

# THE SKANEATELES HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Mar-Apr 2015

Vol. 30, No. 2

Laurie Winship, Editor



## MARCH PROGRAM

### School Fire

Where were you on March 21, 1952? Some of you may have witnessed the horror that visited Skaneateles that day--the burning of the Skaneateles High School Building and its total destruction.

Charlie Major was one who has vivid recollections of that tragic day and the challenges that were met to continue the education process here. He was in his senior year and just months away from graduating when the fire broke out. Charlie will be presenting a talk with many actual pictures of the event and the rebuilding of the school at our meeting on Tuesday, March 24th at 7:30 p.m., as well as telling his own interesting stories. Come as we revisit that historic day, and if you have stories to recall and would like to share them, feel free to bring them along. See you then!

The quilt shown to the right was created for the 45th reunion of the Class of 1952. Each square was signed by a member of the class. Joan Lockwood Covert, Margaret Alden Fisher, Nancy Bales, and Rose Burdick were responsible for creating it.

**SECOND REMINDER--ANNUAL  
MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS ARE DUE!**

**SEE PAGE SEVEN**



**CREAMERY HOURS, MARCH-APRIL**

Fridays, 1-4 p.m.

Or by appointment

**New Web Site!**

Our newly designed web site is up and running. We're still learning how to update it, but we're getting there. Our thanks to Nicole Kelly, of Nicole Kelly Designs, who took all of our ideas and developed this wonderful site.

[skaneateleshistoricalsociety.org](http://skaneateleshistoricalsociety.org)

**APRIL PROGRAM****A History of Stella Maris**

Stella Maris began life in 1879 as Roseleigh, a private estate that was a summer residence first for Frederick and Mary Roosevelt, and then for Mr. & Mrs. Burns Lyman Smith. Roseleigh had 10 bedrooms, 4 baths, a billiard parlor, den, dining room and living room, with a fireplace in every room. It included a stable, a boat house and a generous expanse of shoreline. It is the only building in Skaneateles with a proven claim to touches by Stanford White. In 1952, it passed to the Sisters of St. Francis. Now, as it approaches a new chapter in its history, Kihm Winship will take a look back at the house itself and those who have called it home, as well as its creators and notable visitors.

Please join us on Tuesday, April 28 at 7:30 p.m. at the Museum at The Creamery, and perhaps by then we'll have heard who has bought it and what their plans are for this unique property.



Photo of Roseleigh, circa 1907?



Back of Roseleigh, 1907

**AMAZON SMILE PROGRAM**

Do you shop at Amazon? If so, they have started a new program that donates a percentage of all eligible sales to a charity of your choice. The Skaneateles Historical Society is now participating, so all you have to do is go to:

<http://smile.amazon.com/ch/23-7339639>

and shop as usual. No cost to you, a benefit to us--what a great deal! Give it a try!

The Skaneateles Historical Society 28 Hannum St. Skaneateles, NY 13152 315-685-1360

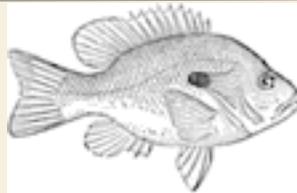
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An unexpected look at prisoners in the Auburn State Prison, from the *Auburn Advertiser*, 13 January 1862. Thanks to Beth Batle, Town Historian, for sharing this.

### **Difference in Convicts**

Forty-nine convicts arrived at the State Prison in this city yesterday from Sing Sing. The convicts were distributed among the various shops, the shoe shop secured the principal portion. The Eastern convicts do not compare favorably with our Western rogues. They have that low cunning, fox look, as if they could stealthily pick a lock, or expertly empty a pocket, or run cold steel through the back of unsuspecting victims, or creep into halls and run away with hats and shawls. They are of the low forehead, unsteady eyed villains, quite unlike the bold, dashing Buffalo or Rochester thief. If any of those fellows escape it will be by burroughing under the walls or sneaking through a ditch; while the western rogue will mount the highest wall and delights in running the chances of breaking his neck while running away. We are rather pleased than otherwise at the fine appearance of our rascals when compared with those crack villains from the East. Ours have got a bold, stand up look about them quite refreshing; they would make excellent Confederate Brigadier Generals, while these foreign thieves are hardly up to the standard of Federal army contractors. The change of climate and the advantages of association will, undoubtedly, develop some latent spark of decent rascality among the imported stock.



And closer to home, this excerpt from an article by L.F. Brown in 1905 describes his experiences fishing in Skaneateles Lake. Thanks to Kihm Winship for this tidbit.

“Only Keuka furnishes better fishing than Otisco, and none have lovelier scenery than Skaneateles. We reached its east shore after a drive of eight miles during a thunder-storm, and were picked up by one of the two or three comical steamers that ply that water during the summer. This boat landed us at Glenhaven, on the south end of the lake; but we saw nothing but driving rain, darkness, and angry water.

At Skaneateles one needs a guide for a day or two, to help locate the best ground for trolling and still-fishing. There are more perch here, a very few rock and black bass, pike and pickerel, and many sunfish and bullheads. We rowed the length of the lake, and then fished a whole day off the end of the dock, each convulsed to see the other anxious to get one more little sunfish or perch. Then we sailed and trolled, getting several fine pickerel; but it was long between hooking them, and the sport was abandoned for bullheading at night. ...

We caught bass. No matter how many. But let the angler who wants a good time at night with black bass ask C.M. Goodspeed at Edgewater to hand one of his men a dollar and tell him to show where the bass may be taken.”

The “C.G. Goodspeed” he mentions had a camp at Five Mile Point, and loved to fish. He was best known as a ginseng tycoon. He built a number of houses on East Genesee Street and Goodspeed Place, once his garden, is named for him.

## New Vice-President for the Historical Society

by Julie DiBagio and Bill Stinson



Bill Stinson was voted vice president of the Skaneateles Historical Society board on January 13th of this year. The Stinson name is a familiar one in the Skaneateles area. Bill's great grandfather, John Patrick Stinson, settled in Skaneateles from Ireland in 1848. His grandfather, William Sr., was born and raised in Skaneateles and remained here for most of his life. Bill's father, William Jr., started the Stinson boat line in 1939 and the business remained in the Stinson family until 1968.

Bill (William III) was born in Oak Ridge, Tennessee and was the only boy in the family of nine children. "Growing up with eight sisters made life interesting". Bill was raised in Pittsford, New York. He worked at the

Skaneateles Country Club in 1965 while earning an AAS Degree in Turf Management from the University of Massachusetts. In 1983 he earned a BA degree in Business Administration from Otterbein College. Bill and Janet, his wife, moved to Niles in 1996. They were married in 1968 and have three sons and six "wonderful" grand children (five boys and one girl). Bill was a member of the Historical Society Steering Committee for several years before joining the board.

Bill has been very involved in the promotion of alternate (green) choices in energy delivery to combat global warming. He hopes to be able to help "preserve the green community" we have in Skaneateles area for future generations to enjoy, keeping it as attractive as John Patrick Stinson found it in 1848. Very much like Ireland itself.

We're still working on the email version of the newsletter, so please be patient. It will always be mailed in paper format for those of you who prefer that option.



## Recent Acquisitions

*The History of the Skaneateles Sea Wall*, by Beth Battle

Scrapbooks compiled by Julia Elster Foote, 1930s and 1940s

Albin Family Genealogy

*Just Passin' Through*--autobiography of Gordon Betts Rose



## We're now on Facebook!

We're slowly entering the world of social media by setting up a Facebook page. Please friend us and check for updates. We plan on gradually posting photos, reminders of programs, etc. Let us know what you'd like to see on our page! It's under Skaneateles Historical Society.

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MUSEUM DIRECTOR: Laurie Winship

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**YOUR ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FOR 2015 IS NOW DUE!**

Our Jan/Feb newsletter announced the S.H.S. membership renewal time. Many have already done so, and we thank you!

Please, if you haven't already, look at the DATE on your address label. If it reads 2013 or 2014, ***your membership is due for renewal.***

To renew, use the form printed below, and return it to me with your payment. Please be sure to include the "Office Use Only" box, and your email address if applicable (Note: We never share email addresses with anyone.)

Thank you.

David Bates  
Membership Chair  
[davebates3@gmail.com](mailto:davebates3@gmail.com)  
(315) 497-3446

Make check payable to The Skaneateles Historical Society and mail to David Bates, 5623 Mack Road, Skaneateles, NY 13152.

-----Clip & return-----

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We can't wait to enjoy these again!

