

THE SKANEATELES HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Sally Holben, Editor Vol.24, No.5 November/December 2009

SPECIAL BOOK OFFER!

As many of you know, John Francis McCarthy, who spoke at our program meeting in October, is publishing a new book of photographs, The Finger Lakes: Glimpses of Paradise. This book will retail for \$49.95 and will be here before Thanksgiving. What a wonderful Christmas gift this would be!

As a special fundraiser for the Skaneateles Historical Society, John is selling some of his books to us at wholesale, so the Society will make a percentage on each sale. This is a wonderfully generous offer from John, and we're very excited and grateful.

And don't forget, members get a 10% discount on items bought at our Gift Shop, so your actual cost per book will be \$48.55, including tax.

These special books must be ordered before Thanksgiving, and John will be happy to sign them. Just make your check out to the Skaneateles Historical Society, indicate what name if any you'd like John to include, and he will deliver the books in early December to the Creamery where you can pick them up.

If you were planning on buying a copy or two of this extraordinary book anyway, for yourself or for gifts, please help the Historical Society by ordering through us in the next two weeks.

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.

NOVEMBER PROGRAM AT FROG POND

We hope this newsletter gets to you in time to remind you that this month's program will be at the Frog Pond B & B, on Sheldon Road. It is the site of the short-lived communal experiment in the mid-1800's. The program will begin at 2:00 pm.

CHRISTMAS AT THE CREAMERY

On Sunday, December 6, from 1 to 4, the Historical Society will host an Open House, with food and festive decorations. Members of the Dickens troupe will be there to sing and entertain and a visit will give you a chance to do some holiday shopping and to take a peek at the expansion to date. Everyone is welcome!

NEWS FROM THE GIFT SHOP

Just in time for the holidays, the Gift Shop has some new items that would make great presents. A desk-size calendar, featuring photos of historic Skaneateles, with description and commentary, would be perfect for everyone, including yourself. The ornament for 2009 features a sketch of the old(er) firehouse--the one at the corner of Fennell and Jordan. Many people have been collecting the series of ornaments; this is one not to be missed. Also, a handsome coffee mug (also works for tea and cocoa) would come in handy these cold days. And for the really special people in your family, past and present, we have brick pavers that will make up the walkway from the Hannum Street sidewalk to the new connector building. These pavers may be engraved to honor family members, friends, or a special occasion. They come in three sizes--4" x 8", 8" x 8", and 12" x 12"--and cost \$125, \$200, and \$500, respectively. Many pavers have already been bought and some of them can be seen at the Creamery. They will make a lasting tribute to whomever/whatever you choose to remember.

NEW OFFICERS

Vice-President Kathy Kane has recently moved to Cortland and, feeling she could not give the necessary time to the job, has resigned. Our thanks to Kathy for her years of fine work lining up interesting programs. We trust that she will continue to be an involved Society member, as time and weather allow. At our October general meeting, David Bates was elected to take over as Vice-President and Betsy Foote, who proved so helpful at the September fund-raiser, was elected to the Board to fill Dave's place. We welcome Betsy and Dave to their new positions and wish them well.

JORDAN STREET HORSE TROUGH

Some 40 years ago, Jim Buff rescued from a discard pile a horse trough that used to stand on the sidewalk on the east side of Jordan Street, about where Riddler's is now. He and Paul Trabold got the very heavy trough to the Buffs' home on East Lake Road. Fast-forward to this year when Jim was telling Beth Battle about it and the decision was made to bring the trough to the Creamery. Dave Miller, Board member, orchestrated the removal with the help of Don Trabold, Paul's son, and the surprised but gracious cooperation of Andy and Heather Buff, Jim's son and daughter-in-law, who now live on the property with the trough and have been using it as a planter. (Jim had neglected to tell them of the removal plan.)

Now the trough sits in front of the porte-cochere on Hannum Street, looking quite at home. The Skaneateles Garden Club asked for permission (gratefully granted) to decorate it with greens for the holidays. Be sure to come by and admire it.

Our thanks to all who were involved in this project: the Buffs, the Trabolds (we're sure Paul is still keeping track of what goes on down here), Dave Miller, Beth Battle, and the Garden Club. We would love to see any photos you may have of the trough when it stood on Jordan Street (it is dated 1901) and/or any memories you may have of it.

JIM DOUGHERTY AND TED PRINDLE HONORED Karlene Miller, President

The new archives room on the northeast corner of the Creamery was dedicated in honor of Jim Dougherty and Ted Prindle, on October 27, 2009. Jim and Ted have volunteered at the Historical Society for many years. They have compiled and organized indexes of births, marriages, and deaths that span more than 100 years of Skaneateles history. This work is an ongoing process, and we are all indebted to them for their help and enthusiasm.

UPDATE ON FUNERAL HOMES Laurie Winship, Creamery Director

We have been given additional information and have one new name to add to the list of funeral homes that was in the May/June newsletter: John Keebler.

Mr. Keebler bought the M.A. Meagher Funeral Service and Furniture Store in 1941. He operated it under his own name until 1959, when he sold it to Mr. and Mrs. Lin Babcock. The Babcocks ran the furniture store, located at 50 East Genesee Street, but did not continue the funeral service.

CIGAR MOLD Pat Blackler, Village Historian

Inspired by an article Beth Battle wrote in the Town Newsletter, "Smoke and Smokes," David Huxford decided to donate to the Historical Society an antique cigar mold that he has had at his home at 52 Fennell Street. Dave and his wife, Teddy, have lived in the house since 1958.

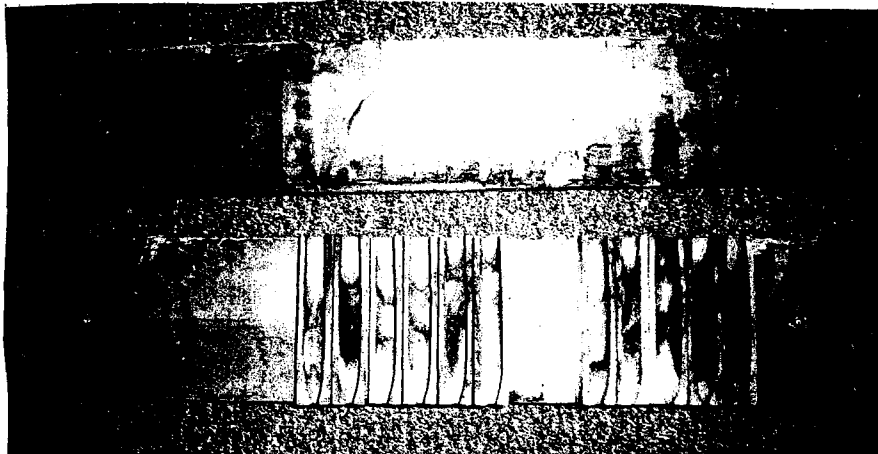
Cigars were made in Skaneateles from 1860 to 1910. William Hennessey was the most prominent cigar maker, but there were others. All that was needed for the "manufactories" of cigars were a few rooms with enough space for a long table and a few men, as well as a spare room to store leaf tobacco, empty boxes, and other supplies. Hand-rolled cigars were simply made: you needed a space to work in, a wooden board, cigar molds and a press to shape the tobacco (see photo), and a sharp knife to cut the final wrapper leaf. By the middle of the 1800's there was widespread growing of tobacco in Onondaga County.

Baldwinsville was the center for cigars; but small towns such as Skaneateles, Marcellus, and Weedsport had their own cigar factories.

Thurlow and Orrie Gage took over the cigar business from Mr. Hennessey in the early 1900's. Now, getting back to the house where the cigar mold was found. When cigarettes became more popular than cigars, the Skaneateles cigar businesses closed but a few men continued the cigar making from their homes. Thurlow Gage was one. He lived in the same house where the Huxfords live today, thus the cigar mold find in the attic (or somewhere else in the house).

The house at 52 Fennell has a wonderful history. It was constructed by Patrick Dougherty in 1876. Patrick's wife was named Elizabeth; it was for her that Elizabeth Street was named. The first owner of this house on the corner of Elizabeth and Fennell Streets was Martin Fennell, a well-known engineer on the Skaneateles Short Line Railroad, as well as the captain of one of the passenger steamboats. (See Mr. Fennell's history at the Creamery.) Fennell Street is named for Martin. Mr. and Mrs. Fennell had one daughter, Louise, who married Thurlow Gage, the cigar maker. The home then passed to Garrett "Panny" Stearns and his wife, Dorothy. Panny, a life-long resident of Skaneateles, was a semi-pro baseball player, a coach, a manager, and an all-round youth leader. The baseball fields at Austin Park are dedicated to him.

Through enjoyable conversations with the Huxfords, we have learned the history of the mold and the house. Some facts were from cigar research, but the best parts are the stories passed down through the years. Thank you, Dave and Teddy, for the cigar mold and the stories.



Nearly 300 people had a great time at our "Sailing through History" fundraising event held at the Skaneateles Country Club on September 25. Our thanks go out to all who helped make the event a success by volunteering, attending, or contributing. We are pleased to report that our Museum Expansion account grew by more than \$27,000.

With winter approaching, we are glad that our expansion is enclosed and secure. The archival addition is occupied and operational. During the winter months, work will take place in the interior of the restored Boiler Plant and in the new wing connecting that to the Creamery. We are currently obtaining quotes for insulation and wiring as well as for the metal mezzanine that will be constructed along the north wall of the Boiler Plant. Quotes for heating and air-conditioning installations are already in hand. After all quotes are in, we will develop our winter construction schedule. We are proceeding with work to open up the now-vacated archival area (the Cooler) that will become part of the space available to our many visitors conducting research at our museum.

To date, we have received about \$585,000 of our \$700,000 goal. This amount reflects deposits as well as pledges, including a \$75,000 grant we were awarded by New York State in 2008. We hope to receive that grant soon since that would more than double the funds we currently have available for winter construction. Additional fundraising events are in the planning stage, and we continue to pursue private and public grants. It would be great to be able to plan a grand opening towards the end of 2010.

NEW MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

As with nearly every not-for-profit organization today, struggling with general month-to-month expenses, the Skaneateles Historical Society Board of Directors has studied, proposed, and approved "multiple-level" memberships, beginning January 2010.

The six new levels are:

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| 1. "Individual" membership | \$15.00 |
| 2. "Friend of" " | \$50.00 |
| 3. "Patron" " | \$100.00 |
| 4. "Sponsor" " | \$250.00 |
| 5. "Benefactor" " | \$500.00 |
| 6. "Life" (one time) " | \$1,000.00 |

The current "Small Jobs Fund," in place for many years, will be retained, allowing for payment of small jobs or tasks our volunteers cannot do.

These memberships will be recognized, by category, at least once a year, via the newsletter or in our annual support publication.

Finally, as in the last couple of years, membership renewals will fall due the same time each year, i.e., each January.