



THE SENTINEL

Vol. 22, No. 3

The Newsletter of the New Scotland Historical Association

Spring 2014

Onesquethaw

(Translated from the Mohawk phrase—**O-nits-quot-haa**—it means *stoney bottom*)

The aptness of this given name transcends the generations from the era when young Maquas braves scaled the escarpments, hid in the

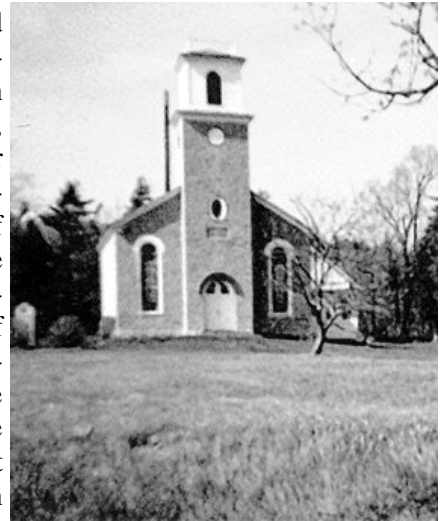


caves, and ran through fields of corn. A communal people, the Maquas toiled side by side, relying on each other for strength and support through harsh winters, glorious springs, steamy summers, and autumns filled with the spectacular colors of sugar maple, oak, alder and birch. They shared in song and prayer, sorrow and ceremony, work and play, hardships and blessings. They drew their sustenance from this rocky land in the shadow of the Helderbergs.

As farmers and hunters themselves, did the Maquas have the foresight to know that men and women of unrelated ancestry would come to farm and hunt the same fields; to quarry the rock that lined the land; to splash in the stoney bottomed creek which would retain the name given by their Mohawk people? Could they have foreseen the continuance of a strong community through a decade of centuries from the days of planting and scouting; through the passing of generation; to the day in 1824 when another community would build a firm foundation in the stoney bottomed land at **Onesquethaw**?

In the passing of the generations, the Dutch arrived along the shore of the Hudson River and a new era brought changes. One of the settlers arriving shortly after Henry Hudson was Mr. Tounis Slingerland. In 1685, a deed signed under the authority of Pieter Schuyler transferred the land lined with rock from the “Maquas Indian owners and native proprietors of the Land called Onitsquothaa” to Tounis Slingerland for amounts listed therein.

Decades passed and the age of industry and transportation flourished. On July 4, 1817, Governor DeWitt Clinton heralded the beginning of construction of the Erie Canal to facilitate transportation of goods from the Atlantic Ocean along the Hudson river to Lake Erie. Until the project was completed in 1825,



massive amounts of the stone—and the labor to quarry and deliver the stone—would be required. The Onisquothaa region could provide just what was needed. And so a community emerged on this land of shale and clay, limestone and caves. Hard working men and women—quarrymen, farriners, farmers, blacksmiths and merchants—settled along the creek. Some worked side by side in back breaking efforts to quarry the stone. Others cleared fields for rows of corn, acres of wheat, and grazing cattle. They sang and prayed with their families and neighbors, shared their tribulations and aspirations, raised their children, formed a lasting bond.

From the purchase in 1685, the land of Onisquothaa passed through the Slingerland family. On November 23, 1824, Cornelius Slingerland and his wife Anne deeded a parcel of about one and a quarter acres of the stoney bottomed land to *Trustees of Onesquethaw Church* (also referred to as *the Onesquethaw Union Church and Church of Bethlehem* in the deed, which was not recorded in the Albany County Clerks Office until October 19, 1915. This omission would later cause serious problems for the church.)

(cont. on page 4)

Mark your Calendar!
Wicked Albany
Dr. Frankie Bailey
March 4th
7:30 P.M.
Community Center

**NEW
SCOTLAND
HISTORICAL
ASSOCIATION**

P. O. Box 541

Voorheesville, NY 12186

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Sentinel Committee

Robert and Marion Parmenter,
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Marie Hornick
Willard Osterhout

Web Page

www.newscotlandhistoricalassociation.org
Email: newscotlandhistoricalassoc@gmail.com

President's Letter

There are a number of preservation efforts in our town that deserve recognition and support. A recent effort is the drive to save the LeVie Barn, which is located on property on Route 85A slated to be developed. The barn dates to the late 19th century and its interior is a magnificent cathedral-like structure (see the photograph featured on the *Enterprise* website). We need to recognize Town Councilor Dan Mackays's leadership in the drive to save the barn. Due to Dan's and others' efforts an agreement has been reached between the Town Planning Board and the developer of the LeVie property has given the town a 16-18 month window to relocate the structure. There are discussions underway with landowners in the community on the ultimate location and use of the structure. Dan has informed us that keeping the barn intact and in town are priorities, and, consultants and specialized contractors will be visiting the barn over the next several weeks to help assess a budget and process for dismantlement. Once details of relocation and the costs are understood, fundraising efforts will likely begin. NSHA will do its bit to help preserve the LeVie barn and we hope that our members will help in any way they can. Stay tuned!

Another form of preservation is also underway in New Scotland. For the last few years Dietrich Gehring has been attempting to re-establish a commercially viable hop farm in the shadow of the Helderbergs near Indian Ladder Farms. Hops were found growing wild by the early Dutch settlers in the 17th century and were commercially grown in New Scotland in the 18th and 19th century. Dietrich, a professional photographer, has successfully grown heirloom varieties of hops and plans to expand the operation. He will present a program for NSHA on April 1 at 7:30 on Hops in New York State: *A Brief History of the New York State Hop Industry and Where We Stand Today*.

Lastly, I am very pleased to report that long time New Scotland resident Debbie Mahan has volunteered to head NSHA'S Collections Committee, tasked with preserving and expanding NSHA's collection of historic artifacts and records (see article on Debbie). We are very pleased to have her filling this critical but long vacant position that had been filled so ably by Marion Parmenter for many years.

Alan Kowlowitz

Scholarship Offered!

Juniors residing in the Town of New Scotland have the opportunity to compete for a \$1,000.00 prize to be used toward their college expenses. Sponsored by the New Scotland Historical Association and the Eberle Fund, the prize will be awarded to a winner at the May meeting of the Association. The winner will then have the option of using money in any way chosen to help with college expenses.

All New Scotland Juniors are invited to compete for the award, whether they are public high school, private school, parochial school or home-schooled students. Each applicant is required to submit a completed application form, along with a copy of his/her resume and high school transcript, and a 250 word essay on a given topic.

Applications are available at the Town Hall in New Scotland, the Community Center in New Salem, Bethlehem Library, Voorheesville Library, and Feura Bush Library. If there are questions, please contact Marie Hornick, 518-768-2933.

The completed applications must be postmarked no later than Friday, March 14, 2014.

The Highwayman

Odds and Ends

One storm I was stuck almost at the end of Countryman Lane. I had gotten too close to the shoulder and slipped into the ditch. I called the garage and they said they would send Mike Hotaling up with his Walters to pull me out. After waiting for what seemed like forever, we saw plow lights coming down the road and knew we would be back on the road shortly. Mike stopped to turn around in Tom Countryman's driveway so he could back up and be in position to pull me out. I was watching him back up when his tail-lights suddenly tipped to the left and he came to a stop. It seems he had backed off into the ditch and now he was stuck. So much for my rescue. Now he had to call the garage for a third truck to come up and pull us both out. We were a bit late getting the roads plowed that night.

Another time I left the garage and proceeded to Indian Ledge Rd. I noticed the headlights of a car following me. I thought to myself, it must be someone who lives up this way and is following the plow to get home. We passed Castle Rd. and the lights were still there. I turned onto Countryman Lane expecting the lights to continue up Wolf Hill Road but no, they followed me. There were only about 10 houses on this road and I expected the lights to turn into a driveway at any time. We passed them all with only Tom Countryman's left, so I assumed it was Tom. I plow about a quarter of a mile past Tom's house to a place where I can turn around and head back out. Those lights went with me and stopped when I did. I got out of the truck to go back to the car to find out what was going on. When that gentleman put his window down, my nose was assaulted with the smell of alcohol. As drunk as he was, this man thought he was following a city of Albany plow. I directed him to retrace his route back off the hill to get to the city. I don't know if he ever made it, but I didn't read about him in the paper.

One day old "Blueberry" and I were coming down a very steep section of Cass Hill Rd. in the Walter's snow plow, Bill was my wingman. Bill was taking a short nap with his head against the window, when my low air warning alarm sounded. I had a serious air leak and would shortly lose all my air pressure and have no brakes. I knew if I could downshift the automatic transmission into low I would only go 5-8 mph, but I had to slow down to get it to do that. There was a high bank on our right side with some bushes and small trees, so I proceeded to steer into that bank and let the plow and wing ride against it until those trees and bushes slowed me down enough to get into low range. Meanwhile, "Blueberry" awoke with a start to hear the alarm ringing and the plow bouncing along that bank with a look on his face I will never forget. We did manage to get down safely and returned to the garage to get our brakes fixed.

I was plowing on Stove Pipe Rd. with the wing down which puts the plow in the middle of the road. As we came around a corner, there was a jeep coming at us at a rate of speed much too fast for conditions. I could not pull over with the wing down, that would just kick me sideways across the road. The driver of that jeep realized he would never be able to stop and rather than slide into that big iron V plow, took a hard right into a field that was there. I saw a big explosion of snow as he went through the snow bank and came to rest out in that field, none the worse for wear. We stopped and were able to back up to him and pull him back onto the road. Fast thinking on his part prevented a serious accident.

Many times we were called upon to take the sand trucks out in very slippery conditions. We would have chains on and a full load of sand for weight as we started out. I was going up Indian Ledge Rd. with my side-kick "Blueberry" when we came to a very steep section. The road was particularly icy as we started up this hill. We kept going slower and slower until we came to a stop just before the top and with wheels spinning, even with the chains on, we did a 180 degree turn and started sliding back down the hill. Fortu-



Our wonderful Highwayman—Will Osterhout!

(cont. from page one)

The following story was recalled by Leroy Vanderbilt, a life long resident of Tarrytown and an active member of the Onesquethaw Reformed Church. As Leroy recalled, the congregation at Onesquethaw came mighty close to losing its church! Sometime around 1910-1915, the property owned by Mr. James K. Polk McCulloch adjoined the parcel of land deeded to the church. Mr. McCulloch, who was an alcoholic, came into hard times when he severed his leg while inebriated at a local fair. Mr. Drew, an acquaintance of McCulloch's, promised McCulloch that if he would sell the farm to him, Drew would allow McCulloch to live there until he died. While researching the transaction, Drew discovered that the deed for the church property had never been recorded. He set his sights on claiming it as part of the McCulloch land sale. Drew proposed to close the church, sell it, and split the profits with McCulloch (whose family had served on the governing body of the church since its inception). A meeting of the consistory was called. The deed proving ownership of the land by the church was no where to be found. Knowing what was about to happen, elders and deacons (led by Conrad Crouse) contacted members of the congregation and raised about \$900 to be able to *buy back* their parcel of land.

As word spread of the scandalous happenings, Myra Mead of Westerlo (originally from Meads Corners in Tarrytown) got wind of the dilemma and recalled that she had seen an old deed in a trunk in the attic. Local legend has it that Mrs. Mead was able to deliver the deed at the 11th hour to Conrad Crouse. Mr. Crouse, along with Leroy's dad, Gulian Vanderbilt, went to the meeting at which the church fate would be determined. They confronted Misters Drew and McCulloch. Playing along at first, Mr. Crouse inquired about the asking price. Mr. Drew had a set amount in mind responded as such. Mr. Crouse proceeded to tell Mr. Drew he had something Drew ought to see—and he pulled out the deed! As Leroy says, “red showed strong” in Mr. Drew's face when he saw the missing document. Drew walked out of the meeting—and the little stone church was saved for its heirs.

(Post Script: the consistory attempted to return the \$900 donated, to members of the congregation. None would accept its return. It was used for the continuance of the work of the church.)

“an excerpt from the History of the Onesquethaw Reformed church (composed by Debra Dailey for the 185th Anniversary) shared by Robert & Lorraine Felter”

Inclement Weather?

In the event of stormy weather on a meeting night, if you are unsure whether the meeting has been cancelled, please call Alan Kowlowitz, 765-4212, or Peg Dorgan, 768-2852. Emails will be sent to those on the email list.

Welcome Debbie!

NSHA, (and especially me!) is delighted to have **Debbie Mahan** on board as our new **Collections Chair**. I will be explaining procedures for accessioning, preserving, proper storage, etc. to her in the next week or so, and I'm confident she'll do fine! New blood is what this organization needs! We did ask her to write a short bio to introduce herself to the membership. Thank you, Debbie!! (M. Parmenter)

Debbie Brennan Mahan

I was born in the city of Albany and lived there with my parents, four sisters and one brother. We moved to Voorheesville in 1969 and I have lived in the Town of New Scotland ever since. After I graduated from Oneonta State College, I worked for the college of Saint Rose, Voorheesville Central School and Niskayuna Central School District. My husband John and I are both retired now and enjoy spending time with four grandchildren and traveling whenever we can.

Some of my earliest memories are hearing stories about all my ancestors. I am very lucky to have a rich family history, with ancestors that settled in Beverwijk (Vanderheyden, VanNess and Van Bergan), as well as ancestors from Ireland (Brennan), Germany and Scotland. I am a member of the Dutch Settlers Society of Albany, and enjoy doing genealogical research whenever I can.

More Historical Trivia!

(We hope you are ready for this!)

In the heyday of sailing ships, all war ships and many freighters carried iron cannons. Those cannons fired round iron cannon balls. It was necessary to keep a good supply near the cannon. However, how to prevent them from rolling about the deck? The best storage method was a square-based pyramid with one ball on top, resting on four, resting on nine, which rested on sixteen. Thus, a supply of 30 cannon balls could be stacked in a small area right next to the cannon. There was only one problem...how to prevent the bottom layer from sliding or rolling from under the others. The solution was a metal plate called a “Monkey” with 16 round indentations. However, if this plate were to be made of iron, the iron balls would quickly rust to it. The solution to the rusting problems was to make “Brass Monkeys.” Few landlubbers realize that brass contracts much more and much faster than iron when chilled. Consequently, when the temperature dropped too far, the brass indentations would shrink so much that the iron cannonballs would come right off the monkey; thus, it was quite literally, ‘cold enough to freeze the balls off a brass monkey.’ (All this time, you thought that was an improper expression, didn't you?)

nately there was a snow bank that stopped me before I went off the bank and I was able to regain control.

One afternoon just before quitting time, it started to pour. You wouldn't even give this a second thought, except it was in January. The rain froze as fast as it hit the ground coating everything with a layer of ice and making a skating rink out of it. We all stood there in amazement looking out the window, knowing what was to come. The boss told us to load up the sand trucks and get ready to start on our routes. We knew this was going to be an experience we would never forget. When conditions are that bad, you sand driving your truck in reverse so you are sanding ahead of yourself. You do this by using your side view mirrors to stay on the road. This is a little less nerve-racking at night, when you can see headlights coming, but during the day you have no idea if someone is heading your way and unable to stop. Sanding this way is bad enough going uphill or on the level, but is really frightening when you start downhill. I want you to imagine sliding out of control down a hill backwards trying to use your side view mirrors to see where you are going. This is a ride that compares to some at the amusement park. After a few hours of this, you are exhausted both physically and mentally.

After working 26 years as a "Highwayman," I hope I was able to give you some idea of what these men go thru on a daily basis. I would only ask one thing of you. When you get upset over the condition of the roads or the snow in your driveway, remember what is required of these men and give them a little consideration and respect.

Hopefully you have enjoyed the tales of this retired "Highwayman,"
Will Osterhout

We want to thank Willard for this delightful series of New Scotland history he has provided over the past several years. Seems appropriate to be publishing this one during one of the largest single storms in several years—we can just see Will smiling when he sees a plow go by, as he watches from the window—called retirement!

Bob and Marion Parmenter

Museum Hours
Sundays
2:00—4:00 P.M.
Closed Easter Sunday

Mother Nature's Garden

Peg Dorgan

As I write of these memories, we are in the midst of a February snowstorm. Why I began to think of spring flowers is not known. Somewhere in my head there must be a yearning for more pleasant weather and the joys of warmer days.

A memory that came to me last night was trekking to the woods with my siblings to pick wild flowers sometime in late April or early May. We picked trilliums, (red and white), dog-tooth violets, Dutchman's britches, Lady Slippers, Blood Root (that made our hands quite red), purple violets, and other flowers that I cannot name. These might not be the official names of the flowers, but this is what my Mother called them. We picked armsful!!! If they were protected by the law, we didn't know it.

Mom seemed to enjoy the bouquets that we delivered to her, but the red trilliums were to be left outdoors because of their unpleasant smell.



Not everyone would find these flowers on their property as we did. Was the soil not right? Did we have just the right amount of sun and shade? All I know is that 50 or 60 years ago, the woods were full of this beauty. Unfortunately, when I visit the family farm now, there are fewer and fewer blooms. Do we blame the loggers, or climate change? I hope it isn't because we picked so many years ago.

Our family farm was in Cayuga County in Central New York. Since moving to the Town of New Scotland, I've not seen woods filled with flowers as I remembered. Can anyone tell me "if" and "where" they might exist close by? I promise not to pick them—only to enjoy the beauty.

Mark your Calendar!

Exhibit Opening!

John Boyd Thacher Park—100th Birthday!

Sunday, May 18

2:00 P.M.



'Old Silver Leg'

Pieter Stuyvesant in the New World

a song-programme with a touch of theatre
with elements like:

vanity – obstinacy – skill – courage –
love – fun – astonishment – hope –
silliness – greed – sorrow – fear – frustration –
dismay – pride – expectation – pleasure

The story will be sung and told with humour and
witticism, but also with sincere concern by

**Ankie,
Nanne & Tseard**

AN&T

Ankie, Nanne & Tseard are three folksingers from Friesland in The Netherlands. They sing traditional Dutch folksongs as well as newly written songs and have a wide repertoire.

They like to sing about different subjects, however maritime and historical themes play an important role!

As a duo Ankie & Nanne toured in many countries, including Australia and the USA. Thus - together with four other musicians (dubbed the Hudson Crew) - they presented the song cycle 'Henry Hudson and the Half Moon' in New York State in 2009.

For the 'Old Silver Leg' programme they joined forces with multi-instrumentalist Tseard Nauta, who as a member of several groups toured the world as well.

At festivals, concerts, cultural evenings or singing workshops, AN&T's programme is always witty and adapted to the situation wherever they are. They accompany themselves on several instruments such as guitar, mandolin, concertina, accordion, piano and fiddle.

'Old Silver Leg'

tells the story of New Netherland - the Dutch colony that was to become New York - in the original songs of modern-day master Dutch songwriter Nanne Kalma.

Using elements of both music and theatre, Nanne Kalma, Ankie van der Meer and Tseard Nauta trace the colony's fortunes from the years just after Henry Hudson's unsuccessful quest for the fabled Northwest Passage in 1609 to Governor Pieter Stuyvesant's reluctant surrender of what had become a thriving center of commerce to the British in 1664.

Mark Your Calendars!

NSHA is hosting this group, Tuesday, June 17 at 7:30 PM
Wyman Osterhout Community Center
Public is welcome, no admission charge

Spring Program Schedule

All programs begin at 7:30 pm
Museum opens at 7pm
Wyman Osterhout Community Center
New Salem

March 4, 2014 Wicked Albany: Lawlessness and Liquor in the Prohibition Era. Criminal Justice Professor and author Dr. Frankie Bailey will paint a vivid picture of crime, violence, and law enforcement in Albany during the Prohibition-era (1919-1932), placing it in a national context of changes during that turbulent period.

April 1, 2014 Hops in New York State Dietrich Gehring presents a brief history of the New York State hop industry and where we stand today.

May 6, 2014 “Of Dartmoor Prison I’ll Tell All I Can”: The Prison Songs of Thomas Mott in the War of 1812. In this musical program, Paul Mercer tells the little known story of the American prisoners of war held in the notorious Dartmoor Prison during the War of 1812 through the songs of Thomas Mott, a 17 year-old seaman from New York who was captured in 1813, off the coast of Newfoundland. Paul is a professional musician, manuscript librarian, and folklorist originally from Newfoundland.

June 17, 2014 ‘Old Silver Leg’—see page 6.



If you would like to become a member, please do so!

NSHA Membership Form

- \$10 Individual
- \$15 Family
- \$25 Sustaining
- \$100.00 Life (per person)

Name _____
 Street _____
 City, State, Zip _____
 Phone _____
 Email _____

Make checks payable to NSHA.
 Please send dues to: NSHA

Sarita Winchell, Membership Chair
 P.O. Box 541
 Voorheesville, NY 12186

It is wonderful to see that the Village of Voorheesville was able to repair the Historic Marker and put it back up on the site of the grand old Grove Hotel, on Grove St. The former railroad station is to the right in the photo.

Thanks to Our Corporate Donors

Although NSHA's funding comes primarily from individual and family donations, the contributions made by businesses are a tremendous help in fulfilling NSHA's mission. This year there are 12 businesses that have contributed. We urge our members to patronize them as a special thank-you for their support.

Special thanks go to the three largest corporate donors this year:

Dunston Brothers
Smith's Tavern
Stewart's Shops

Other business donors are :

Elemental Landscapes, Inc.
Helderberg Oil
Hennessy Engineering
Jaycees Pizza Depot
Morrison Engineering, PC
Olsen's Hardware & Garden Shop
Something Olde Something New
Steven Lysenko, DMD, PLLC
Voorheesville Rod and Gun Club

Mission Statement

The Town of New Scotland Historical Association preserves, protects and promotes history in the Town of New Scotland through the stewardship of material culture directly related to the town. The purpose is to promote an appreciation of local history, heritage and culture through research, publications and educational programs.

Museum Hours

**The museum is
open year-round
on Sunday
from
2:00 P.M. - 4:00 P.M.
Handicap Accessible**

THE SENTINEL

New Scotland Historical Association
P. O. Box 541
Voorheesville, New York 12186