Message to the Membership
By David Bates, President

I was recently asked how my involvement with the Skaneateles Historical Society began. My wife and I moved into our Town of Niles home in late 1999, and my retirement followed a year later. While she was attending seminary at CRCDS in Rochester, I frequently explored our new hometown. On one such jaunt I ventured into the Creamery Museum where I was greeted by docent Pat Blackler. That first impromptu visit was the beginning of a journey into a whole new arena for me. One that ignited an unexpected interest in volunteering. After hearing I had taken college courses at RIT’s School of Printing, Mrs. Blackler asked me to co-create the Newspapers of Skaneateles exhibit. Shortly afterwards I joined the Building Maintenance Committee. Then in 2004 I took over the SHS membership campaigns and database updates. In 2011 then President Karlene Miller asked me to take the position of VP of the Board of Directors (that role also was responsible for all programming). I agreed, and the following year became President. I have worn many hats over many years…what better way to hold my historic interests?

A special thanks to David Bates as he passes on the baton of President of the Board of Directors after 6+ years at the helm. His commitment, dedication, passion and vision for the SHS have been deeply appreciated.

Skaneateles Lake

For those of us lucky enough to call this beautiful area our home, it is good from time to time to pause and reflect on all the things we find meaningful about living here. At the Skaneateles Historical Society, that includes the time, commitment and dedication of our volunteers, and the support of our members.
From the Director’s Office:

I have discovered during my four months here that the Creamery Museum is regularly humming with activity! Especially on Tuesdays, which have become the designated “volunteer day”. Recently, Laurie, Karen, Sally and Sue were hard at work updating the Subject Files in the Archives, and adding newly donated collections pieces to the database. Ted, Jorge and Beth were researching recent requests for information. Barb was working on Gift Shop inventory, while Tessi was filing office paperwork. Patti was assisting with updates to the website and Peter was organizing the attic storage area. Julie and Colleen were meeting with Shannon to plan the next Program Night presentation. Scott was assisting with updating the exhibits. David B, Dave M. and Doug were on vacation, but were emailing the office providing input on upcoming programs and strategic planning. This all happened over a two day period!

These wonderful people, along with 30+ other volunteers, regularly donate their time, talents, interests and enthusiasm to keeping the SHS running smoothly. The adage “it takes a Village” aptly applies, as the SHS strives to meet its mission “…to conduct and encourage historical research and to collect, preserve, and exhibit historical material connected to the Town of Skaneateles.” New volunteers are always needed and welcomed. Please consider joining the ranks of those working so hard to maintain, promote and update this community treasure. Stop in, especially on a Tuesday afternoon, and we’ll find the right assignment for you!

Warm Regards, Geralyn Huba
May Program Night

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SKANEATELES AMERICAN LEGION

On May 27th this year, you will have the opportunity to watch the annual Skaneateles Memorial Day parade, as our military veterans proudly march through the village to commemorate the service of our veterans who are no longer with us. The following evening, on May 28th, the Creamery Museum’s monthly program will be on the history of our local American Legion Post #239. This year marks the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Post, which is named after Robert J. Hydon, the first local veteran to die in World War I. From its first meeting at the Skaneateles Yacht Club in August of 1919, with 44 members in attendance, to its current home on Jordan Road, the legion has evolved to the vibrant organization that it is today. The presentation on May 28th will trace the growth of the Legion locally from that first meeting with those 44 members to its current status: we now have over 300 members including veterans, sons of veterans and the Women’s Auxiliary. We hope you will join us for the presentation, as we mark and celebrate the 100th anniversary of the American Legion in Skaneateles.

Dan Bangs, American Legion Post #239 Historian

Be sure to mark your calendar for **TUESDAY, MAY 28th at 7:30 PM** and join us for an inspiring evening. Our monthly Program Nights are free, and light refreshments will be provided after a Q & A session.
SHS Board Member David Miller will be the presenter on this special evening, which will be held at the Borodino Town Hall, on Rt. 41. Board Members of the Spafford and Glen Haven Historical Societies will be co-hosting the event with the SHS Board.

Steamboats appeared on Skaneateles Lake in the 1830’s and they were used for public transportation, mail delivery and freight hauling. The early steamers were “side-wheelers” which were not too stable and were not very successful. Later versions were propeller driven and were quite successful as passenger traffic increased, especially after the Glen Haven Sanatarium was established at the head of the Lake.

The “Steamboats on The Lake” program will trace the history of these magnificent vessels and the major part they played in the development of our community and the commercial activity that sustained it. We are delighted to present an interesting, informative and entertaining evening to a combined membership of the three Historical Societies and the general public.

We hope you will join us on Tuesday, June 25th at 7:00 p.m. at the Borodino Town Hall, on Rt. 41 in Borodino for this very special program and evening. The Hall is handicapped accessible. There is ample parking on site and across the street. Admission is free. Light refreshments will be served.
MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Sunday, May 12th is Mother’s Day & Sunday, June 16th is Father’s Day: consider purchasing a brick paver or Green Date House Plaque to honor those special people in your life. Details can be found on our website, or by calling the museum at 315-685-1360 for more information.

Saturday, May 18th, 9:00 a.m. - Noon: “If it grows in your neighbors garden, it will grow in yours!”, the Skaneateles Historical Society PLANT SALE in front of the Creamery building at 28 Hannum Street. As part of the sale a unique raffle opportunity was created. “A Garden In A Box” features gift certificates, books, gardening gloves, tools, and seeds. Tickets are $2 each or 3 for $5 and are available in the Gift Shop at the Creamery. The drawing will be at noon on the 18th.

Wednesday, June 5th, 9:00 - 10:00 a.m.: As a member of the Skaneateles Board of Education, Museum Director Geralyn Huba will be hosting a meet and greet gathering for new Superintendent Ms. Lynda Quick. From 9:00 - 10:00 a.m., in the meeting room of the Creamery. Please join us to hear about Ms. Quick’s experiences in the 8+ months she has been at the helm of the District, what her vision is for the future, and possible collaborations with the SHS and in the community. Light refreshments will be served.

May & June are Graduation months. Our gift shop has the most unique and varied collection of Skaneateles items for sale in the area. Visit during our open hours of Friday and Saturdays from 1:00 - 4:00, check out our website under the Gift Shop link, or call for more information to find that perfect gift!
Creamery Museum
Spring Garden Sale!

Perennials, Annuals and Shrubs
*Plus a Garden In A Box Raffle*

Saturday May 18, 9am-12pm

Join us for a fun event; under the porte-cochere at the Creamery. All proceeds support the SHS @ the Creamery’s creekside planting program. All of the potted plants are donated from local residents’ gardens. There will also be “gently used” gardening tools, pots and other formerly owned outdoor miscellany. Helpers with wheelbarrows will bring your new treasures to your cars if parking is limited on Hannum Street. NO EARLY BIRDS PLEASE!
Many people who stop by the Creamery to attend a meeting, tour the exhibit hall to view artifacts entrusted to the Society, admire the beautiful boat displays, or purchase unique items in the Gift shop have little knowledge that the Historical Society has a resourceful and voluminous Archives & Research department. Visitors and SHS members alike may peruse surprising amounts of data pertaining to Skaneateles history. Main subjects can be explored, such as family roots, and houses. Aside from these frequently-used files are many less commonly used ones, such as Skaneateles Lake, industry and business, farms, and hamlets.

Four rooms are included in the Archives & Research wing, filled with 16 filing cabinets and several book shelves. Books, files, reports, and notebooks holding alphabetically-arranged birth, marriage, and death announcements, and Skaneateles census records alphabetized by surname for every decade from 1830 through 1940 are stored there. Skaneateles newspapers, 1835 to the present, are preserved in acid-free boxes. Photos, maps, diaries, church records, and scrapbooks are archived, and three computers, a digitized newspaper reader, a photocopy machine, and a microfilm reader-printer are available for use.
As important as the data that fills the files and shelves, are the experienced volunteers who assist those who visit. A plaque dated October 27, 2009, dedicates the department in honor of Jim Dougherty and Ted Prindle. Ted remembers beginning to research his Morton family at the Society about 1988. A few years later, Jim began researching his Dougherty and McLaughlin families. He and Ted had the ability to see the benefit in collecting and arranging Skaneateles history and making the data gleaned from multiple sources available to researchers. Jim is greatly missed since his October 2017 death; Ted continues to volunteer in Archives & Research almost every Friday and Saturday afternoons, year-round.

Five others assist researchers on specified Friday afternoons of each month. Barbara Spain on the 1st Friday, Beth Battle on the 2nd, Sally Holben on the 3rd, Judy Bragg on the 4th and Barbara Patrick on the 5th. Ted, Sally, Beth and Barbara all began researching and volunteering helping visitors to the Society when it was located on the 2nd floor of Skaneateles Town Hall, several years before the Creamery’s renovation and opening as the Historical Society in 1993.

Sally has helped at the Society in many ways, including as secretary, president, board member, docent, and research assistant “for at least 20 years” she said. Barbara Spain has served in a variety of ways, including as research assistant, secretary, president, and creator of the Society’s newsletter, and then continued writing it for its first 14 years. Judy Bragg, the most recent research volunteer, came to the department with amazing abilities. The first task she undertook was designing the form and entering data onto it, of a Skaneateles church’s membership records. When assistance is needed with visitors, she jumps in to help. Barbara Patrick is the Gift Shop Manager, but also assists. She started because “she wanted to learn more about Skaneateles history herself…and there was no better place to do it.” Beth Battle also takes her turn helping researchers on a Friday each month in the department. As Town Historian, along with her husband Jorge Battle as the Village Historian, they both value having the use of the Society’s Archives, as they assist people from around the globe with their inquiries that come in person, through email and letters.

Visitors directed to the Historical Society’s Archives & Research Department find it hard to believe the vast array of remarkable resources and assistance that is available to them. They are likely to leave very grateful, exclaiming “I couldn’t have done it without you!” Of course Ted, Sally, both Barbaras, Beth and Judy love to hear those comments, which make their volunteerism all worthwhile.

by Barbara L. Spain

Researchers are available every Friday from 1 - 4 PM

The Society, through the efforts of many dedicated volunteers, has created and collected extensive archives for historical and genealogical research; it’s an amazing resource which serves the community and visitors alike.

Our researchers, who include our Town & Village Historian along with other experienced volunteers, help a variety of visitors just like you! Members and non-members come in to research the history of their homes, their families, or other subjects of interest. Some are working on a personal project and many are completing projects for their work life. Plan a visit to our research room and start on your own path to your history!

Interested in some research but can’t make it into the museum?
Email our Historians at: bquest4@verizon.net
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THE CREAMERY
Your Community Museum