



# THE SKANEATELES HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Sally Holben, Editor

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## JANUARY MEETING: GLEN HAVEN WATER CURE

Sheila Tucker, Cayuga County Historian, will give a power point presentation of the history of the Glen Haven Water Cure, on Tuesday, January 26 at the Creamery, at 7:30 pm.

Mrs. Tucker has restored tin-type photos of the original abolitionist founders as well as later operators of the water cure. Her presentation will cover not only those who operated the facility but what the "cure" entailed as well as the bloomer style of dress popularized at the Glen. The photo presentation will also show the last years of the facility when it was more or less a summer resort.

Mrs. Tucker, a former teacher of college history, says that she "is excited to have all of these original photos and many anecdotes related to the Glen Haven Water Cure as well as the abolitionist activities of the founders." All are welcome to what promises to be a fascinating presentation.

## FEBRUARY 23 MEETING

Plans for the February meeting are still being finalized, so keep your eyes peeled on the local papers for specific information. As usual, the meeting will begin at 7:30pm and everyone is invited.

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.

In the death of Ginnie Thorne, Skaneateles lost a very good friend and community advocate. Although not a Skaneateles native, (she grew up in Tonawanda), Ginnie was an active and long-time supporter of a number of local organizations, among them the Library, St. James Church, the Barrow Gallery, the Festival, the Leisure Hour Book Club, the Country Club, and the Historical Society. Whenever a member of one of these groups couldn't remember something, someone was bound to say, "Let's ask Ginnie. She'll know." And she usually did.

Although a Thorne by marriage not by birth (she and Waller Thorne were married in 1938) Ginnie took seriously the responsibilities of being custodian of that family's long and extensive role in Skaneateles's history.

Until the last few months of her life, she was ever alert and learning. When presented with a new idea or piece of information, her surprisingly deep-voiced "Oh?" was not an expression of scepticism but of curiosity and pleasure at finding out something new.

We will miss Ginnie very much, as both a delightful friend and a fellow historian.

#### MUSEUM EXPANSION UPDATE Bent Thomsen, Steering Committee

With all the snow on the ground and freezing temperatures, it is fortunate that we have a lot of inside work ahead of us. An initial layer of foam insulation has been applied to exterior walls and ceilings inside the boiler plant and the new connecting wing. State-of-the-art closed cell spray-on foam was used for this application. Beside having superior insulation value, this material also functions as a moisture- and air-barrier and provides us with a very energy-efficient building. A Skaneateles contractor, Andy Buff LLC, specializes in spray-on foam technology and submitted the winning bid.

Work will now proceed to install electrical wiring throughout the buildings to accommodate lighting, heating, air-conditioning and humidification. At the same time the boiler will be installed in the utility room so that we can activate the radiant floor heating system already in place. The insulation work will than be finalized through installation of conventional fiberglass insulation against the foam layer.

The next step will be the installation of the suspended metal mezzanine along the north wall of the boiler plant. Quotes for that work are in and being evaluated. After the mezzanine is in place, work can proceed to totally finish the boiler plant, and we will be ready to receive the boats that will be displayed there. We are finalizing the details of the boat exhibits.

Concurrent with the work in the new buildings, we will complete some of the renovations in the existing Creamery, and we will again be looking for volunteers to help with the finishing paintwork. Please call if you have the time to help us out. Of course, fundraising efforts are still underway and we are making steady, although slow progress. The big question remains, when (and we are beginning to wonder if) we will receive the \$75,000 grant awarded by NYS back in 2008.

## WHAT SEWARD REALLY SAID

In the May/June 2005 newsletter, we mentioned that "everyone knows" that William Seward said that Skaneateles Lake is "the most beautiful body of water in the world," but that no one, not even the folks at Seward House, seems to know where he said it.

Cyberspacer Kihm Winship took up the challenge to track down the quotation. What follows is what he discovered.

Actually, he probably never said that. The quote is most likely a paraphrase of the opening lines of a speech he made on May 6, 1870. Soon after returning from an around-the-world tour, he received a delegation of visitors from Skaneateles in his Auburn home. His full remarks were reported in the New York Times the following day, headlined "Mr. Seward on Lakes: Influence of Lakes on Loyalty, Patriotism, Philanthropy and Religion--Speech of the Statesman to a Visiting Committee." It began

Gentleman, Your own Skaneateles was the first lake I ever saw. I have since seen many others in North America, and some elsewhere. Nevertheless, I still think your little lake, with the smiling village of Skaneateles reflected in its blue waters, is about the finest one I ever saw.

His written copy of the speech is archived at the University of Rochester Library, and differs only slightly from the version the Times reported:

Gentlemen, Your own Skaneateles was the first lake I ever saw. I have since seen many in North America, and indeed not a few elsewhere. Nevertheless, I still think that your little lake, with the smiling village of Skaneateles reflected in its blue waters, is about the finest one I know.

The sentiment is the same, but it is useful to see it in context, and exactly as Seward intended to say it.

My thanks to the Skaneateles Historical Society and the University of Rochester Library.

Kihm Winship, 2009

And our thanks to Kihm, for finding what Seward really said.

## JANUARY -- TIME TO RENEW MEMBERSHIPS

Please check your address label. If it says 2010 or later, your membership is up to date. If not, please see page 5 for membership levels and send us your check!

## MEMBERS' E-MAIL ADDRESSES

The Society is compiling a list of members' E-mail addresses, to help with conveying information, etc. Please add your E-mail address to the membership renewal form.

WHITEY WILSHIRE, OUR LOCAL BASEBALL HERO Pat Blackler, Village Historian

Vernon "Whitey" Wilshire graduated from Skaneateles High School in 1931. He was president of his class, but he is best known for his feats on the baseball field. He broke perfect records and long winning streaks. When in high school, he pitched four no-hit games and later, when playing for the Lakeshores in the Post Standard League, he led his team to four championships of the Central NY League. During the time he played for SHS he is credited with 44 wins and only one loss, that to the Colgate freshmen team in 1931. Out of 32 league games played by SHS between 1928 and 1931, Skaneateles did not lose one. The team won the Onondaga County Championship three years in a row.

Whitey graduated from the University of Indiana. While pitching for Indiana against Temple in 1934, he struck out 18 batters in a 9-inning game. Connie Mack of the Philadelphia Athletics saw the fine performance from the stands and signed the Skaneateles youth to pitch for his team. The papers called him "Wilshire, Prize Rookie."

In August 1935, Whitey hurt his arm after going in cold as a relief pitcher with bases loaded, but not before he struck out Gehrig, Selkirk, and Dickey of the Yankees. His arm never returned to normal but later he still spent time with the Yankees and the White Sox.

In 1939 he received a Masters degree from IU and taught and coached in Evansville. In WWII, 1942, Whitey was commissioned in the Navy and stationed in Iowa. He of course coached the Navy ball team at that base as well as at others. Lt. Commander Wilshire was discharged in December 1946. While in the Navy he married Betty Munden of Iowa; they had three children.

As a civilian again, Wilshire taught in Cooperstown for seventeen years. He retired there, the home of the Baseball Hall of Fame. He died on May 23, 1985, having been a resident of that village for 30 years. His daughter Diane still is a resident there. Now, Cooperstown calls him a native son. The next time you visit the "baseball" village, go to one of the restaurants or a souvenir shop and you can read all about him. But can't Skaneateles call him a native son, too?

#### HOUSE TOUR AND FLOWER SHOW PLANNED

The Historical Society and Garden Club are planning a house tour and judged flower show for June 25 and 26, 2010. Six lovely homes on East Genesee Street and Leitch Avenue will be open to the public, and flower arrangements will be on display and judged in each of the homes. A similar event was extremely popular when it was held a few years ago.

We are looking for volunteers to be hostesses (or hosts) in the homes and to help with signage and parking for visitors. If you would like to participate in this exciting event, please call the Creamery at 685-1360.

AN ENCOURAGING FABLE FOR THOSE OF US GETTING ON IN YEARS  
(Thanks to Beth Batlle)

One day an old German Shepherd starts chasing rabbits and before long discovers that he is lost. Wandering about, he notices a panther heading rapidly in his direction with the intention of having lunch.

The old German Shepherd thinks, "Oh, oh, I'm in deep doo-doo now!" Seeing some bones on the ground close by, he immediately settles down to chew on the bones with his back to the approaching cat. Just as the panther is about to leap, the old German Shepherd exclaims loudly, "Boy, that was one delicious panther! I wonder if there are any more around here."

Hearing this, the young panther halts his attack in mid-strike, a look of terror comes over him, and he slinks away into the trees. "Whew!" says the panther. "That was close. That old German Shepherd nearly had me!"

Meanwhile a squirrel who had been watching the whole scene from a nearby tree figures he can put his knowledge to good use and trade it for protection from the panther. Off he goes, but the old German Shepherd sees him heading after the panther with great speed, and figures that something must be up.

The squirrel soon catches up with the panther, spills the beans, and strikes a deal for himself with the panther.

The young panther is furious at being made a fool of and says, "Here, squirrel, hop on my back and watch what's going to happen to that conniving canine!"

Now, the old German Shepherd sees the panther coming with the squirrel on his back and thinks, "What am I going to do now?" But instead of running, the dog sits down with his back to his attackers, pretending he hasn't seen them yet, and just when they get close enough to hear, the old German Shepherd says, "Where's that squirrel? I sent him off an hour ago to bring me another panther."

MORAL: Don't mess with the old dogs. Age and skill will always overcome youth and treachery. BS and brilliance only come with  
and experience.