



THE SKANEATELES HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Sally Holben, Editor

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MAY 25 MEETING: DICK LONG AND THE SKANEATELES SCRAPBOOK

At 7:30 on Tuesday, May 25, at the Creamery, Dick Long will describe how his 11-part tv show, Skaneateles Scrapbook, came into being and became an award-winning program.

For many recent years a columnist for the Skaneateles Press, Long will touch on such subjects as the old steamboats, the railroad that used to run from Skaneateles to the Junction, the Allyn Family, and Roosevelt Hall. He will illustrate his talk with archival pictures from the Society, many of them used in the Scrapbook.

Bob Eggleston, former president of the Society, said of the Scrapbook, "It was an exciting venture for all of us and I believe Skaneateles is one of the few American communities to have its history told in a television series." Village Historian Pat Blackler submitted the Scrapbook to a New York State Historical Society competition, where it took first place in the media category "for depicting its community in an excellent way through television."

Please come to hear and see Dick Long's presentation. Whether or not you are familiar with the series, you're sure to find the program fascinating.

JUNE 22 MEETING: A LOOK BACK AND A LOOK FORWARD

During the last program until the fall, we will hold elections (see article on page 2), hear year-end reports, and be given a sneak preview of the upcoming Garden Club/Historical Society Tour. Come to vote, to relax, and to enjoy each others' company. The meeting will begin at 7:30, as usual.

The purpose of the Skaneateles Historical Society is to conduct and encourage historical research and to collect, preserve, and exhibit historical material in connection with the Town of Skaneateles.

SLATE FOR JUNE ELECTIONS

Betsy Foote and Barb Patrick, our Nominating Committee, present the following slate of officers and board members for the election to be held at the June meeting:

Vice-President David Bates

Corresponding Secretary Sharon Osika Michales

Recording Secretary Mona Smalley

Treasurer Joan Thomsen

Board Member Sue Spalding

Nominations may be made from the floor at either the May or June meeting. Please be sure to come on June 22 and cast your vote.

CAP ASSESSORS VISIT Laurie Winship, Creamery Director

On May 5 and 6, two assessors from the federal Heritage Preservation's Conservation Assessment Program came to the Creamery and reviewed the buildings and the collections of the Society. They were impressed and said that we are way ahead of most museums of our size. One assessor focused on the collections; the other, the buildings. They will issue a final report by the end of August that will include recommendations and ways to prepare for the future, including information about grants we would be eligible for to help meet these recommendations.

COME TO "A SUMMER PLACE"

As we told you in the previous newsletter, the Skaneateles Garden Club and the Historical Society are joining forces to present a house tour and standard flower show. On Friday, June 25, and Saturday, June 26, there will be judged artistic flower arrangements in 6 homes on Genesee and Academy Streets; judged horticultural exhibits at St. James Church; and judged educational exhibits, raffles, and refreshments at First Presbyterian Church.

Through June 11, you can order your ticket for \$20 by sending a check made payable to the Skaneateles Garden Club, PO Box 96, Skaneateles, NY 13152; then you can pick up your ticket at St. James on the day of the tour. Or you can buy your ticket for \$25 at St. James on the day of the tour. The proceeds from the tour will benefit Skaneateles community projects.

Following a snowy Mother's Day, we are getting ready to start work on the creek bank stabilization behind the old Boiler Plant that we discussed in the March/April 2010 newsletter. The work was awarded to Brillo Excavating and Waste Disposal. We have notified NYS Department of Environmental Conservation that the anticipated starting date is May 17, 2010. The dry month of April has resulted in a low flow of water in Skaneateles Creek, which will help facilitate the work on the creek bank.

Once that work is finished, installation of the air conditioning system for the new buildings can be completed. The outdoor compressor unit will be located just adjacent to the stabilized creek bank.

Work has been contracted to fabricate and install the steel mezzanine along the north wall of the old Boiler Plant. The work was awarded to Leo's Body Shop. The mezzanine will be four feet wide and will be suspended from the roof structure. It will be accessed from the second floor of the south section of the Connecting Wing. The mezzanine will enhance viewing of the boats that will be displayed in the Boiler Plant. These projects will just about deplete funds currently in hand. For the last couple of months, the Steering Committee has been working on the final report and documentation to release the \$75,000 reimbursement grant sponsored back in 2008 by Senator John DeFrancisco and funded through the New York State Capital Assistance Program. The Empire State Development Corporation is administering the grant, which will reimburse us for work completed on the Archival Wing and related Creamery improvements. We are hopeful we'll have the funds by the end of June 2010, so we can complete all remaining interior work within the Boiler Plant and the Connecting Wing.

Fundraising work will be ongoing to reach our total goals and to enable us to complete paving and landscaping work and a planned lean-to south of the Boiler Plant.

Ed. note: A huge thank you to the Steering Committee for all its work to date and a special thanks to Bent Thomsen for his herculean efforts in pursuing the DeFrancisco grant.

FROM THE GOOD OLD DAYS OF 1913

An ad in the Skaneateles Press: "Why buy old houses to repair when a brand-new house with all modern conveniences can be purchased for \$3500 on easy terms of Payment? Inspection invited."

OUR VILLAGE

The following is excerpted from an essay written by Marian Stuart (1897-1995) in 1917 when she was a freshman in college. She had graduated from Skaneateles High School in 1916 and she later married Kenneth Holben, also a Skaneateles native and a member of the class of 1916. They spent most of their married life in Baltimore, returning in the summers to visit families. In the 1960's they returned to live in Skaneateles year round.

Only yesterday a friend said to me, "I adore Skaneateles." As she is not a superlative person who adores everything, she made me wonder about my little home village. Excitingly pleasurable things could never be associated with the place, so it must have been the spirit of it which she loved.

Skaneateles is one of those conservative, aristocratic little towns, plentiful in the East. Altho it never openly boasts and would not think of advertising, it has the smug consciousness that in worthwhile matters, it has the best of everything.

It seems to me like one of its own middle-aged ladies of comfortable fortune and culture, who is superior to those around her. She gradually, with no conscious conceit but entire satisfaction, comes to feel that she is second to no one in the land. Young people never seem to belong. They are just

visitors between college terms. The real inhabitants are those who have lived there long enough for their eccentricities to develop and crystallize.

The hills, the long tree-lined streets, the mansions of the "summer people," the comfortable farm houses with grain fields stretching to the lake, the long narrow ribbon of intense blue, itself, each has a place in the consciousness of the village that it has an assured position....

The block of commonplace stores has crates and boxes dumped behind them. From the lake, however, the matter-of-fact places of business are glorified. The sun spreads a golden haze over the warm red and buff brick and the fire walls rise up to give a touch of the old world. From experience I know that this mellow splash of color at the end of the water sends a little thrill thru you. The village recounts with pride that these stores look like the little German villages of the Rhine. The village is perfectly neutral. If it delights to be compared to an old German Städtchen (little village; the Skaneateles High School had a strong German department), it is equally glad to boast of a typical English church. The little Gothic church of gray stone is back only a trifle from the broad maple-bordered street. Its lawn slopes back to the lake where the shore line is softened by feathery willows. The slender spire reaches up from the trees to call men to worship.

Such are the charms of our village. Perhaps not the inner ones, for it would take years to appreciate the traits of the people. Yet while thinking of the little town of lake and hills, I have grown almost sentimental. I believe I "adore" it myself.

GATEWAY SIGNS Beth Batlle, Town Historian

Skaneateles village has a special greeting for all those entering and leaving the village limits. This greeting is in the form of bronze signs that read "Skaneateles, Eastern Gateway to the Finger Lakes." They are mounted on ornamental posts with ornamental lights on either side so they can be readily seen at night.

These signs, erected in 1931, can be seen today on East and West Genesee Streets and Onondaga Street. There was also a pair on Jordan Street at the corporation line, but they are no longer there due to the ravages of time and a runaway automobile.

According to village records, these signs were presented to the village as a gift to the Municipal Board, headed at the time by George Tucker. Mr. Tucker stated in his annual report for 1931 that the signs were paid for from surplus earnings from the prospering Electric Department.

The large bronze plates were designed by artist Gaylord Wiard. Mr. Wiard was a native of Batavia and a graduate of Syracuse University. In 1925 he married Margaret Tucker, George Tucker's daughter, and settled down in Skaneateles. Mrs. Wiard was also an artist, an illustrator of children's books and a portrait painter.

The December 3, 1931, issue of the Skaneateles Press said of the signs, "These ornamental tablets are a first class feature and in keeping with the proud position of Skaneateles among the villages in the area."

HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP DUES RENEWAL SLIP

Please make check payable to the Skaneateles Historical Society, c/o David Bates,
5623 Mack Road, Skaneateles, NY 13152-9511, and THANK YOU!

----- (Clip and return) -----

NAMES /
ADDRESS _____

e-mail address _____ (optional)

Members \$ _____
Small Jobs' Fund \$ _____ TOTAL \$ _____

(The "Small Jobs Fund" helps pay for items our volunteers cannot do.)

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

Individual	\$15.00	"Sponsor"	\$250.00
"Friend"	\$50.00	"Benefactor"	\$500.00
"Patron"	\$100.00	"Life"	\$1,000.00

(Membership carries a 10% discount at The Gift Shop)