


G·A·L·W·A·Y JOURNAL

PRESERVATION SOCIETY

November 2025

~Coleen Germond

We had a lovely balmy night with a full hunter's moon on October 6th for our GPS meeting. Our speaker was Jon Jasewicz, the reenactor chosen to represent General Philip Scuyler during the many festivities New York State has planned to celebrate our nation's birth.

Jon Jasewicz is well versed in both Revolutionary War history and his subject General Schuyler. He gave us a good broad view of how General Philip Schuyler helped to win the war. Schuyler came from vast amounts of old Dutch money and married into more old Dutch money. This wealth and the connections that came with it enabled him to get the needed supplies for use by younger men, more robust men like Benedict Arnold and Henry Knox who could charge into the battles and climb over mountains. It was a bit of a surprise to learn that axes and picks were as important as guns to stop and delay the British from sliding into the Champlain Valley. In the hour that he spoke, Jon paced back and forth, and he took us through from the events that happened at Ticonderoga, on Valcour Island as well as at Bennington and Hubbardton, Vermont. He wore a yellow velvet coat like one Schuyler might have worn and fancy leather shoes fashioned after a pair pulled up the depths of Lake Champlain.



There were surprises. You think you know everything there is to know about the American Revolution, but a reenactor can tell you firsthand what it is like to march twenty-seven miles in those uncomfortable shoes. At the end of the program, guests were able to examine the historic artifacts Jon has found over the years.

There will be happenings over the next two years to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution. Be sure to keep your eyes open for them.

~ **November's Program:** Elizabeth Gillette, a Schenectady Surgeon

On Monday, November 3, 2025, at 7:00 pm our program will be presented by Michael Diana, Director of Education/ Historian of the Schenectady County Historical Society.

At the turn of the 20th Century, Elizabeth Gillette made her move to Schenectady. At the time, she was only the second woman to practice medicine in the small American city. Over the course of her long career, Gillette would defy not just the profession but the political boundaries of her gender. The presentation details her many accomplishments and remarkable personality.

Reverend John Taylor

Missionary to Galway in 1802

When the Hampshire Missionary Society of Northampton, Massachusetts, was formed in early 1802, its goal was to send ministers into frontier towns where families from their area had settled over the years. The society moved quickly in its mission, as by that first summer, they had two missionaries in the field. While Enoch Hale headed north to Maine, Rev. John Taylor was sent west into the Mohawk Valley of New York. Both men were Yale College graduates, and each had been ordained as ministers in Reformed Protestant Congregational churches at Westhampton and Deerfield, Massachusetts, respectively, and were serving their churches when they were called to the mission field.

On July 31, 1802, John Taylor saddled his horse, heading out on his missionary journey. When you consider that in Deerfield he was leaving behind a wife and eight children, the youngest only six months old, it could only have been the strength of his devotion to the gospel that carried him away that day. He told of the parting with these words:

I this day passed through the affecting scene of parting with my family for the term of three months, to journey into the northern mountains of New York, and to perform the duties of a missionary. May I and my family enjoy Divine protection and may the pleasure of meeting my family and people again be greater than the sorrow of parting with them.

After leaving Deerfield, the first two days of his journey took him west eighty miles to the city of Albany in New York State. It was in Albany that he picked up the Bibles and religious pamphlets he would be distributing during his trip. Being alone and on horseback, he was forced to hire space on the stagecoach to carry this material westward for him, a decision he would later regret.

It was Amsterdam, thirty-seven miles west of Albany, that he marked as the place where he started his missionary work. On July 29th of 1802, he preached the first sermon of his trip at the home of 41-year-old Revolutionary War Veteran Jared Plumb. In his journal, Taylor noted that the two hundred people who were in attendance were very attentive to the words that he spoke that day.

At his next stop, Little Falls, in Herkimer County, he learned that his books and pamphlets had been lost when the box they were in split open, spilling the contents out behind the moving stagecoach. As he had been giving assurances in Albany that his package would be safely transported, a driver was immediately dispatched to search along the route and locate the missing material. It would be another week before

Reverend Taylor was reunited with his books, which miraculously had been found scattered along the road with every piece located and returned to him.

As John Taylor was educated at Yale, he received instruction in natural history as well as his preparation for the ministry. In his journal, he made occasional observations about the land and the farming methods of people who lived there. Here is one example:

From Johnstown to Stone Arabia, the timber is beech and maple, with some hemlock. In Stone Arabia the timber is walnut and butternut. The fields of wheat are numerous, and the crop is in general excellent. In everything but wheat, the husbandry appears to be bad. The land for Indian corn, it is evident from appearance, is not properly plowed—they plow very shallow. Neither is the corn tended—it is in general full of weeds and grass and looks miserably.

By the 8th of September, he had made his way as far north as Watertown, even taking time to visit the shore of Lake Ontario and examine sites of historic interest. In mid-September, Reverend Taylor left Watertown and started heading east towards home, making stops over the next ten days to preach in Leyden, Remsen, Norway, Salisbury, Johnstown, and Mayfield, finally arriving in Galway at the end of the month.

The following are the entries from Reverend Taylor's journal concerning his visit to Galway:

(Sept) 30th.—Rode to *Galway*, a part of New Broad Alban, eight miles. This town, like all others in this quarter, is very much divided. (i.e., having churches of differing denominations) The Presbyterians are, however, taking measures for settling the Gospel by uniting with a part of Amsterdam.

Oct. 1st.—Preached to thirty-five persons, at Deacon Otis's—the people attentive. Visited several families. This town does not stand in great need of missionary labors; and yet as much so as any part of the country that I have yet seen.

2d—Spent the day in study.

3d—Sunday. Preached to a large audience, in a meeting house—the first house I have preached in since I left Deerfield. I find the people in this part of the world much more attentive apparently in the time of service than in New-England. It is the practice of this people always to have a contribution when they are supplied. Received \$2.16c.5 mills. This chh. Contains fifty members. Gave one of Lothrop's Challenges, and of Dodridge's Address to Deacon Otis, to be circulated in the neighborhood.

By 1802 Galway supported four churches: United Presbyterian on Sacandaga Road just north of the Charlton town line, established sometime before 1794; First Baptist Church in East Galway, believed to have been organized in 1778; the Second Baptist Church, which had separated from the First in 1790, and two years later building its first church northeast of the village on the Elias Stilwell Farm property along along Mack Road; and the Reformed Presbyterian Church, formed by Covenanters in 1791, who in 1800 built a church east of the village at the north-west corner of Armer and Ballston Roads.

Though never stated in his journal, Rev. Taylor likely centered his activities in Galway around the Second Baptist Church. First, there was the fact that Baptists shared the basic beliefs of most Protestants, which

would have aligned closely with Taylor's training and beliefs. Other evidence was his association in Galway with Deacon Otis, who is listed as an early Elder in the Second Baptist Church.

William J. Otis was born on December 9, 1762, in Montville, Connecticut. At the age of 19, he married Margaret Jaquin and together they moved west to the town of Galway, Saratoga County, where their first child, Dorothy, was born in 1783. By 1789, the couple had added three more children to their family. It is not known what brought this family to Galway, or even what his occupation was during their years of living in the area.

Leaving Galway on October 4th, Rev. Taylor headed eighteen miles northwest on horseback to the Fulton County town of Northampton, where he was put up for the night with a Dutch family. As an example of some of the food that was set before him during his journey, that night he feasted on "boiled squash, swimming in butter, sweetened a little; and with this mess the family mixed vinegar in great plenty."

Reverend Taylor ended his missionary trip through the Mohawk and Black River valleys when he rode into Ballston Spa on October 8th, leaving the next day to start his journey back to his family in Deerfield.

After his mission to the Mohawk Valley, John Taylor stayed in Deerfield until 1816, when he moved his family to Mendon, New York, where he served as pastor of the local Presbyterian Church. He continued as pastor in Mendon for the next sixteen years, then moved west to Macomb County, Michigan, in 1832. As he had in western New York, in Michigan, Taylor devoted his life to the church, where it was said that his intelligence and refinement of manner won him many friends throughout the years. Reverend John Taylor passed away in 1840 at the age of seventy-eight in Bruce, Michigan.

~by Dave Waite

Sources for this article include W. Bronson Taylor's *Stories, and Pictures of Galway; Documentary History of New York, volume III*, by E. B. O'Callaghan, M.D., and the online resources at americancenturies.mass and the newspaper archives newyorkhistoricnewspapers.org and fultonhistory.com