


G·A·L·W·A·Y JOURNAL

PRESERVATION SOCIETY

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~Coleen Germond

Michael Diana of the Schenectady Historical Society spoke at our November GPS meeting. He told us the story of a remarkable woman, Doctor Elizabeth Gillette. Her battle with a childhood illness that caused her sister's death and for Elizabeth, a very long recovery, must have focused her resolve to become a doctor and a surgeon. This was not an easy path for anyone, especially a woman born in 1874. Mr. Diana told us of the many reasons she is a woman worth honoring and remembering.

On Monday December 1st at 7:00 PM in the Galway Town Hall our speaker will be Charlene Dubuque, Education Director of the Saratoga County History Center. Her presentation will be **The One Room School House**. Doors will open at 6:45 PM. I hope to see you there.

In anticipation of Ms. Dubuque's presentation, we are sharing a story from *The Glowegee Scroll* of 1982. The Scroll was a publication written by and for seniors. It ran for over a decade. This was a part of the beginnings of The Galway Seniors Group we have today. Ms. Mildred Foss, an Amsterdam girl, started out as a teacher aged 19 in a one-room school. She later married a Galway man, Arthur Follett. She taught for decades in the Galway school system. In the eighties she was an active member of the Galway Seniors. I suggest she was still teaching in 1982 at age 85 as part of the Galway Seniors; how to live, how to support your community and how to have fun.



Town Barn 1970 by Ted Chamberlin

Mrs. Follett took on the challenge of teaching the first kindergarten in Galway. By necessity, her classroom was the Galway Town Barn. Her booklet written in 1975 and titled "Old Days Old Ways" tells of her years of teaching and includes a longer more detailed version of this story. The Town Barn where she taught no longer exists its location was on East Street where Galway Emergency Medical Services now resides.

"I Remember"

By Mildred Follett

The first kindergarten was situated in the Town Barn. In this room were two large voting machines, the town safe, their two large tables, eight large arm chairs stacked on top of the voting machines, the six Home Bureau sewing machines and their barrel of dishes. The Presbyterian Church had burned. So the Home Bureau who had kept their equipment there now had to use the Town Barn.

In the middle of all this, we placed six kindergarten tables, each table seating six children, plus the stove, the piano, and the teacher's desk. We had to shove all this furniture together in the afternoon in order to make room to set up the thirty-six cots where the thirty-six children took their naps.

As I had never taught kindergarten before, this was quite an experience. We were there at eight-thirty in the morning when the buses brought the other children, and we left at four in the afternoon. I really taught more first grade work than kindergarten material. When the State inspectors came, they asked me why I was making these little children work so hard. I didn't want to tell them I didn't know what to teach kindergarten children, so I told them the things they were eager to know. When I decided to continue teaching kindergarten, I went to Plattsburg and Oneonta Normal Schools to learn how.

One day as we were loading the buses, I discovered one little boy was missing. I looked in the big room, but there was no little boy. I found him in the boy's room calmly seated on the toilet. When I opened the door, I smelled smoke and saw it rolling up along the floor boards. I got the boy up and safely on the bus, then ran for the water pail and doused the water on the smoke that was now rolling up in increasing amounts. Dashing to the telephone, I called the main school. The janitor Lloyd McCrossen jumped into his car and came to help me. We kept pouring water on the boards until the fire was extinguished. The fire, we found, had been caused by oily rags ignited by the sun shining on the snow, The town workers had thrown them against the building. It was fortunate that the little boy had loitered in the toilet that day; otherwise, the fire would never had been discovered until it was too late to save the building, for it was my habit to leave the building immediately after the bus.

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Do you have our pictorial history book *Galway 1900-1949*? It would make a great gift, especially for people with Galway family roots that no longer live in the area. The book can be purchased at the Galway Public Library.