Life in Galway

“A Walk on Broadway” (Saratoga Springs) 1874
by Currier and Ives

Change Is in the Air, Dawn’s Last
Wish! Eliphalet Nott and Galway’s
Methodist Church.

Free – take one!
Change Is in the Air
A Word from the Editor

This has been a tough winter. The other day at the bank I overheard a firefighter from the West Charlton Fire Department tell Ingrid that they had to break through over three feet of ice to fill up their truck with water.

To those who play in the outdoors - skiing, snowmobiling, snowshoeing, ice fishing - it has been the best of years. To others, when they think of this year, what comes to mind is a lot of shoveling, driving in hazardous conditions, and finger and toe-numbing cold. The good or bad news, depending on how you look at it, is that there is change in the air. “Change” is that ever-present constant in our lives. Nothing stays the same.

Speaking of change, what did you think about the cover of this issue? The painting by Currier and Ives captures a different Saratoga Springs than what we are accustomed to. As you can see, Broadway was a fit name for the road which went through the center of Saratoga Springs. Gone are the majestic hotels and the horses and carriages that would be kicking up dust. Today we effortlessly glide across an asphalt road on synthetic tires. The painting on the cover captures for us a snapshot of a time gone by. In reading *Life in Galway*, hopefully, in days to come, others will see a snapshot of the life we share as a community.

One further item to reflect upon with respect to the Saratoga Springs painting is that, for the farmers and other tradesmen here in Galway, the hustle and bustle of the city, even in 1874, was not far away at all. The reputed health-giving springs of Ballston Spa and Saratoga Springs drew people from all over the Northeast in the 1800s, and they were in Galway’s backyard.

In this issue you will find stories of Galway, both past and present. I’m grateful to all those who have contributed since its inception. I am
especially grateful for those who have expressed their gratitude for Life in Galway and regularly provide funds to see it continue.

Since the last issue, I would like to acknowledge the following for their donation to this ongoing work: Andrew and Terrill Curran, Tim and Carole Jones, Timothy O’Neil, Virginia Sawicki, and those who contributed through the collection box at the Galway Market. As always, much gratitude is due to the Dockstader Charitable Trust for their continuing grant to fund those portions of Life in Galway regarding the people and organizations of Galway.

Dear Reader, sit back and enjoy this issue about two people, one from our own day and the other, a notable person who was a contemporary of and of the same renown as Joseph Henry.¹ Both individuals have ties to this special place we call home, Galway. I cannot begin to tell you how much I relish the opportunity to tell you the stories of Galway. As I write, I feel like you are present, and like in most conversations of interest, there is a connection of my heart to yours.

Wayne R. Brandow

NOTE: If you would like to help with the printing costs, please send a check made out to the Bible Baptist Church of Galway. We have a separate bank account for Life in Galway.

Dawn’s Last Wish!

It all started with a message on my answering machine. “Hello, Pastor Brandow. This is Denise Thompson. You officiated at my wedding years ago and I’m calling you on behalf of my sister Dawn . . .” When I returned the call, I discovered that Dawn lived in Florida and was dying of cancer. Denise asked if I would be able to conduct Dawn’s funeral. Also, she had one more request. Dawn was coming to Galway in October. Would it be possible for me to talk to her?

¹ Joseph Henry (1797-1878) grew up in Galway, living with his grandparents. He was a highly respected scientist and the first secretary of the Smithsonian Institute. An historical marker of his boyhood home can be found just east of the village on Ballston-Galway Road.
The day came. It was a sunny, crisp autumn morning, the maples around the parsonage were adorned in their golden splendor and set against a rich blue sky when I opened the door to greet Dawn, along with her husband, Dave, and grown son, Chris. Dawn remarked on the beauty of fall in Galway and as she said it, the “fairy-tale” quaintness of the village. She was glad to be home.

Having ushered them into the living room, I was curious to learn why they wanted to talk to me and discover how I could be of help to them.

I learned that Dawn was going to be buried in Galway as this was where she was from. Her childhood was spent here, and many family and friends still reside here. She knew that she was dying and the day was fast approaching when they would gather at her funeral. There was something that both Dawn and Dave desired that I would tell everyone. It was concerning a life-changing experience, too good not to be shared. The whole point of our meeting, in Dawn’s eyes, was to ask me if I would relate to others what had happened to both her and Dave.

On November 19th, on a bitter cold, but likewise, sunny morning, I conducted her graveside funeral at the Ashley Cemetery.² It is a small cemetery out in the countryside, off Bliss Road, access to which is through a private driveway. The cemetery was situated on a knoll and surrounded by the natural beauty of its rural setting. Addressing a good-sized gathering of her family and friends, many of whom I have known

2 Ashley Cemetery, March 2014. At the time of the funeral there was no snow.
for years, I had the opportunity to share details of her life and open up the Bible to preach a funeral sermon.

I do not think that I will ever forget that funeral. I felt like I had stepped back in time to a different era. Martha, my wife, sensed the same and told me about it afterwards. The trappings of the modern world were noticeably absent. Not even the cars that brought those gathered were in sight. It was just people, land, sky, and an open grave. The stillness of the hour was only broken by the Word of God.

Let me tell you a little about what I shared that day, about Dawn and what it was that she desired for me to say.

The Life of Dawn Louise Rice

On April 4, 1949, a baby girl was born to Burton and Louise Reynolds. They named her Dawn. She was the second of four siblings (Burton, Dawn, Thomas, and Denise). It was a close-knit family with extended family nearby. Her childhood was spent here in Galway, living in a house on the Ballston-Galway Road a little east of Jockey Street. The 50s and 60s in which she grew up were the days of black and white television sets, transistor radios and The Beatles. For Dawn it was a simple life in a rural setting. It was going to a school so small that everyone knew each other.

Upon graduating from Galway High School in 1967, Dawn went to work at GE. It was at a dance during that time that she met a fellow serving in the Air Force named Dave Rice. Dave was stationed at a small out-of-the-way radar site in the area. Being attracted to each other, they began to date steadily.

Dawn would sometimes visit Dave at work. On one such visit, Dawn helped with painting the building. Taking a break, they decided to watch TV together, when to their surprise they saw Dave’s supervisor come up
the driveway. Not wanting to be caught there, Dawn hid behind the TV and Dave sat down to continue watching it. The boss came in and decided to sit down and join him in viewing the movie. Unbeknownst to him, Dawn was crouched-down, hiding behind the TV that he was looking at. She stayed there throughout the whole movie, and he never found out that she was there. That was an episode in their lives that they would never forget.

On March 20, 1971 Dave and Dawn were married in the West Charlton United Presbyterian Church. It was the beginning of many happy days together. They enjoyed numerous interests, especially motorcycling and playing golf together. Dave’s last tour of duty in the Air Force took them to Florida and they both liked it so much that they decided to settle in the “Sunshine State.” After he got out of the service, Dave started a business in the security field, and Dawn started a microfilm business.

On October 22, 1985, Christopher was born. Chris added to the joy they had. Then it happened! The events that she wanted me to share with others occurred.

Dawn’s Last Wish!

Four years after Chris was born, Dave agreed to go with Dawn to church. He usually played golf. Dawn was invited to church by her brother, but she did not want to go alone, so Dave agreed to go with her. During the sermon, God began to do something remarkable in Dave’s life. The preaching of the Bible was like a mirror to his own soul. Dave began to see himself and others as we really are. In polite society we tend to accent the positive and look over the negative in our own lives and the lives of others. What he heard would not permit him to do so. He saw his own selfishness and aloofness from God. He realized that he was living a life that was not in accordance with the will of God, which the Bible calls sin. The thought that one day he would die and stand before God as a “sinner” was unsettling to him. He was pricked in his conscience. It does not take much for God to bring to the surface the sinfulness so native to us all. We are all flawed. However, the pastor did not stop there. There is good news in the Bible that goes beyond finger-pointing. Dave heard it that day. He discovered that forgiveness for sin and reconciliation with God are found in Jesus Christ. Christ had come
into the world not to judge him but to save him. The pastor saw himself as a herald, to declare this good news from God and he invited all to accept it. Dave responded in faith, believing that Jesus had come to save him. He learned that God loved him. It marked the beginning of his Christian life.

With zeal to learn all he could about God, Dave began to read the Bible and tell others about his newly found faith. He had struggled with alcohol all his life, so his first steps in this new life were, as he told me, “reading with the Bible in one hand and a beer in the other.” Through Christ, it was not long before he overcame that life-dominating habit. The change in his life was evident to all, especially to Dawn. She began to examine her own life.

As a child in Galway, Dawn had attended a Pilgrim’s Holiness church at Fox Hill. Having made a profession of faith, she thought of herself as a Christian. Seeing the vitality of the life of God in her husband’s everyday life, one day when Dave was out of town, Dawn got down on her knees and asked God to save her and give her the same kind of assurance that Dave had. When Dave came home, he found that they now shared a kindred spirit in which they both truly loved Christ and wanted to live for Him. There was a reality to their Christianity beyond mere words. For them, Christ was their life.

Becoming members and attending the Grace Community Church in Valrico, Florida, they served the Lord together. How Christ had changed both of their lives and made a good marriage even better was what Dawn desired for me to share at her funeral.

To read past issues online go to http://lifeingalway.wordpress.com
The Curtain Opens on a Beautiful Life

Our lives are so short here on this earth. When you think about it, each one’s life is like the blink of a lightning bug on a warm summer night. It is so ephemeral, so brief. However, this life is not all there is for any of us. This life is like the opening act before a play, but in reality we are all made for eternity. At death the curtain opens. For Dawn, it opened to a beautiful life that will last forever.

“Together,” is the word to describe Dave and Dawn’s life, from those happy days of dating, to married life pursuing many of the same interests, and family life. Together, they faced cancer, not once, but two times. The first time by God’s grace Dawn battled this disease and overcame it. Although she was cancer free for many years, it was once again discovered. This time the outcome would be different. Dawn and Dave both knew it and made preparations. Dawn departed this life on Tuesday, November 12, 2013.

What was Dawn like? Her name really fit her. Like the dawn of the early morning sun that brings warmth and light to all, she was full of compassion and mercy to those in need. Like her Savior, she was touched with the feelings of other’s infirmities. Hearing of her favorite Bible verse, I know where she drew her strength from as she reached out toward others and as she faced life’s challenges. What is the verse? Philippians 4:13 – “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” When I met with Dawn that day just a little over a month before her death, her faith was such that she was not afraid to die. She only grieved that she had to say goodbye. I know that she is not gone. She has only gone ahead. Dear reader, there is a happy reunion ahead for this couple that loved each other so in this life.
As a result of Denise’s call, I had the opportunity to meet this wonderful couple and now count Dave as a friend. When I told him that I would like to write Dawn’s story in *Life in Galway*, Dave replied that I should tell it. It is what she would have wanted more than anything else in this world.

**Eliphalet Nott and Galway’s Methodist Church**

This article starts with a quote from Elsie M. Maddaus’ booklet, *A Brief History of the Galway United Methodist Church to 1978.*\(^3\) You may find it strange that a well-known person who came to the Presbyterian Church in Galway would be mentioned in the history of the Methodist Church. The solution is that the present-day Galway United Methodist Church was the result of a union of two churches, the First Associate Presbyterian Church of Galway and the Galway Methodist Episcopal Church. This union took place on February 1, 1939. The present-day location of the Galway United Methodist Church was the site of the Presbyterian Church which burnt to the ground on April 18, 1948. Saint Mary’s Roman Catholic Church presently occupies the former Methodist church building. The present meeting house of the Galway United Methodist Church was at one time a carriage house that was moved and refurbished to suit the needs of a church. While rebuilding, the Methodists held their own services in the Baptist church, on the invitation of that congregation.

Here is the quote from Elsie Maddaus about the Associate Presbyterian Church of Galway:

> According to author Cornelius E. Durkee, the church membership increased over the years from less than 20 persons

\(^3\) This is an excellent overview of the history of all three congregations, the two separate Presbyterian and Methodist societies and the resulting union. A copy of this publication is available at the Galway Public Library.
to 133. A religious revival took place in 1820 at a time when the church was without a pastor. It was said to have originated among school children who became interested in studying the scriptures from an interest in Biblical doctrines. In two month’s time, 152 names were added to the church roll. Dr. Eliphalet Nott, president of Union College, was at this time supplying the pulpit. With an increase in membership, the new church building was found to be an absolute necessity and was planned to seat 500 people.\(^4\)

This revival of 1820 has intrigued me for many years. I wrote about it in a previous edition of *Life in Galway*.\(^5\) Dr. Nott’s preaching in Galway and the revival that occurred here is attested in many sources.\(^6\) The principal instrument used of God in this revival was Rev. Ashael Nettleton, who not only was a known revival preacher, but also the one who wrote the well-known hymn tune “Nettleton” which usually is sung with the lyrics to “Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing.”

Nettleton had actually come to Saratoga Springs in July 1819. According to E. A. Johnston, it was the custom of Nettleton to visit “The Springs” to recover from his energy spent in his itinerant evangelistic labors.\(^7\) While there he met Union Professor Dr. McAuley, with whom he afterward stayed as a house guest during the revival in Galway. Johnston also wrote that McAuley’s house on the Union College campus still stands and is “virtually the same today as it was in Nettleton’s time . . . The wide front porch, where he and Dr. McAuley used to sit evenings, still beckons with comfortable chairs.”\(^8\)

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\(^7\) Ibid, 147.

\(^8\) Ibid., 147.
In the past, I had always wondered why Nettleton came to Galway of all places. Now I know. Nettleton, McAuley, and Nott were all ministers and were all highly educated men. Nettleton was a graduate of Yale. Common interests helped to foster an intellectual and spiritual fraternity among them. Dr. Nott’s pulpit supply in Galway’s Presbyterian Church was the link that brought Nettleton’s revival labors in our direction.

Just who was Eliphalet Nott? That he was a person of note is obvious just by visiting Schenectady. Major roads are named after him, Nott Terrace and Nott Street. Then there is the Nott Memorial at Union College.

Dr. Nott was the President not only of Union College but for a time was also President of RPI, while still presiding over Union. As a Presbyterian minister, he preached a sermon that was widely read against dueling after Alexander Hamilton was shot dead by Aaron Burr. He was an inventor and promoted science education. Though classically trained himself, he led the way to educationally equip men to handle the demands of the newly blossoming industrial society.

Galway takes pride in its ties to Joseph Henry. However, we should not forget another renowned person, Dr. Nott!

Nott and Henry had met, and both are featured with others in an 1862 oil painting that hangs in the National Portrait Gallery in the Smithsonian in Washington DC titled “Men of Progress.”

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10 In the painting above, “Men of Progress” Henry is 9th from the left, standing just to the left of the pillar, and Nott is 10th, seated just to the right of the pillar.
The spacious Associate Presbyterian Church building was constructed to accommodate the people that joined as a result of the 1820 revival. The front door faced East Street in this photo taken prior to the fire.

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