

## **FLOYDE GALLAGHER: ONE MAN'S INFLUENCE MADE A DIFFERENCE**

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Certain people in our lives, whether we even realize it or not, influence our destiny. One such person in the Allen family's life was Floydde Gallagher.

I first met Floydde in 1958, my first year in Old Forge. He was a popular figure with my supervisor, Merrill Dewan, who came to know Floydde as a member of our fire warden roster. He proved to be as popular with me.

Floydde started work at the Adirondack League Club in the Honnedaga area as a teamster in 1927. Two years later he and his wife, Anita, became managers at Bisby Lodge. Bisby was a popular place for my family to visit and we soon became friends with the Gallaghers. It was our friendship and admiration for them that led to our eventual decision to replace them when they retired in 1970.

A resourceful man, Floydde of course experienced many transitions from 1927 to 1970 and proved to be equal to all of them. I was ill prepared to carry on much of his work when we first went to Bisby. Most of my training for the job came from him the first month when we shared the job. I never missed an opportunity to pick his brain on his many visits following his retirement.

He was rugged man of tremendous strength. A good man to have on your side in a barroom brawl, except he would never have been found in one. A strict teetotaler, he never had a drink in his life.

A crew from New York City was installing a sewage system at Bisby and Floydde demonstrated to one young twerp just how strong he was. The sections of pipe they were installing were made of cast iron and very heavy. The young guy would hoist a section of pipe over his head with both hands, with a smug look that implied it would be hard for anyone else to duplicate the feat. Floydde strolled by one morning, nonchalantly reached down with one hand, picked up a piece of pipe and balanced it over his head.

The Gallaghers loved children but were unable to have any of their own. They were fortunate, however, to have many of the members' children with whom to share their affection. I recall him being very upset with an incident he witnessed in a Utica

shopping mall parking lot. A man was dealing rather harshly with one of his children until Floyd asked him to desist or he would “break his jaw.”

Both instances are not at all typical of his demeanor or character. He was always a gentleman and looked the part. Well dressed and with a good sense of humor, Floyd was well-received wherever he went.

It would be impossible to do justice to the man with an article of this nature. My reason for mentioning him was more to illustrate the effect one person can have on another in general.

Whether or not my admiration for him caused me to make the right decision remains to be seen. The jury is still out on that, but my regard for him will never change.