



MARCELLUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

Volume 2, Issue No 4

July/August 1997

MEMORIAL DAY ADDRESS... *Bill Reagan*

(Part I)



In the year 1794, Surveyor-General, Simeon Dewitt, surveyed the newly created Onondaga County and laid out twenty-five military townships. It was at that time that the name Marcellus was given to military township number nine, and the tract was organized as a civil town. Marcellus was the name of a celebrated Roman General and Statesman, Marcus Claudius Marcellus, a who was slain in battle in 208 BC. The Township of Marcellus was later divided into lots which would be granted to veterans of the Revolutionary War in return for their service.

On a day such as this, it is appropriate that Marcellus was named for a military hero, for that is why we are gathered here today, to remember the military heroes of Marcellus, NY - those veterans who were killed in action or while in service to their country. Over one hundred Marcellus men served in the Civil War - twenty of them were killed in action. Twenty-nine more Marcellus men have made this sacrifice since the beginning of World War I.

Like myself, I am sure that some of you gathered here today did not know many, if any, of the men who we are here to remember and honor. So that we may realize the full scale of the sacrifice which they have made, I spoke with many of their families and, in order to understand what these men may have experienced while serving in the military, I spoke with some Marcellus veterans who are still with us today. Combined, their stories help to illustrate the loss to both the families and the community when these men were killed.

Approximately 130 Marcellians served in the armed forces during World War I. Of these, five were killed in action and five died while in service.

The last surviving veteran of World War I in Marcellus was Russell Crawford, father of Betty Paul. He passed away at the age of 93 on January 7th, 1988. He served in the Army Tank Core under Dwight Eisenhower and was a charter member of the Valley American Legion Post 1468.

After World War I, a group of twenty Marcellus veterans applied for a charter for a local post of the American Legion. The charter was granted on August 14, 1919 and American Legion Post 297 was

formed. The post was named in honor of Ralph Share, the first Marcellian killed in action in World War I. Ralph was killed on October 4, 1918, while serving in France.

During World War II, Compulsory Selective Service was in effect. As a result, many Marcellus boys were drafted into the military immediately upon graduating from high school. Approximately 365 Marcellians served in the American Armed Forces during World War II. Of these, twelve were killed in action.

Among those Marcellians who served in World War II were two brothers and a cousin, Donald, Frank and James Kelly. Donald and James never made it home.

James was in the Army and lost his life while serving overseas. Donald was in the Navy and was killed at the age of twenty when his ship was sunk during the invasion of Sicily in 1943. Donald's brother, Frank, was drafted into the Army Air Force in 1942 and served until December 1945. Many of you know Frank Kelly for his outstanding contributions to our community.

I spoke to Ray Lollis and Bill Stevens, each of whom served during World War II. Ray was drafted into the Army in early 1942. He trained at Fort Lewis, Washington and in the Mojave Desert before being sent to Hawaii for amphibious training. Before long he found himself in Dutch New Guinea, where he and his fellow soldiers landed right in the midst of a battle. They had to fight their way from the landing sight to the mountains of the capitol of Dutch New Guinea. From there Ray was sent to Japan where he was part of a truck convoy which drove through Nagasaki & Hiroshima shortly after the atomic bombs had devastated the cities.

Marcellus resident Bill Stevens served in the United States Navy from 1942 through 1946. He served in such countries as Spain and Guam and in Okinawa. While on board the USS Coluso, a troop transport ship which happened to be in the midst of a hurricane, Bill and a ship's electrician were standing near a huge electrical panel. As the electrician made his way up a ladder to close the hatch which was open above them, a huge wave swept over the boat and entered through the hatch. As the wave made contact with the electrical panel, it exploded in front of Bill. Fortunately he wasn't

Continued next page

injured. Bill told me how after fierce fighting, the decks of his ship would be covered with injured soldiers, many of them wearing body casts and bandages from head to toe.

Talking to our veterans who lived through such battles and events helps to make the sacrifices of the soldiers whose names are on this monument more vivid and reminds us that these are not just names on this monument, but that they were men like Frank, Ray and Bill. They are men who were our neighbors, our friends, our relatives - our loved ones. Men who gave all that they could give for their country. ■

(The second half of this address will be printed in our next issue.)

OLDE HOME DAYS OPEN HOUSE A HIT!

Approximately 300 people visited our museum above the village hall on Saturday, June 7.

Everyone seemed to truly enjoy our many new displays. The special display on Marcellus veterans killed in action drew much attention as did the display of Marcellus postcards.

The postcard display featured 260 Marcellus postcards from the museum collection and the collections of Jack Dillon and Dan and Bill Reagan. A special thank you to Jack Dillon for loaning us his huge collection of postcards for the open house and to be copied for our collection.

Sales from our gift shop during the one day open house brought in a much needed \$821. We thank everyone in the community who visited and we plan on having another open house this Fall. The museum is also open by appointment. Call Bill Reagan at 463-4160. ■

SOCIETY RECEIVES \$2,200 GRANT

Senator John A. DeFrancisco awarded our Society a grant through his "Onondaga Heritage Awards" program. The program awards historical societies mini-grants to fund special local history projects. The Marcellus Historical Society was awarded the grant for its latest publication "Marcellus Through The Years." As a result, our members voted at the last meeting to place \$1,000 in proceeds from the sale of the book into our new museum fund and to have our photocopy machine repaired. We have sold almost 300 copies of the book since its December release. The remaining money has been used to replenish our future publications fund and will allow us to produce another book in the near future. Our greatest thanks and appreciation to the Senator. ■

NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT — *Bill Reagan*

I had the honor of being asked to give the Memorial Day address in Marcellus this year. I have great respect for those veterans who fought to preserve our freedom and much sympathy for the families who lost loved ones in the service. As a result I felt a great need to not disappoint anyone with my words, so I spent about a month researching information about our veterans.

Several people suggested that I print the address in our newsletter, so I present the first half of it in this issue. The second half will appear in the next issue. I wish to thank everyone for their kind words regarding the address, but the real thanks belongs to those veterans who gave their lives for our freedom.

Also in this issue we have the meeting and speaker schedule for the entire rest of the year. We have some wonderful presentations lined up thanks to the hard work of our Vice President Sidney Tuthill. I would like to encourage as many of our members as possible to attend the meetings, if you don't, you'll be missing out on some great Marcellus history!

The rest of the year looks exciting! Our first annual Marcellus Historic Home tour is scheduled for September 20 and we have five great houses lined up! Look for details in this and future issues. In October we will be having another open house at our museum with more new and special displays. Please come out and support your Historical Society. We couldn't do any of it without you! One last note: Please support our advertisers and tell them you saw their ads here! Have a great summer! ■

Bill Reagan

PHOTO SEARCH

We are looking for photos of the following historic events or scenes 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.

- The village clock being installed on the Methodist Church in 1909.
- Early photos of Marcellus Park.
- The Presbyterian Church steeple when it blew down in 1925.
- The 1973 Alvord House fire.
- Photos of early Marcellus fire equipment and engines.
- Photos of early Marcellus Police cars or officers.



NEW AND RENEWED MEMBERS

Since our last issue, 84 more people joined our Society, bringing our total membership to 670. The following people have renewed their membership or joined for the first time:

Carol Armstrong; Mildred Bradshaw; Laurie Branson; Joy L. Buffan; Bill & Kathy Bush; Martha & Will Cole; Thomas & Barbara Corey & family; Robert Dingman; Mary Drexler; June Fellows; Roger Friske; Janet Gray; Ellen M. Hall Guptill; David Hanke; Patty Head; Edward & Janet Heinrich; Dorothy R. Herold; Gary Hildman; Harry Howard; Bill & Rebecca Johnstone; Ruth & George Kinder; Richard Kissane; John Knowlton & family; Ed Lawson; Deb Leubner; Bob & Rosemary Mason & family; Thomas McGraw; Rite Meldrum; John & Ann Mitchell; Edward S. Murray; Jon Nicholson; Louis & Catherine Palladino; Ray & Betty Paul; Marie Porter; Ron & Joyce Ramsden; Veronica Revere; Bill Rivett; Tom & Jennifer Rogers & family; Ron & Judi Schneider & family; William & Eleanor Schneider; Lewis & Elizabeth Selover; Herb & Helen Sennett Toles; Don & Betty Sherman; Margaret Shields; Norma Shultz; Lucille & Tom Slater; Frank & Janet Smith; Ray & Janet Smith; Mary Snyder & Tim Clark; Roger Spofford; Russell & Nancy Striffler; Francis Vile; Joan Warrender; Bob & Alice Waters; Robert & Sharon Waters; Mary A. Woods; Marion Hall Zinc; Anthony & Joan Zukowski. ■



THIS 'N THATS

Joy L. Buffan became the first person to join the Society for five years at our new Sustaining Membership level. Thanks Joy! Over twenty people have now become Sustaining Members. Joining for five years lets you avoid any increases in dues and makes our job easier too. See our membership form for details.

We have now been mailing our bimonthly newsletter for one year! In our first year of publication we have mailed out approximately 16,100 copies! Our membership and advertisers make it all possible and we thank all of you! We try to keep adding new features to keep our newsletter interesting. With this issue we start a feature called "ASK THE HISTORIANS." We invite our readers to submit questions they may have about the history of Marcellus and we will research and answer those questions here. Send any questions to Bill Reagan at this paper. ■

Test Your Knowledge of Marcellus History

- A) The First Trust and Deposit Company merged with the First National Bank of Marcellus in 1936, 1956 or 1976?
- B) The octagon school house on Slate Hill Road was built in 1867, 1887 or 1907?
- C) Priest Chevrolet became Steven Chevrolet in 1953, 1963 or 1973?
- D) Snyder Appliance bought the building at 37 South Street in 1950, 1960 or 1970?
- E) The Saint Francis Xavier Instructional Center on North Street was built in 1959, 1969 or 1979?
- F) The first Rose Hill Seed House catalogue came out in 1887, 1897 or 1907?

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS

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

Kay Kershaw for an outdoor thermometer from D. J. Chrisler Lumber Yard. Nan Stone Hutchins for antique children's pajamas. Sondra Smolen for a crate from Master Brother's Hardware and for books. Bill Case for several certificates, photographs and books. Tom Gilmore for wool and felt manufactured in the Crown Woolen Mills. Joyce Murphy for donating a "Loss Real Estate, Marcellus, NY" Jacket. Helen Hopkins for donating photographs and newspaper clippings. Art Scotti and Linda Waterman for donating a 1956 - 1963 Marcellus High School Band uniform. Jane Conley for a 1910 Marcellus yearbook and Jane Conley and Paul Bristol for each donating a book which details the history of the Irish who came to Marcellus at the time of the great famine. Bruce Widger for a medical cabinet which was used by Dr. Walsh, MD in the 1930's and 40's and by Dr. Widger, DVM from 1953 on. Edna Henderson for donating a very old pair of shoes, a railway service pocket watch and another watch, which belonged to her Aunt, Mary Hamlin Henderson who lived on East Hill. Bill Bush for a photo of the Earl Bush Garage which was on Main Street. Peg Ryan for photos of the Mary Wybron candy store. Joan Warrender for many Marcellus Chorale artifacts including a t-shirt and a complete set of newsletters from 1988 - 95. ■

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MEETING SCHEDULE

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

Wednesday, July 9 ... Full Day of Activities - Attend some or all 1:30 PM
Boat ride on the Midlakes Navigation Line on Skaneateles Lake. Enjoy a boat ride on beautiful Skaneateles Lake. Tickets \$7.50. First come first serve.

Wednesday, July 9 10 - 8 PM
After the boat ride, attend the 38th annual Skaneateles Antiques Show if you wish. Held in the Allyn Arena, tickets are \$4.00. Receive 50¢ off coupons from Sidney Tuthill or at the village hall. After the show, stop and have dinner out where-ever you want and then attend our meeting at 7:00.

Wednesday, July 9 7:00 PM
Regular meeting at the Creamery on Hannum Street in Skaneateles. Bob Egleston, Skaneateles Historical Society President, will provide a tour and slide show of their new museum and its restoration.

Wednesday, August 13 7:00 PM
Hugh Norris will speak on Norris Funeral Home and Lester Norris.

Wednesday, September 10 7:00 PM
Rev. Keith Shinaman will speak on the many years he has lived in and served Marcellus.

Sunday, October 5 1:00 PM
Covered Dish Luncheon will be held and the guest speaker will be Richard Smith and his memories of Marcellus. Members are asked to bring a dish and their own place setting.

Sunday, November 2 2:00 PM
Guest speaker Agnes Miers will provide a presentation on the Martisco Paper Mill featuring a slide show and samples of products produced at the mill.

Sunday, December 7 2:00 PM
Pearl Harbor Day. Our guest speakers will be four Marcellus veterans from World War II, Ray and Louise Lollis, Hugh Dawson and Ray Paul.

[Meetings are held at the Marcellus Fire Station unless indicated otherwise]

MARCELLUS HISTORY CONTEST

Louise Berry solved our last riddle with the correct answer of "Marcellus Observer" and received a gift certificate compliments of Brian's Creekside Inn for a spaghetti & meatball dinner.

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 July 31, 1997. The winner, drawn at random from all correct entries, will be announced in our next issue and will receive a gift certificate from the Creekside Inn.

This issue's riddle: Fast to get on the scene, their dedication true. One hundred and thirteen, their main concern is you! *(Hint: Answers can be found in our publication "Marcellus Through The Years.")*

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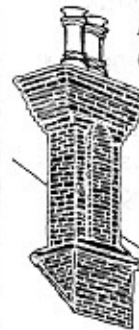
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HISTORIC HOUSE TOUR COMING!

Plans are well underway for our first-ever Historical House Tour. The event is scheduled for Saturday, September 20, from 11 - 4. Tickets are \$7.50 and they can be purchased in advance at Society meetings or on the day of the tour at the Marcellus Fire Station. Proceeds from the tour will benefit the NEW MUSEUM FUND. Advance tickets can also be purchased by calling Maureen Kantor at 673-2462 - they will also be available at various locations in town late this summer. A limited number will be sold.

The response was wonderful in our search for homes. We decided upon 5 homes for this year and have homeowners already interested in next year. The committee is excited and the homeowners are most enthusiastic! Our featured homes are those owned by: Lewis and Elma Steadman who recently purchased the Dr. Lake Tefft home at 18 North Street and are busy restoring this stately brick home that was built in 1827; Larry and Janet Bednarczyk owners of "The Old Moses House," which was built in 1817 of post and beam construction; Russell and Robin Jackson at 2599 West Seneca Turnpike, once the home of William Bangs who came to Marcellus in 1801 and built the farm home in the early 1800's; Phil and Sandy Ragovin's home at 2781 West Seneca Turnpike which is said to have been a tavern and may have been the sight of William Bang's marriage to Roxanna Hall in 1803; and the home of Gary and Jean Eichelberger of 4418 Frank Gay Road, a late 1800's totally restored farm house brimming with collectibles - Gary has offered to display his 4 vintage cars as well!

The tour will end at the Marcellus Fire Station where refreshments can be enjoyed along with a guided tour of the fire house. If Christmas gifts are a challenge this year, our Society will have its gift shop set up with a fine selection of items. Volunteers are still needed as guides, if interested, please call Jan Debevic at 673-9447. Your support is greatly appreciated in this worthwhile fund raiser, please mark your calendar and join us! ■

ASK THE HISTORIANS...

Send any questions you have about the history of Marcellus to Bill Reagan in care of this paper.

- Q. *Did there used to be two traffic lights on Main Street?*
- A. Yes. One at North and Main and one at South and Main. During World War II the lights were set to blink red or yellow continuously in order to conserve fuel. The light at South and Main was removed in 1966 when the State gave South Street to the village of Marcellus (it had been a State Route). The light was removed because the State only provides traffic lights where two State Roads intersect. It was reported that removal of the light caused great traffic jams on Main Street until drivers got used to it.
- Q. *What is in the cornerstone of the Marcellus Senior High School building?*
- A. The school was built in 1966-7 and the laying of the cornerstone took place in November of 1966. Placed in the stone were: a copy of the bond issue brochure, the official ballot, the advertisement and bond proposal, floor plans, copies of the Marcellus Observer including material concerning the building's progress and the first M.C.S. newsletter, the school yearbook, the school newspaper, the student handbook, a faculty list and the program for the 1966 commencement exercises.
- Q. *Did someone from Marcellus invent the steam engine?*
- A. Emory Wilson Mills created a sensation when he invented a new steam agricultural engine in 1869. Mills operated a small factory in Marcellus when he invented what would later be called a self-propelled traction engine. Mills died in 1882 and in 1924 Henry Ford purchased an 1877 model of Mill's invention for the Dearborn Museum. ■

THANK YOU!

Thank you to Peg Nolan for obtaining two nice display cases for the museum and to Hollis Abbott for repairing more of the clocks in our collection - he has six of them running now! And thank you to Francis Randall and Doug Whitman for donating picture frames. ■

THE WOOLEN MILLS IN MARCELLUS . . . Bill Reagan

In 1812, Robert & Thomas Dyer erected a mill which made woolens on the site of the later upper Crown Mill. The Dyer woolen mill changed hands several times before a fire destroyed it in 1847. The following year one of the owners, William Machan, rebuilt a mill on the west part of the original site with brick and continued the manufacture of woolens for a short time. The mill was then purchased by a group of investors including Horace Greeley. The new owners brought in expensive machinery from abroad for the manufacture of linen, but the undertaking proved a failure and the mill was sold at reduced price to Chester Moses, who reopened it as a woolen mill in 1855. The mill produced wool for Civil War uniforms and was flourishing at the time of his death in 1870.

In 1877, the saw mill which stood on the site of the present lower Crown Mill washed away and J.C. Sayre and a partner bought the property and in 1880 opened the first woolen mill on the site. When Sayre and his partner ran into financial problems, S.W. Barker purchased the business for \$16,000. Barker organized the Crown Mills Co. and Robert Waugh became its superintendent.

The business prospered from the beginning and soon the company was able to build a home on the corner of Scotch Hill and North Street for their superintendent, as well as the first three cottages above it as homes for mill employees. Waugh died in 1883 and Barker brought in Edward Moir as the new superintendent.

In 1886 the Moses mill at the end of Maple Street, then called Factory Street, was taken over by a stock company under the name of Marcellus Woolen Mills. Lucius Moses, son of the original owner, became president. In 1889 the company

consolidated with the Crown Mills Company. Barker became president of the merger and Moses vice president. The upper mill, on Maple Street, was enlarged in 1895. In 1896 the mill was consuming 500,000 pounds of wool annually, and the lower mill 400,000 pounds.

Control of the Crown Mills Company eventually passed into the hands of Edward Moir and remained in the Moir family until they closed. Under Moir the Crown Mills flourished. Being from Scotland, he recruited skilled workers from his native land. The mills also gave employment to the children of many of the Irish immigrants who had come to the area during the great Irish migration.

As more workers came to the mills there was need for housing. Under Moses, the company had built the first eight houses on Limerick Street. Under Moir those on East Maple, northern Limerick and on Scotch Hill were built. Moir bought the property along what is now Orchard Street and through his efforts, what had been an apple orchard became incorporated into the village and a street for additional homes for mill workers was opened. At the east end of Orchard Street the company erected a 30-room boarding house to accommodate single men. Prior to this time single men had often found lodging at the Alvord House.

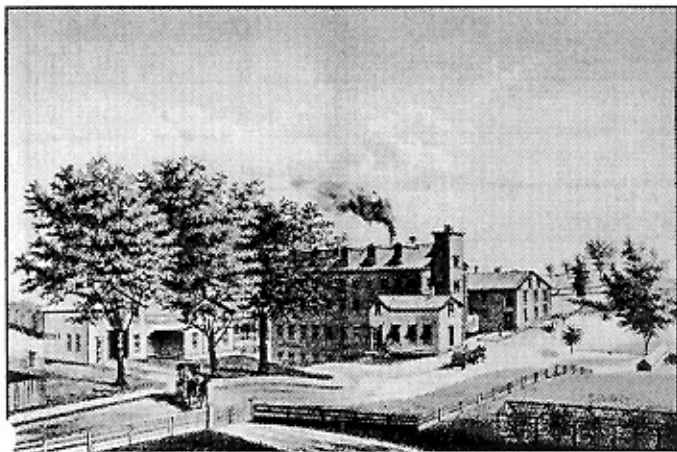
In the 1890's the mills were still operated by water power, however a steam engine was installed for added power when needed. Upon Mr. Moir's death in 1932, his son, John, became head of the Crown Mills Company. The mills continued to make a profit through World War II. Finally, due to competition from imports and the development of synthetic fabrics, the upper mill closed in 1955 and the lower mill closed in 1961.

In his daily column in the "Syracuse Post Standard" for February 10, 1935, the late Joseph Adams wrote:

"The Crown Woolen Mills, through their products, furnish comfort the length and breadth of the land, but especially to the village of Marcellus with whose history they are closely interwoven, and whose destiny is literally woven by the looms of the two plants." ■

SEE THE SKANEATELES MUSEUM!

The Skaneateles Historical Society Museum, the "Creamery," announces its summer hours. The museum is open on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 1 - 4:00 p.m. through August. Go and see their beautiful new museum on your own, or come with us on July 9th at 7:00 p.m. (See our meeting schedule.) ■



Upper Crown Mill, formerly at the end of Factory (now Maple) Street.

Marcellus Historical Society News

P.O. Box 165

Marcellus, NY 13108

Non-Profit Organization
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Marcellus, NY 13108
Permit Number 18

INSIDE...

- Meeting Schedule For Entire Year!
- Historic Home Tour Coming!
- Memorial Day Address
- History Contest

IT'S A GIRL!

Historical Society President Bill Reagan and his wife Joanne announce the birth of their first child, Alyssa Margaret. Alyssa was born on June 10th at 2:07 a.m. and weighed in at 8 lbs. ½ oz. Mother and baby both came home Wednesday June 11th and are doing great! ■

Postal Customer
Local

— GIFT SHOP / MEMBERSHIP / ORDER FORM —

The following collectibles can be purchased from the Marcellus Historical Society at open houses, or by mail order. Some are also available from local merchants and at the town & village halls. For mail orders, use the form below.

- Official Marcellus Afghans; green or cranberry, \$45 each.
- Marcellus Through The Years, 1794 - 1996; a chronological history with photos, \$6 each.
- Marcellus 1794 - 1994, When Wool Was King; a collection of photos, \$5 each.
- A Pictorial History of Early Marcellus; 53 photos, \$5 each.
- Centennial History of the Town of Marcellus, 1878; \$15 ea.
- Index to Nine Mile Country; \$5 each.
- 1960's black & white postcards; featuring the four churches and post office, \$1/set.
- Color postcard of Talbot-Case home; \$1 each.
- Marcellus Bicentennial Mugs; \$3 each.
- Official Marcellus Pins; \$5 each.

(Prices include Tax. Shipping add \$4.00/Afghan; \$2.00/mug; \$2.00/1st book -\$1.00/each additional; 50¢/postcard set or pin)

Membership Form

Please Check One Box: NEW MEMBER RENEWAL

Category (Check Box)	Basic (1-year)	Sustaining (5-Years)
Individual	<input type="checkbox"/> \$5 ea.	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25 ea.
Senior	<input type="checkbox"/> \$4 ea.	<input type="checkbox"/> \$20 ea.
Student	<input type="checkbox"/> \$4 ea.	<input type="checkbox"/> \$20 ea.
Family	<input type="checkbox"/> \$12	<input type="checkbox"/> \$60
Number of people joining _____		

(Please indicate membership dues at right.)

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____

QTY	ITEM	COST/EA.	TOTAL
_____	_____	\$ _____	\$ _____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Total \$ _____

Shipping \$ _____

Membership Dues \$ _____

ENCLOSED \$ _____

Make Check Payable and Mail To:

Marcellus Historical Society
Mr. Richard Smith, Treasurer
P.O. Box 165
Marcellus, NY 13108