

## The Old Valise's Story

I am an old valise. I've known good days and bad. I am ashamed of myself now because I'm crushed, cracked and torn. At least the owner's name in bold red and black letters is yet visible. The name is V.O. Garlock – Fort Plain, NY. Really I'm a small hand bag used to carry special things when my owner traveled. In me you might find a shaving kit, tooth brush, a clean change of socks or even one of those bottles with its brown liquid also marked with my owner's name, address and 1882. I know that is when my owner started his liquor store in this Mohawk Valley village. Boy have I had a varied life of travelling. I went many times when my owner visited his brothers in Kansas. I seem to recall that remarkable venture to the Rhine River Valley in Germany and Switzerland.



Now let's see where I went in later days. My owner died at age 79 in 1925. I was there in his house on Canal Street at Fort Plain. His only son Benjamin was now 48 years old. This old valise was up there in the attic unused for many years. If an old leather valise can think, the question would be am I headed for the scrap pile. No one thought to open me up and see what was inside me. I survived and was taken to my second home there along the creek at Marshville, four miles south of Canajoharie, NY. I was unceremoniously tossed into a garage to wait for heaven only knows what. Years later I was moved again, to another Marshville, NY house spared again, but still no one checked what was inside me. My original owner's son was now an old man. Possibly he still prized me because I once had belonged to his father.

About this time VO Garlock's great grandson Skip took notice of me. He had just gotten married and was taking some of those things he had collected to his new home in Stone Arabia just across the Mohawk. This old valise was thrilled to make yet another move, even though it was a short one. This time I was stored in really rough storage over a farm building. Still no one opened me. A lot of years went by. Now that old farm building was to be torn down. I was so pleased to be yet special to someone. Skip took me to another old place he was restoring. Again, up overhead of a garage. The 21<sup>st</sup> century was upon us and one day Skip, VO's great grandson, picked me up and opened me. There inside was a top hat and the picture of a pretty lady. Skip will never know if the photo was his great grandmother who was separated from VO many years ago or Lottie who became VO's housekeeper from about 1880 to his death.

This old valise is still crushed and torn. Will it still stick around or finally be cast away? Only time will tell.

Skip Barshied, Stone Arabia, November 26, 2014