I’m sure many of you remember Carlton Nellis. He was very active in community service. During the 1970 and 80’s he wrote articles for the Gloversville newspaper. Many people clipped these articles out and put them in scrapbooks. This is one of his articles where he was reminiscing about Christmases in Northville.

One of the first holiday activities was to cut a Christmas tree. Northville, being surrounded by a forest of potential Christmas trees, finding one was no problem. The task was to find the most suitable one from the innumerable thousands of evergreens available.

One of the most popular was the balsam, because it would fill the home with its fragrance. The possibility of buying an artificial tree was unheard of. It would have been like “carrying coals to New Castle”.

Just about every home had a tree; either free for the cutting, or at the cost of having someone deliver one. The churches each had a least one, or probably more.

With the inexhaustible supply of all sizes available, one of appropriate size would be chosen. Often, when the conifer was taken into the house, it was discovered to be larger than it appeared in the forest. This necessitated cutting off a section of the tree at the base. The boughs of this cut-off were used to cover the unsightly wooden box, which was the support for the tree. This box was usually filled with coal, for ballast.

The tree ornaments were brought out of storage, and were inventoried. Perhaps a few would be repaired. Most likely, the collection would be increased by the purchase of a few.

It being before the era of electric lights; candles would sometimes be used to light the tree. These would be set in candle-stick holders. This was seldom done, because of the danger of igniting the tree.

Another early activity, in preparing for the holidays, was stringing popcorn for the evergreen’s decoration. In preparing for this chore, much more popcorn was prepared that was needed for the stringing. The workers at the tree trimming bee would probably eat the surplus. “Snitched” corn, even without salt or butter, tasted pretty good. (continued on page 2)
Northville Christmases continued

By New Year’s Day, after the apex of the Christmas spirit had passed, the family, especially the parents, would have decided that the tree was drying out, and was becoming a fire hazard. With much less glamour that was evident when the tree was being decorated; it was stripped of its finery.

In those days, it was not set out “naked”, to be collected with the refuse, to be taken to the “Christmas Tree Cemetery”. Rather, it was cut into sections and “cremated” in the home heating plant.

The wooden box, which had supported the tree, was packed away empty. Being dirty with coal dust, it was not used to pack ornaments in. They were carefully packed away in cleaner boxes.

CVN

These F J & G R R hats were recently purchased by Art Simmons at a garage sale.

What a nice find this was. Thanks for letting me take some pictures of them.

Below is a picture of an F J & G Conductor and Motorman at the Gloversville station, with hats like or similar to the one on the left.

Train Conductor and Motorman standing beside an F. J. & G. train in Gloversville
When you are walking or driving down South First Street you may realize something is missing. This house was demolished this month to make way for a parking lot. It was located behind a real estate office which as some will remember, was formerly Sweet’s Shoe Store.

Most of us probably remember this as the Blower’s family home. The parents; Gordon and Bessie and their children, Bessie, Marilyn, Gordon Jr., and Hiram.

According to an article written by Carlton Nellis, the house was originally owned by John Brownell. Mr. Brownell owned a bottling works. He was in business with his brother Lewis. John later bought his brother out. (See NNHS August 2014 newsletter for more detail about the Brownell brother’s bottling business).

Besides this gas station which is missing what else do you notice is no longer on the corner of Main and Bridge Streets? If you haven’t already noticed, it’s the water fountain and the telephone booth.

The telephone booth was so handy for kids to call home asking Mom or Dad to come and get them. As I remember (illegal as it probably was), kids could dial the number, it would ring and when the person answered the telephone, the operator would ask for your dime. What the kids would do was shout into the phone, “come and get me” and hang up without paying their dime. The party (mom or dad) would hear that and get the message.

How many stories could be told concerning this telephone booth? What do you remember?

How did that era live without cell phones and smart phones???? But they did!! Here is that phone booth today. Thankfully it wasn’t trashed. It now resides at the William Coffey Studio on Third Street. He has placed a Christmas tree inside the booth for the holidays.
I wonder why just boys were warned? My mother told me that she was riding her bike on the sidewalk when she was a teen and was told by the constable to get off the sidewalk. She said the road was muddy and had ruts, so it was easier to ride on the sidewalk. She was about 9 years old when this article was written.

Ever wonder when the Serfis Glove company started business in Northville? Remember they set up a glove shop in the old Union Free School house where the municipal building is located now.