



MARCELLUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

Volume 2, Issue No 1

January/February 1997

OUR VILLAGE CLOCK ... Doug Whitman

In late October, I had an opportunity to climb into the belfry of a historic Marcellus landmark (built in 1877-8) which has fascinated me for many years. I gladly accepted an invitation from Historical Society President, Bill Reagan, to assist with replacement of two lamps for the clock faces on the Methodist Church tower. Hearing the bell hourly, and seeing the clock's faces from my front porch day or night, have kept me punctual during my twenty-two years of Marcellus residency.



In 1909, our village clock's cast-brass mechanism was purchased, for \$500 from the H.J. Howe, Co. in Syracuse, and donated to the Methodist Church by Mr. and Mrs. George Case, local farmers.

Made and installed by E. Howard & Company, Boston, MA, the heavy machine was hoisted with a block and tackle to the fifth floor of the Church belfry where all but the hand-crank assembly and weights still reside. A single linkage-rod extends from the top of the clock mechanism to the tower's sixth floor where its rotation is transferred through a gearbox and more linkage to each of the four sets of clock hands. (Supporting the central gearbox is a board from the clock's original shipping crate stenciled: "H. J. Howe; Care E. V. Baker [Postmaster]; Marcellus Onondaga Co. N.Y.")

For \$50, Marcellus resident, Edgar Bartlett built the six-foot wooden clock faces, and three-foot hands with iron balance rods, and installed them on the belfry 64 feet above the ground. On Tuesdays and Fridays, Mr. Bartlett, D.F. Coon, or Fred Woodbridge maintained and wound the clock. They climbed on crude ladders through the belfry chambers housing the clock's 145-pound running-weight and 800-pound striking-weight.

In the early 1960's, the Methodist Church donated its landmark clock to the Village of Marcellus, and Mr. Mel Corp assumed primary responsibility as the last person to wind the clock's huge weights by hand.

Perched high above the clock's faces, on the seventh (and top) floor of the belfry, is the 40-inch wide by 36-inch high cast-bronze bell made in 1876 at Troy, NY by the Meneely & Kimberly Foundry.

(Since the belfry was constructed in 1877-8 as part of the original church structure, I'm assuming the M&K bell was installed in it at that time.)

From installation to 1909, the bell was rung by pulling a rope extending down five floors to the church vestibule. The rope was connected to the 6-foot, 3-inch great-wheel on the bell's West side. A manual pull-rope is still used to ring the bell for special occasions, but now it operates a striking mallet, rather than rocking the huge bell North and South in its massive cast iron suspension cradle. The bell's large clapper still hangs within its vessel.

In 1962, with \$795 in donations from the Marcellus Rotary and Citizen's Clubs, the clock's original weights were removed and electric motors installed to drive its running and striking mechanisms. The conversion was contracted to the Bert Rogers firm from Harrisburg, PA, by then Mayor, Lester Norris. The Rogers firm removed the hand-crank mechanism and weights from the tower.

Now, a large metal mallet connected to the clock's striking mechanism rings the bell on the hour. Electric lights illuminate the four clock-faces at night. Modern ladders have replaced the old ones used for climbing through the tower chambers to maintain the clock, bell, strike mallets and lights.

Since electrification, annual maintenance has continued to be performed by the Rogers firm from Harrisburg, and routine maintenance by Lester Norris, Ray Lawless and George Haggett.

Following Mr. Haggett's recent death, the village has made arrangements with Bill Reagan and Doug Whitman who are now providing routine care and time adjustments when needed. ■

SPEAKING OF CLOCKS...

The Marcellus Historical Society has four clocks in its collection, all of which need cleaning and/or repair to make them again operational. One clock is particularly valuable, *historically speaking*. It was made at the Marcellus Falls, Smith Clock factory circa 1833. Another is a large Ithaca Calendar wall clock from the First National Bank of Marcellus.

We are requesting that a person or group donate the funds or services necessary to restore our clocks to working order. If you may be that person or group, please call Bill Reagan at 463-4160. ■

NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT — *Bill Reagan*

As 1996 comes to a close I've taken a few moments to look back at all that the Marcellus Historical Society has accomplished this year. I can't thank everyone enough who has helped our organization come so far in just twelve months. The greatest accomplishment by far has to be growing from 31 members in one state to 457 members in 12 states including New York, Ohio, Georgia, Indiana, Texas, California, Tennessee, Illinois, Florida, Kansas, South Carolina and Washington. I knew there was a great interest in our local history and am very pleased that so many people have chosen to support the historical society.

Other accomplishments in 1996 include publishing an index for "Nine Mile Country;" publishing "Marcellus Through The Years, 1774-1996, A Chronological History;" reorganizing our museum, a historic walking tour and two open houses at our museum. The most recent open house coincided with the Marcellus Chamber of Commerce events on Saturday December 7 and included a special display on the Marcellus and Otisco Lake Railway. This past year the society also started collection and preservation programs for photographs and family histories, sponsored field trips to the Onondaga County Court House, the Catholic Diocese Archives, the Onondaga Historical Association and the Rose Hill Baptist Church and, of course, we started our newspaper.

1997 should be another exciting year. Beginning with the historical society re-releasing the official Marcellus afghan (an order form is on page 7 of this newspaper), we have many things planned. During Old Home Days in June we will have an open house at our museum which will include another special display and we will have a float in the annual parade. A Marcellus Historic Homes Tour is being planned for autumn and a note card set featuring historic sites in Marcellus as well as a collectors set of historic Marcellus postcards are in the works. Other publications we are working on include a historic coloring book for children, an in depth book on the history of the mills along Nine Mile Creek through Marcellus and a book and registry of historic homes in Marcellus.

As you know, we are striving to gain a new building for our museum. A building in which we can safely preserve and display our huge collection of over 1,500 historic artifacts from Marcellus' past. In order to obtain this new museum we will need to receive grants which are available from many sources. What you may not know is that many of these grants require us to raise a certain percent of funds ourselves, such as twenty percent of the

grant amount. It is crucial that we raise this money in order to receive the grants. Two of our major fund raisers for this year will be the sale of afghans and the historic home tour. Please remember the importance of these events as they occur.

In order to accomplish all that we have planned we need the support of the community. I would like to remind our members to please renew your membership and if you are not yet a member, please join today. Much of we do would not be possible without the support of our members, including this newspaper! One last note, please support our advertisers and let them know you saw their ad in our newspaper. Without the support of our advertisers we will not be able to print this newspaper.



I wish to personally thank everyone who has joined the Marcellus Historical Society this year -- you have helped it to surpass its goals for 1996. ■

I wish you all a safe and happy New Year.

Bill Reagan

RECENT ACQUISITIONS

We wish to thank the following people for donating historic items to be added to our museum collection.

Marie Banky for Hickman's Meat Market photos. **Joy Buffan** for submitting her family history which includes Edgar Bartlett. **Miss Sarah Welsh** for donating two pairs of shears which were used in the upper Crown Woolen Mill. **Mitch Amidon** for Crown Woolen Mill photographs. **Mr. & Mrs. Russell Snell** for a lard bucket from George Hickman's store. **Barb & Alice Mahan** for a new cedar chest for clothing storage. **Debevic Homestead** for an artificial Christmas tree.

Mr. & Mrs. Cy Vile for an adding machine from Donald Hickman's Corner Store. **Bill & Norma Schultz** for an up-to-date copy of Shepard Settlement Cemetery records. **Doug Whitman** for picture frames. **Florence Pottinger** for family photographs, a clock made in Howard White's Clock Shop, a pan made at Matteson's Tin Shop, a historic, metal hot water bottle, a musical photo album, handkerchiefs that were sent home during W.W. II and copies of old Marcellus Observers.

Dr. DePaul for donating film. **Tim Barstow** and the **Marcellus Central School** for donating many old year books, a scale and adding machine from the office, class photos, an old drafting table and other historic items. More next issue . . . ■

PHOTO SEARCH

We are looking for photos of the following historic events in Marcellus to add to our collection. If you have any which you can donate, or loan to us to copy, please call Bill Reagan.

- Saint John's Episcopal Church being moved down Orange Street to its present location in 1924.
- Any of the past or present Marcellus school buildings being constructed.
- The Methodist Church Clock being installed in 1909.
- The 1973 Alvord House fire, or any other fires.
- Christmas scenes along Main Street.
- Photographs of old mills and businesses.

CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY NOW AVAILABLE



"*Marcellus Through The Years, 1794-1996, A Chronological History*," is now for sale. This is the very latest publication by the Marcellus Historical Society. It contains the dates of many significant events which took place in Marcellus between 1794 and 1996, and contains

25 historic photographs and other items of interest. They sell for \$6 each or \$5 each for two or more and are available in our gift shop or at many shops in Marcellus including: Angel Heart Gifts, Ivy & Lace Florist, Brian's Creekside Inn, Blakeslee Antiques, Pedigreed Plants, Touch of Spice, First Impression Salon and Debevic Homestead. Each of these businesses has generously agreed to donate all proceeds from the sale of this book to the Marcellus Historical Society. Refer to our "Gift Shop" (page 7) to see what other items we have for sale. ■

INDEX TO "NINE MILE COUNTRY" PEOPLE, BUSINESSES AND PHOTOS

An index of people, businesses and photographs in K.C. Heffernan's "*Nine Mile Country*," a history of Marcellus first published in 1978 is now available. The index was printed as a joint project by the Marcellus Historical Society and the Marcellus Free Library. Included in the index are the names of 1,300 people mentioned in "*Nine Mile Country*," and what pages they can be found on. It is available at our gift shop or at the Marcellus Free Library. ■

Test Your Knowledge of Marcellus History

- Whitfield's Grill, now Brian's Creekside Inn, first opened as a food stand in 1922, 1932, or 1942?
- Don Hickman reopened Hickman's Market on Main Street, at the sight of his grandfather's original Hickman's Market in 1935, 1945, or 1955?
- Oakes Lumber was sold to Leonard Bishop in 1949, 1959, or 1969?
- Nightingale Mills opened in 1888, 1908, or 1928?
- The Marcellus Rotary Club was organized in 1948, 1958, or 1968?
- The Marcellus Post Office opened in 1799, 1809, or 1819?

ANSWERS: (A) 1932 (B) 1945 (C) 1949 (D) 1908 (E) 1948 (F) 1809

ELECTION RESULTS

Our election of officers was held at the November meeting. All officers were reelected: Bill Reagan, President; Sidney Tuthill, Vice President; Dick Smith, Treasurer; Joyce Murphy, Secretary. Three trustee positions were filled as follows: John Curtin (*replacing Bob Negus*) thru 1997, Don Kilcoyne and Bruce Widger thru 1999. The society's new Correspondence Secretary is Kathleen Reagan. Congratulations to each of you and thanks for volunteering! ■

CUB SCOUTS TOUR MUSEUM

Cub scout troop 166, their den leader Dan DeMeritt, and several parents toured the M.H.S. museum Monday night, November 4, 1996. Society President Bill Reagan and Historian Mike Plumpton hosted the cub scouts, who held their bimonthly meeting right in the museum. The scouts viewed all of the artifacts with great enthusiasm. Bill and Mike were very impressed with how well mannered the scouts were. ■

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HISTORIC HOME TOUR PLANNED

We are planning a historic home tour in Marcellus to be held in the autumn of 1997 as a fund raiser for our new museum. Five or six houses of all ages will be included, even brand new houses will be considered. If you would like your house to be considered for the tour please call or write Bill Reagan at this newspaper. ■

GET WELL JOYCE AND SIDNEY

Our Vice-president, Sidney Tuthill is doing well following his heart by-pass surgery on December 13th, and our Secretary, Joyce Murphy is feeling much better since her back surgery. Sidney should be home by the time you receive this paper, and Joyce may still be on the 6th floor at Community Hospital. We wish them both a speedy recovery!

WISH LIST

These items will assist the historical society in its on-going projects and preservation efforts. If you can help us obtain any of these items, new or used, please call Bill Reagan at 463-4160.

Glass Display Cases
Photocopy Machine
35mm Slide Projector
Filing System for film negatives
Magazine Sales Rack for use in our gift shop
Color Television and VCR for presentations

OFFICIAL MARCELLUS PIN AND AFGHAN FOR SALE

The Village of Marcellus has produced an official Marcellus pin. The pins depict the old village fire barn which was constructed in 1884, and say "Marcellus" on the front. They sell for \$5.00 and all proceeds go to the Marcellus Historical Society. The pins are available at our gift shop, at the village and town halls and from some local merchants.

The historical society is re-releasing the official Marcellus afghan in green and cranberry as a fund raiser for our new museum. First released during the 1994 bicentennial, the afghan was produced by Jean Schneider and depicts many historic Marcellus landmarks on it. They sell for \$45 and all proceeds go into the new museum fund. ■

MEETING SCHEDULE

The tentative speaker and presentation schedule for our upcoming meetings is as follows:.

January 5th 2:00 p.m.
Nancy Shelley, Town of Otisco Historian.
Presentation relating to *Otisco*. Location:
Marcellus Fire Station.



February 2nd 2:00 p.m.
Jack Priest of Marcellus on
*Priest Chevrolet and Marcellus
Memories*. Location: Marcellus
Fire Station.

March 2nd 2:00 p.m.
Bill Reagan with a *Past and Present* slide show
on Marcellus landmarks and views: Marcellus
Fire Station.

April 6th 2:00 p.m.
Helen Ionta, Skaneateles Historian on her
Memories of Growing Up In Marcellus. Location
to be announced.

May 4th 2:00 p.m.
To be announced.

June 7th 10:00 a.m.
Open House at the museum through 4:00 p.m.
in conjunction with Marcellus Old Home Days.



Marcellus Historical Society

Officers

President: Bill Reagan 463-4160
Vice Pres: Sidney Tuthill 673-2990
Treasurer: Richard Smith 673-1532
Secretary: Joyce Murphy 673-2528
Cor. Secretary: Kathleen Reagan 673-3365

Trustees & Term End

Peg Nolan (1997)
John Curtin (1997)
Tom Reagan (1998)
Mike Plumpton (1998)
Don Kilcoyne (1999)
Bruce Widger (1999)

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THE MARTISCO PAPER MILL . . . Bill Reagan

In 1852 George Reed and Sanford Dalliba, two Marcellus business men, purchased the site at Marcellus Falls on which had stood the Phillip Smith Clock Factory. Reed and Dalliba commenced the construction of a new dam built of wood and stone (a few rods north of the old log dam) and the construction of a new brick paper mill. When the walls were nearly completed the work came to a standstill until early in 1853 when N.G. Case bought a one third interest in the mill and the firm became George Reed & Company.

The work resumed, the dam and building were finished. They installed a Fourdriner machine for making white print and book paper. One of the first items made from the product of the mill was a large family bible which was printed by an Auburn firm.

Reed & Company ran the mill, considered one of the best in the state, quite successfully for about a year, making paper for the Albany Argus, Moore's Rural New Yorker, New York World and many other publications. In 1854 the firm was reorganized as Reed & Case after Dalliba's other business ventures failed. The business continued successfully until 1859 when Case's boot making business in Auburn failed for a large amount which involved the firm of Reed & Case at the Falls and caused them to fail. The bank foreclosed on the mortgage and in 1861 the property was sold.

After changing hands again, in 1862 Benjamin Culver purchased the mill and went to great expense in putting new machinery in to bleach straw for making printing paper of it. Culver owned and operated the mill for several years and finally sold it to John F. Jones. Mr. Jones owned the Genesee Mills at Rochester and was reported to be very wealthy. He put a lot of money into the property at the Falls and unfortunately over-extended himself. Two or three years later the mill was turned over to his creditors who ran it for a while and then it was sold under foreclosure to the firm of Lawless and Tierney in April of 1875.

Lawless and Tierney built a new, stronger dam on the creek and installed new machinery. They added a large brick chimney and new boiler. The mill produced three to four tons of paper a day at this time and became known as the Eagle Mill. The Lawless family continued running the mill until 1959 at which time it was sold to the Martisco Paper Company which was originally called the Onondaga Paper Company.

In 1990 Agnes and Darryl Meiers of Marcellus purchased the mill. Today the mill employs about twenty full and part time workers who turn newspapers and cardboard into what is known as bogus, a specialty paper used in wrapping. ■



MARCELLUS HISTORY CONTEST

How to play: Read the riddle printed below. If you can solve it, mail your answer to the Marcellus Historical Society at P.O. Box 165, Marcellus, NY 13108. Entries must be postmarked by January 31, 1997. The winner will be chosen at random from all correct entries and will be announced in our next issue. The winner will receive a gift certificate from Brian's Creekside Inn. ■

History Contest Riddle Number One:

The first one in Marcellus was built in 1812. It was only in use for thirty-six years before another one took its place. Thirty-two years later the third one came onto the scene. Although it is not yet the most enduring, it is the only one which is still with us today.

(Hint: Answers to Riddle Contests can be found in "Marcellus Through The Years," our newest book.)

GRANT-WRITING HELP NEEDED

We have in our possession applications for grants from many sources. These grants support many of the projects that we currently have underway such as the preservation of historical records, genealogical research and the acquisition of a new museum building. We have people in the society willing to help write grants but no one with the experience to lead the process. In order to acquire a new museum building which can be opened to the public regularly we need to apply for grants. If you could help us with this please call our President Bill Reagan as soon as possible. ■

78 ENJOY HOLIDAY DINNER

Our annual holiday dinner was held on Sunday December 1 at the Marcellus Fire House. Seventy-eight members attended the dinner which was catered by Kirby Bartholomew. Each of the tables was decorated with a festive centerpiece compliments of Ivy & Lace Florist. The meal included stuffing rolled inside trukey, ham, potatos, corn, salads, jellos, breads and more. During dessert twenty door prizes donated by local businesses were handed out. Following the dinner, Marcellus resident Bob Wilson gave a presentation on the history of the Marcellus Fire Department. ■

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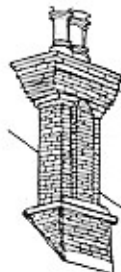
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RICHARD NOJAIM

200 VISITORS TOUR MUSEUM

Our museum was open on Saturday December 7th as part of the Marcellus Chamber of Commerce events which took place that weekend. Approximately 200 visitors toured the museum between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

Antique toys loaned by Debevic Homestead were in place under a traditional Christmas tree which adorned the front room. Along with our ever-expanding collection of historic artifacts was a special display on the Martisco and Otisco Lake Railway. Marcellus resident and M.&O.L. Rwy. expert, Bob Piekiet, was on hand to answer questions about the railroad. Other volunteers included Peg Nolan, Bill Reagan, Stan Impson, Doug Whitman, and Tom Leonard. As usual, society volunteers learned as much about our local history from museum visitors as the visitors learned from the museum and us. We enjoy and appreciate the many fascinating stories and tidbits of information.

Many books and souvenirs were sold from our gift shop. Our newset book, *Marcellus Through The Years*, was the top selling item. The next planned Open House will take place during the Old Home Days celebration on June 7th. Anyone may tour the museum by appointment by calling Peg Nolan at 673-1765, Mike Plumpton at 673-3453 or Bill Reagan. ■

MARCELLUS HISTORIC HOMES REGISTRY

The Marcellus Historic Homes Registry is being undertaken by the MHS to: *collect and preserve information about historically significant homes in Marcellus; promote preservation and appreciation of Marcellus homes; publish the history of selected Marcellus homes in book form; include historic Marcellus homes on MHS Tours and; promote general interest and appreciation of our rich local history.*

The MHS has developed guidelines and forms to help you research and register your home. Use of the forms will ensure that everyone submits similar basic information -- and additional data is encouraged if you know it.

What qualifies a home for registry? The registry is open to every home (*new and old*) within the Township of Marcellus, especially homes relating to residents or events that have contributed (*or may contribute in the future*) to local history! This definition includes your home, and every other home within the township.

Everyone in the Marcellus Township wishing to register their home should request printed guidelines and forms from Doug Whitman, who will coordinate the project (673-4091) — a \$3 fee for printing & mailing is requested. Lists of resources and other data are printed in the guidelines to help you with the information on the forms. So, please request an information packet and enjoy your research! ■

— THE GIFT SHOP —

The following items are for sale at the museum gift shop. Some are available at local merchants. For information on how to obtain items from the museum directly, call Bill Reagan at 463-4160. For mail orders, use the form below.

- Official Marcellus Afghans; green or cranberry, \$45 each; (\$3.50 shipping)
- Marcellus Through The Years; a chronological history with photos, \$6 each, \$5 each for two or more;
- Marcellus 1794 - 1994, When Wool Was King; a collection of photographs, \$5 each;
- A Pictorial History of Early Marcellus, 53 photos; \$5 each; (\$1.00 ea. shipping)
- Centennial History of the Town of Marcellus, 1878; \$15 each; (*only 3 left*)
- Nine Mile Country, The History of the Town of Marcellus, NY; \$17 each.
- Index to Nine Mile Country; \$5 each.
- 1960's black & white postcards; featuring the four churches and post office, \$1/set.
- Color postcard of the Talbot-Case home; \$1 each.
- Marcellus Bicentennial Mugs; \$3 each
- Official Marcellus Pins; \$5 each.

(For Shipping, please add \$3.50/Afghan; \$1.50/mug; \$1.00/1st book -50¢/ea. additional; 50¢/postcards or pins)

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Marcellus Historical Society News

P.O. Box 165

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HAPPY NEW YEAR!

- INSIDE ...**
- History of the Village Clock
 - History of Martisco Paper Mill
 - Our New "Gift Shop"
 - Recent Acquisitions
 - *Much, Much More!*

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ABOUT YOUR M.H.S. NEWSPAPER

The Marcellus Historical Society News is mailed to approximately 2,450 homes including everyone in the 13108 zip code and all of our members elsewhere. All of the newspapers mailed in the Marcellus Village, and in Marcellus city routes one and two, require a mailing label with the street number. The information for these labels is not taken from our membership list. If your label needs correction or if you would like it changed, please call our editor, Bill Reagan. If you know anyone who does not receive this paper but would like to, please have them join the society. ■

Membership Form

Please Check One Box: NEW MEMBER RENEWAL

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State ____ Zip _____

Phone (____) _____

Check One:

<input type="checkbox"/> Single	\$3.00
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Make Check Payable and Mail To: **Marcellus Historical Society**
Mr. Richard Smith, Treasurer
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ITS TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP ... OR BECOME A NEW MHS MEMBER!

Its amazing how fast the year went! Its already time for historical society members to renew their memberships! Use the form at the left and check the "renewal" box. Any member who joined after October 1st. 1996 does not need to pay dues again, as your dues are good for all of 1997. Please renew now so that we won't have to mail you a separate form. Your continued support is very important and greatly appreciated.

If you would like to join Central New York's fastest growing historical society, please check the "new" box and send in your dues! Thank you! ■