDA withdrew approval as an over-the-counter drug over questions about safety and effectiveness. It is now marketed as a "dietary supplement" because supplements don't have to meet the same standards as medicines.

After researching, briefly, the contents of the one named medication, I wonder what was in "Bottle Medicine" and "Pills" and "Heart Tablets?"