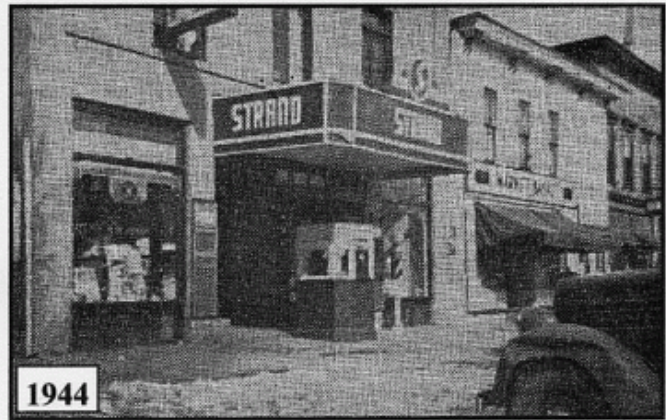




MARCELLUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

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Summer 2005



Parsons Hall and the Strand Theater

In 1914, Levi Parsons III (Seymour Parsons father and grandson of the first pastor of the Marcellus Presbyterian Church) purchased the building on Main Street where the Strand Theatre would later be located. Using horses and a windlass he moved the building to what is now Platt Road where he remodeled it and turned it into a home that is still there today.

After clearing the site he erected a cement block building using blocks made by his new machine. The walls of this building were double rows of blocks joined together by bent spikes. The building was one hundred ten feet long and was two stories high in the front, with a store on each side and a large basement underneath. The upper rooms were used by the Lodge, and the rear structure was a hall eighty feet long and thirty six feet wide.

The hall was called Parsons Hall and was where the community gathered for bazaars, talent shows, dances, graduations and basketball games. Fred Thompson went into business with Mr. Parsons showing silent movies and Mrs. Dygert would play the piano to accompany the films. In 1925 Al Jolson's "Jazz Singer" was the first successful talking picture. At this time Mr. Parsons rented the hall to a man from Weedsport who brought talking pictures to Marcellus.

In 1935 Reuben Cantor rented Parsons Hall and turned it into a real movie theatre. He created the sloping floor by placing graduated shims on the floor joists and then installed fixed seats. A marquee and ticket office were constructed at the front entrance. Mr. Cantor operated the theatre well into the 1950's when it was no longer profitable.

The building was then rented out for storage and use by a construction company. Recently the Marcellus Group has purchased the property and the old theatre will now be home to JaSpa.

Adapted from

Nine Mile Country by Katherine C. Heffernan, 1978

Submitted by Peg Nolan ~





The Round Hen House

Don Morford of "Blue Spruce Farms" made history when he built the only round hen house in New York State. He engineered and built the hen house with the help of his father-in-law James Cooper, Roy Thompson, James Harris, Otto Howard, Jacob Schaad, Rev. John J. Baker, Joseph Atwater, Thomas Sullivan, Ray Ward, Charles Barton and Francis Murphy.

In his first attempt he started building from the outside inward securing it with cable but in 1955 Hurricane Hazel's strong winds took the building down. He started again and this time began building from the inside outward. All of the wood used in the building came from his family's land in Central Square. After several months work over two thousand New Hampshire Reds were housed on the first and second floors.

Not yet completed the building needed windows, which Don would make himself using the thermal principle. He also had to lay the third floor and install two elevators: one a man lift and the other a service elevator for lifting feed, etc. to the top two floors.

The feeders for the chickens being placed in a circle made it easier to feed the chickens without disturbing them. The chickens learned to follow the sun's rays from window to window throughout the day for food.

Don came from Central Square and married Betty (Pauline) Cooper in 1941. He established Blue Spruce Farms on Howlett Hill Road about 1945/46 and remained in business for over twenty-five years. Don and Betty raised their family and retired in the late 1960's. In the early 1970's, they moved to Colorado.

Submitted by Peg Nolan ~

The Marcellus Observer June 30, 1894

BRIEF SKETCHES OF EARLY AND LATER TIMES IN MARCELLUS

History of Marcellus Falls Mills Continued. The first Saw Mill, the Grist and Flouring Mill on the Same Site.

FIFTEENTH PAPER

What is now called Marcellus Falls was for many years called Union Falls. The first settlement there was commenced in the fall of 1806 and the Herring paper mill described in our last article was one of the first business enterprises and the following year about 1808 a saw mill was built on the site of the present flouring mill. It was rather a crude mill but answered a good purpose for a few years to meet the wants of that early day. We have not learned who built it but at one time it was owned by Dr. Bildad Beach and then by Henry S. Platt.

In 1824 the first grist mill was built on this site by Silas Crane and Joseph Platt. There are a few living about here yet among them are Thomas Rhodes and Henry Steele, who remember when boys of being at the raising. The raising of such a building in those days was a great occasion. The timber of this mill was of rock elm large and heavy and men were invited for miles around to attend and lend a helping hand. They cheerfully responded expecting a jolly time and this occasion was no exception. John Reynolds was the boss carpenter and millright, though another man of experience and of heavier voice was procured to give directions in raising the building. When the timbers were all in place the customary ceremony of giving it a name, took place. A man stood on the north plate with bottle in hand, and cried out: "This is a good frame

And deserves a good name
And what shall I call it?"

Some one on the ground responded "The Pride of Algiers," (Algiers being a nick name for the place at the time) and away went the bottle as a seal to the name. There is a story handed down that Col. Erastus Laurence stood on his head on the ridge pole at this time, but the story requires a good deal of credulity to believe that any one would be so reckless. There is another story more probable, which says that Crane and Platt each had farms, and that they sent their men early to milk the cows and that they brought the milk down to the mill, and as whiskey was handy and plenty, they made it into milk punch for a crowd, and as a consequence a very jolly time followed.

(to be continued) Submitted by John Curtin ~



John Moir's Desk

Recent Acquisitions: *We wish to thank the following people for donating items to the museum collection:* **Judy Gilchrist** for grain sickle belonging to her great grandfather, Mortimer Jackson; **Nancy Stopyro** for 2 8x10 picture frames; **John E. Drummond** for Painting of dried flowers; **Gretchen Rusk, Mark, Robert & William Siersma** for MCS class of 1911 picture, MCS class of 1941 picture, First National Bank interior picture, Upper Crown Mill interior picture, Japanese music sheet, Historical Sketch of First Church Marcellus, large canvas bag from Mills Seed House, money bag from First National Bank, Emma Weeks Spaulding's piano music book, two 1953 Post Standards, newspaper articles; **Gene Rowland** for hat & shoe stretcher, Lower Mill picture by John Ward; **Helen Hopkins** for Bradley Street map original layout, gas ration coupons; **Joy, Kay & Ed Buffan** for bobble head, Mustang pin, Mustang memorabilia, greens glasses, Cliff Buffan's band letter; **Eileen Kennedy** for Martin Jewell's painting of Marietta Post Office; **Alice Snow** for 1905 YWCA Cookbook; **Jack Rice** for J.M. Murphy top calendar with thermometer; **Matt Shoff** for Mulroy Dairy milk crate; **Phyllis Gamon** for scissor sharpener from Betty Long's Gift Shop; **Allan Gamon** for pick-axe head; **Julia Pepperman** for Guernsey Drugstore bottles - 1 glycerin & 1 sweet oil; **Mary McGreal** for 1896 Onondaga County classified business directory; **Cathleen Waters Walker** for desk belonging to John Moir (see above picture); **Judy Schneider** for Hickman & Son coin holder, Snyder Appliance Center emery boards; **Ingrid & Gene Seymour** for color postcard of West Hill School; **Joy Buffan** for Cliff Buffan's Legion bowling shirt; **Bill Reagan** for 2nd grade Alphabet Book from Mrs. Fox's class. ~

Donations: *Our thanks to the following people for cash donations:*

Dave Cummings; Judy Gilchrist; George Giles; Mary Tuthill; Rev. Saunda E. Thomas. ~

Renewed Members: *(since our last newsletter)* **(Sustaining members in bold print, New members underlined):** Joel Bellows, Peter & Ethel Cole, Edward & Marilyn Copley, Pat & Mary Dailey & Family, William H. & June Frawley, Judy Gilchrist, Nettie Gilmour, Russell & Joyce Glover & Family, James & Cheryl Gonzalez, **Gene Hares & Family**, Matthew Shoff, Russell & Dorothy Snell, Patricia Sposato, Russell & Nancy Striffler, Saunda E. Thomas, Mary S. Woods. ~

Member Summary:

| | |
|----------------------------|------------|
| Current members: | 400 |
| Sustaining members: | 119 |
| Business members: | 30 |

Reminder:

The Museum is air conditioned and the stair chair is always available - so come and visit!

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Marcellus Historical Society
P.O. Box 165
Marcellus, NY 13108

Non-Profit Organization
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 Marcellus, NY 13108
 Permit Number 18

Web Site: mhs.marcellusny.com

Next Meeting:
Sunday, September 11th at 2 p.m.

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(The date on the label is the
 Year your dues are paid through.)

INSIDE:

- * *Parsons Hall & the Strand Theater*
- * *Don Morford's Round Hen House*
- * *More about Marcellus Falls Mills*
- * *Identify a picture for us*

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