



Marcellus Historical Society News

Volume 12, Issue 4

Fall 2007

A Grand Opening

On Sunday, September 16th, President Peg Nolan addresses the audience at the Grand Opening of the new home of the Marcellus Historical Society - The Steadman House at 18 North Street. Seated are: John Curtin, Marcellus Village Trustee; Daniel Ross, Marcellus Town Supervisor; Lewis and Alma Steadman, Donors of the Steadman House; and James Quinn, author of "The Town He Loved So Well". Standing are Dr. Bruce Widger, Vice President of the Historical Society and Robert Wilson, former Marcellus Village Trustee.



Lewis and Alma Steadman cut the ribbon for the formal opening of The Steadman House. Holding the ribbon are Katie Moran and Emma Moran with Peg Nolan on the right.

Standing at the top of the steps are: Ellena Schiebel, Rachael Sayre, Amanda Hoke, Olivia Bird, Lewis Moran, Madelyn Bird, Lexie Bird, Allison Moran, and Briley Caughill.

Mary Tuthill, a Trustee of the Marcellus Historical Society, rides the wheelchair lift from the lower floor to the main floor of the Steadman House during the Grand Opening Day celebration. A new stairway was built to accommodate the lift and allow easier access from the lower floor to the main floor. The lift was given by Barbara Parsons Hildreth in memory of her father, Levi Seymour Parsons, to "enable everyone to learn the history of this special place".

Photos courtesy of John Curtin



EVENTS SCHEDULE

The tentative schedule of events is as follows:

Sunday, November 11, 2007 **2 p.m.**

Gloria Wiley

"A New Community Program"

Sunday, November 11, 2007 **3:15 p.m.**

Mercy Flight Central Helicopter

Sunday, December 9, 2007 **1 p.m.**

Holiday Dinner

Sunday, January 13, 2008 **2 p.m.**

Tom Meier, Camp Director at Baltimore Woods

"Baltimore Woods Archeological Digs"

Meetings are open to anyone and are held at the Marcellus Fire Station unless indicated otherwise. A short business meeting will precede each program.

Historical Society Officers for 2007

President: Peg Nolan673-1765

E-mail: pegnolan@hotmail.com

Vice President: Bruce Widger.....673-9142

E-mail: drbwwidger@windstream.net

Treasurer: Hollis Abbott.....673-1753

E-mail: habbott1@twcny.rr.com

Secretary: Carriebeth Pottinger....673-3187

E-mail: cb90009@aol.com

Trustees and Term End

2007 Tom Leonard673-4273

E-mail: TomLeonard35@msn.com

2007 Doug Nightingale.....673-2539

E-mail: djn0409@alltel.net

2008 Mary Jane Domurat673-4896

E-mail: mjdomurat@msn.com

2008 Dick Smith.....673-1532

2009 John Curtin.....673-3660

E-mail: jcurtin2@twcny.rr.com

2009 Mary Tuthill.....673-2990

Correspondence Secretary: Joyce Murphy..673-2528

The Marcellus Historical Society,
P.O. Box 165, Marcellus, NY 13108,
publishes this newsletter and mails it quarterly to its
members and advertisers.

Please direct comments or questions to Hollis Abbott.

Annual Meeting, November 11th at 2 p.m.

The annual meeting and election of officers of the Marcellus Historical Society will take place at the regular November meeting. Nominees announced at the October 14th meeting are as follows:

Officers (two year term ending 12/31/2009)

President: Peg Nolan

Vice President: Doug Nightingale

Treasurer: Hollis Abbott

Secretary: Carriebeth Pottinger

Trustee (two year term ending 12/31/2009)

(To replace retiring Trustee, Mary Tuthill)

Joy Buffan

Trustees (three year term ending 12/31/2010)

Bob Wilson

Jamie Johnston

Nominations will also be accepted from the floor. ~

From The President ...

Our Grand Opening was a huge success. Many people made this day happen. First, **Lew and Alma Steadman**, Marcellus is truly honored by this gift. **Hollis Abbott, John Curtin, Dick Smith, Doug and Jean Nightingale**, your dedication and hard work is very much appreciated. **Barbara Parsons Hildreth**, so many people are grateful for your donation - the lift was busy all afternoon and continues to be well used. **Marcellus Garden Club** did the floral arrangements for every room and the front of the house. How beautiful they were! To the volunteers for the day we thank you: **Jane Amidon, Joy Buffan, Mrs. Hoke, Jamie Johnston, Jean Nightingale, Amy North, Cathy North, Tammy Sayre, Janet Warner, Bruce Widger**; and the student volunteers: **Alexandra Bird, Madelyn Bird, Olivia Bird, Briley Caughill, Amanda Hoke, Allison Moran, Emma Moran, Lewis Moran, Katie Moran, Rachael Sayre, Ellena Schiebel** - we couldn't have done it without you.

Hillside Gardens is providing the labor for the landscaping around the sign. As we look to the future we will need the support of everyone to complete projects that need to be done. We can all be proud of this house, a place where we can educate both the young and old. Generations to come will be able to enjoy Marcellus History.

Peg Nolan ~

In Remembrance

Isabel Sawtell - August 16, 2007

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

John T. Coyne

Allen S. Odell in memory of John & Aleene Odell



MHS Board Members at the Grand Opening:
Dick Smith, Doug Nightingale, John Curtin, Mary Tuthill, Hollis Abbott, Carriabeth Pottinger, Bruce Widger and Peg Nolan.

(Mary Jane Domurat and Tom Leonard could not attend).

Holiday Dinner December 9th at 1 p.m.

The annual Holiday Dinner, catered by Kirby Bartholomew, will be held at the Marcellus Fire Station. The price is \$12.50 per person. *Please have your payment in to the treasurer by November 26th.*

Menu

Oven Roasted Chicken
Baked Ham
Scalloped Potatoes
3 Bean Salad
Vegetable
Relish Tray
Gelatin or Fruit Salad
Parkerhouse Rolls
Coffee, Tea, Punch
Sheet Cake for Dessert ~

Steadman House Hours:

Tuesdays 7 to 9 pm (thru Dec. 18th)

Thursdays 1 to 4 pm (weather permitting)

Sundays 1 to 3 pm (weather permitting)

Or By Appointment:

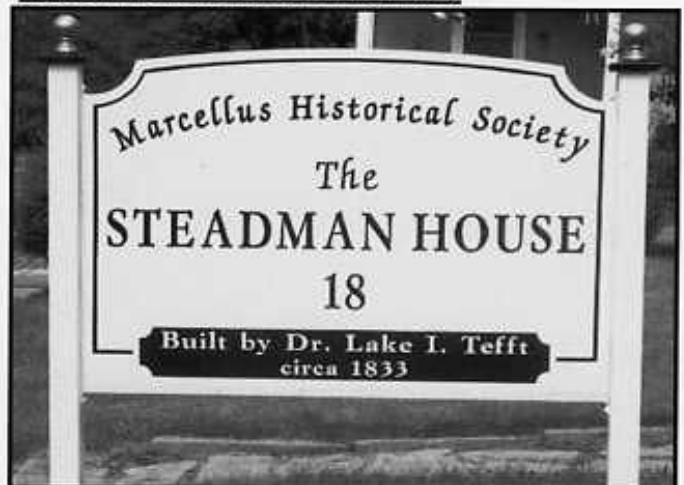
Peg Nolan - 673-1765 (Until end of year)

Bruce Widger - 673-9142

John Curtin - 673-3660

Hollis Abbott - 673-1753

Steadman House Contributions



The permanent Steadman House sign was anonymously donated to the Historical Society by a local family.

The portable "events" sign was donated by Chuck & Mary Jo Paul.

Steve Raven donated his repairing and hydro-seeding of the lawn at the rear of the house.

Peg and Joe Nolan have provided the labor to insulate the east and south walls of the garage and install pegboard.



The construction costs to make the house handicapped accessible have depleted our reserve and **we are in need of donations** to cover additional projects as follows:

- 1 - Lighting of the flag pole and the permanent sign (we have had one estimate of \$1858).
- 2 - Replacement of the floor in the Tefft room (\$800 - \$1000).
- 3 - Removal of the large tree in back yard (\$1300).
- 4 - Repairs to one chimney and capping of all the chimneys to keep water and animals from entering the house.
- 5 - Complete the insulation of the garage and the required covering of the north wall with sheetrock.
- 6 - Purchase of an additional dehumidifier (\$220).
- 7 - Acrylic panels to cover the exposed stone wall on the lower floor (\$96).
- 8 - Repair of railings on the front and side porches. ~

**Brief Sketches of Early and Later Times
in Marcellus by Rev. A. Roe**

The Marcellus Observer May 26, 1894

***Brief History of the Marcellus Powder Company
Property.***
TENTH PAPER

From some of the early settlers we learn that the first building of any account, erected on the grounds of the present Marcellus Powder Company, was a linseed oil mill, built about seventy years ago, and owned and managed by the brothers, John, Seba and David Bonta and after a few years it was converted into a distillery by David Bonta, father of Mrs. W. B. White and Myron L. Mills. Later on it came into the hands of Arthur Machan, who ran it several years until he failed, when it was run for a short time by the late Wm. J. Machan as agent. While the Machans were running it, the late D. G. Coon came out from Jefferson County and hired out to them and worked for them a while and then moved his family here in May 1841 into a house where the present office stands, a part of which is the wing part of the office house now. Here they lived three years and Mr. Coon continued working for the Machans. Then he and Arthur Machan changed residences, Machan taking the office house and Mr. Coon the one on the flat toward the creek. Mr. Coon resided there on the flat about nine years, during which time his own children, D.D.F. Coon and J. Adelaide, now Mrs. Hastings of Troy, were born. Mr. Coon formed a co-partnership with John D. Norton of Syracuse, and William B. Olney, the firm name being Norton, Coon & Olney. They first rented the property and Mr. Norton who continued to live in Syracuse and being a man of considerable means, soon thought it better to buy it and he furnished the means temporarily for the purchase. They went on and greatly enlarged the buildings and the yards and did a much larger business and kept more cattle and hogs. They made money in the business and one time a large amount by the rise in the price of whiskey, they having a large quantity on hand, but occasionally had quite heavy losses also. They lost in one year five hundred hogs with cholera, but were more fortunate with their cattle, generally doing well with them. Mr. Coon had a secret in making yeast, which he bought of a Frenchman, which gave him some notoriety and largely added to their profits by which he increased the product of whiskey from the grain from 9 to 18 quarts per bushel. After about five years, Norton went out of the firm and the firm became Coon &

Olney. A few years after, or early in 1853, Mr. Coon bought the place of Samuel Ball, where he soon moved and where he afterwards lived and died, and which is still owned and occupied by his family. Some two years after he moved to this place there was a gathering one night at a husking bee, and the same night there was a carousal at the distillery that ended up with a quarrel, the beginning and details of which have never been fully known. Some outsiders, as well as employees, had a hand in it. In the melee two persons lost their lives. One was John Galligan, the book-keeper, supposed to be innocent, and in the discharge of his duty in trying to put a stop to the fight as he had the reputation of being a quiet, peaceable man and the other was James English, not an employee. Others, undoubtedly had a part in the fracas but it is not definitely known how many. One Albert or "Cub" Bessey, as he was called, was teamster at the time and afterwards moved to and now lives in Nebraska. He was mixed up in the affair and it is thought knew more about it than he was willing to own. The unfortunate affair created great excitement at the time. The guilt of the crimes committed was not fastened upon any one so that no legal penalties were inflicted. Those implicated went free and some suspected ones proved an alibi.

Coon and Olney did not run the distillery long after this but sold out to John E. Jones. Mr. Jones did not run the distillery but took out all that was valuable in the building and sold it and turned the building into a paper mill machine shop. After a time a fire destroyed the building, shed house and everything about them. Some years after the site and real estate were advertised for sale by Cyrus Sweet, trustee for the Morris Coal Company and other creditors and sold at public auction on the 30th day of April, 1875, at the Court House in Syracuse, when Davis Cossit was Sheriff of the county, and Joel G. Northrup took the property with the incumbrance and received a Sheriff's deed from Cossit.

In April, 1877, Northrup gave a contract to William Wicking, R. O. Crump, and John H. Asgoodby, who were to build and did build some of the present powder mill buildings, and went so far as to make a few hundred kegs of powder, but through embarrassments were unable to fulfill their contract and surrendered the property, losing all or nearly all they put in. Subsequently in February, 1879, Northrup leased the property to John D. Griswold of Buffalo, for five years, with the privilege of making changes and improvements in the machinery and

buildings and the further privilege of purchasing the property if he so desired, which he did purchase about two years thereafter, and Griswold in the spring of 1881 sold the property with all the appurtenances thereof to the Marcellus Powder Company, a corporation duly organized and existing under and by virtue of the laws of the State of New York.

The company, formed in 1881, consisted of Griswold, Hamilton, Holden, Thos. Moloy, James M. Ward and John C. Keefe, mainly Syracuse parties. John C. Keefe became Secretary and Treasurer. In the fall of 1881, the Duponts bought out Griswold's share, and a little later bought out the balance of the stock. A while later the property came into the hands of a syndicate, consisting of the largest firms in the United States, the Duponts, the Hazard Company, the Oriental and the Lafler and Rand, who now own it. John D. Griswold was Superintendent and agent for a time while he was in the company, or until December 15, 1881, when he retired and H. P. Tefft, who came here in December, 1879, was made superintendent, and has continued in this position ever since. The buildings have undergone considerable change and improvement in the meantime, and some, destroyed by explosion and fire, have been replaced. Quite an explosion and fire, that took place on Thanksgiving day, 1879, created some commotion, and a fire consumed the dry house about six years ago, but no lives were destroyed, and no very serious loss was sustained.

These works consist of the office building, the dry house pulverizer mill, No. 1, pulverizer mill, No. 2, the press and mix building, the corning mill, the glaze mill, drying, finishing and packing and are capable of turning out 150 kegs or about two tons of powder per day, and when in operation employ thirteen or fourteen men. They have been in operation daily (sic) a part of the time for the last fifteen years. The works are in good repair, ready for use and under the careful supervision of H. P. Tefft. This place is the shipping station for powder for all Central New York. Powder is shipped in by the car load, and sent out on orders to any part, in any quantity, from the smallest package to any amount called for. It is uncertain when the works here may start up again.

Submitted by John Curtin ~

The Joanne Robinson Research Room at the Steadman House has census records, family histories, scrapbooks, Marcellus Observers and other Marcellus files available for your use.



The c.1910 Hoosier Kitchen Cabinet pictured above in the Steadman House Kitchen Room was made by Hart & Beebe in Rose Hill. It is on loan from Bill & Mary Warren.

The Marcellus Observer November 20, 1879

The Celluloid Marvel

A capital example of those numerous industrial revolutions of which we have spoken, and which are peculiarly characteristic of America, is furnished by the article, celluloid. Although it was invented nine or ten years ago (by two brothers names Hyatt), its perfect manufacture has been regularly in progress for only about five years, and is considered to be only in its infancy, yet immense quantities of the substance are produced. It is converted into a wonderful variety of forms, and new modes of applying it are discovered daily.

This composition of tissue paper, camphor and certain chemicals is already used for billiard balls, combs, back of brushes, hand-mirrors and other toilet articles, whip, cane and umbrella handles, every kind of harness trimmings, foot-rules, chessmen, handles of knives and forks, pencil cases, jewelry of all kinds, pocket books, mouth-pieces for pipes, cigar-holders, musical instruments, dolls' heads, porcelain imitations, hat-bands, neckties, optical goods, shoe tips and insoles, thimbles, emery wheels, shirt-cuffs, collars, etc. Its use as a substitute for ivory has already exercised a world-wide effect upon the ivory industry, the falling off in the demand having been felt in the remote regions of Africa--*Exchange*.

(Note: Celluloid was one of the first "plastic" materials and was patented by John Hyatt in 1870. It was highly flammable and is still used for ping-pong balls.)

Submitted by Hollis Abbott ~

Recent Acquisitions: *We wish to thank the following people for donating items to add to our collection:*

Lason Dorchester for First Nation Bank yardstick; **Dorothy Masters Manilla** for Teacher Hazel Hackett's notebook on students 1903/04 & 1904/05, Pearl Lord's autograph; **Phil Murphy** for Fireman's patch from early 1960's; **Eve Travers** for 1940's MCS Band uniform, 1939 Grange minute book, Children's Grange 101; **Jane Amidon** for Waterless aluminum cookware; **Betty DeDell** for doll's table, 2 chairs, china cabinet from Christmas 1914, Toy WW I Soldier & Cannon; **Hollis Abbott** for bentwood cradle, wooden baby carriage, oak-framed mirror; **Peg & Bud Flitcroft** for 2 photos of 1961 Marcellus Community Council, 2 MCS Girls' Athletic Club clothing patches, MCS Mustangs clip-on button, MCS green stadium cushion; **Joy Buffan** for June 2007 Program for Children's playground in Marcellus Park, Onondaga Historical Assoc. booklet, framed collage of MCS buildings & 1967 plaque; **Helen Fenlon** for bookcase made by Dwight Baker, quilt top, crocheted vest, 1935-39, 1942, 1946, 1947 Marcellians; **Janet Linderman** for 2 complete WW II Army uniforms, 3 pamphlets on Marcellus development 1964, 1968 & 1970; **Marion Ossit** for early newspaper, 1942 Country Gentleman Magazine, Winners Flute Primer Music Book; **Eleanor & Bill Schneider** for typewriter; **Doris Phillips** for 1850's parlor stove; **Dave & Lisa Gallinger** for painting of Jones/Master house; **Dan Coon** for portrait of Dan G. Coon, picture copies; **Joyce Murphy** for Haney racing jacket; **Nancy Casler** for men's spats from Jim Curtin, 1938 Mills Seed House catalog; **9 Mile Landing** for set of dishes in memory of **Frances Alexander**. ~

Renewed Members: *(since our last newsletter) (Sustaining members in bold print, New members underlined):*

Newt & Ann Allen, Daphne Bedford-Goldacker, Bill & Kathy Bush, Shirley Criswell, Lucille Culotti, Janet Fisher, Barbara Hildreth, Phil & Toni Mezey, Doug & Cathy North & Family, Lisa Rigge, George & Bev Schmidt, Gene & Ingrid Seymour, Patricia Sposato, Mr. & Mrs. William G. Tallman, Robert Waters, Leona Wilcox.

Current membership: 412 ~

Reminder: Membership covers the calendar year and the newsletter is discontinued if dues are not paid by March 31st.

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**Call Hollis Abbott at 673-1753 to include your Ad
in our Business Member Directory.**

Marcellus Historical Society
P.O. Box 165, 18 North St.
Marcellus, NY 13108

Non-Profit Organization
 U. S. Postage Paid
 Marcellus, NY 13108
 Permit Number 18

Web Site: mhs.marcellusny.com

NEXT MEETING (Annual Meeting):

Sunday, November 11th, 2 p.m.
Mercy Flight Central Helicopter due
to arrive at 3:15 p.m.

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

Postal Customer
 Local

INSIDE:

- * *The Grand Opening*
- * *Holiday Dinner December 9th*
- * *Marcellus Powder Company*
- * *Celluloid*

~ GIFT SHOP & MEMBERSHIP ORDER FORM ~

Please use this form or a copy of it to join the society and to order our historic collectibles.

Join Our Society Today!

\$5/Person ~ \$9/Couple ~

\$12/Family (includes children under 18)

Basic Membership = 1 yr. ~ Sustaining = 5 yr.

(Multiply dues by 5 for sustaining membership)

Number Joining? _____ New Members? _____

Name: _____

Addr: _____

City: _____

Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Qty	Item Description	Cost Ea	Total
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
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Available Collectibles

Pucker Street by John Curtin \$26
 Ruth Anne Reagan Prints of Marcellus \$20
 John Drummond "Dried Weeds" Print \$20
 Around Marcellus by Leslie Church Kraus \$20
 The Town He Loved So Well by James Quinn \$20
 Official Marcellus Afghans: cranberry, blue, green .. \$45
 Centennial History of the Town of Marcellus \$15
 Otisco Lake Map 1868 \$10
 Marcellus, When Wool Was King, Pictorial \$ 5
 Marcellus Through the Years; Chronology, photos \$ 5
 Index to Nine Mile Country; Names and more \$ 5
 New Colored Postcards of Marcellus \$ 1
 Postcards(5), 1960's B&W, 4 churches, post office \$ 1
 Package of 10 note-cards picturing Marcellus \$ 5
Shipping: \$3 per book, \$4 other.

Make Checks Payable to:	Total	\$ _____
Marcellus Historical Society	Shipping	\$ _____
PO Box 165	Dues	\$ _____
Marcellus, NY 13108	Total Enclosed	\$ _____