

Will Stone Arabia survive hurricane Irene

It is August 29, 2011, the day after hurricane Irene. I woke up this morning just as I have for 63 years in this place called Stone Arabia. Yesterday the wind blew and it rained but no worse than I've seen lots of times before. I have only crept into the 21st century and the computer age. I like many other people do not have a computer. Last evening the electric power ceased and the TV along with it. I could have relied on a kerosene lamp as my good Amish friends do. No! I think I will get the generator out so I will have some small semblance of the electric power I've known all my 81 years. Still no TV so I reverted to an almost forgotten pastime. I looked up some books and did some reading. Have you heard of that recently? The generator was turned off when I went to bed at about 11. To not have its constant hum was somewhat of a relief.

I awoke at 4am to restart the generator so the food in the freezer did not thaw up and be spoiled. How in the world did mankind survive before freezers? The answer is - quite well or our species would be extinct. There were major area highways closed. That threw a lot of traffic around this sharp Route 10 corner. Lots of them were huge trucks. This little Stone Arabia settlement must yet be important if for no other reason than to pass through en route to some more important destinations. One wonders if the world will cease to be after Irene. Stone Arabia has survived so many disasters, not the least of which was a devastating British, Tory and Indian raid in 1780. This dark morning I waited for a sign which would assure me that old Stone Arabia would survive. I finally got one when I saw a beer truck go past.

I now knew all would be well. This Mohawk Valley area was no stranger to beer. There were breweries here and hop growing was once common. You know the flavor of beer comes from hops. Today's happenings tend to jog my memory of long ago. I'm sure people get bored with my stories but they often remind me of some great people now long gone. When I was quite small grandpa Garlock and mother's sister, Pauline, and I started on a trip to Aunt Pauline's camp not so far from Lake George. We were going toward Fonda down Route 5 a main New York State Highway that is closed today because of the storm. We came to an approaching funeral procession. In the middle of it was, of all things, a beer truck. I asked grandpa why it was there. He said that he thought the deceased probably had a big supply of beer on hand and it was being sent back to the company before the price went down. Yes we will survive the hurricane Irene. The sun is brightly shining this morning. It is time to return to everyday tasks. I will often think of grandpa and the joys I had with him. It helps to smooth over present day rough stretches. Thanks grandpa.

Skip Barshied, Stone Arabia, August 29, 2011

Hand-written note on a copy of this story that Skip gave to Emanuel Byler:

I'm sorry I wrote this. When I did I did not yet know of the great damage done to the Mohawk and Schoharie Valleys.