

Marcellus Historical Society News

Volume 19 Issue 1

Winter 2014

MARCELLUS AND OTISCO LAKE RAILWAY by Bill Reagan

The first thoughts of a railroad through Marcellus began in 1871, but never got beyond talking. In 1897 the Marcellus Electric Railroad Company formed. The M.E.R.R. officers were Edward Moir, L.N. Mogg, Edmund Reed and John M. Seymour. Due to rock formations at Marcellus Falls, the job was given up with less than two miles of roadbed constructed. Promoters would not give up.

With more backing, construction resumed in 1901 and the line was completed from the New York Central station at Martisco to its own station at the base of East Hill in Marcellus village.

In 1903, William P. Barrows of Philadelphia purchased the railroad. Even though several trolley poles were installed, an electric train never operated on the line. Locomotive No. 1, a 2-4-0 Baldwin steamer was delivered in 1904. On May 25, 1905 the Marcellus & Otisco Lake Railway was incorporated with officers Frederick McOwen, Sylvester S. Marvin, Frederick M. Simons and William P. Barrows. Passenger service began July 1, 1905.

The line was extended another 9.05 miles to Otisco Lake and provided three round trips a day between Martisco and Marietta using two Pullman coaches which the line had purchased. In 1909 the M. & O. L. began carrying the mail to and from Martisco for the post office at Marietta and Rose Hill. Freight service was provided to the farmers for transporting their products.

The railroad tracks ran from Martisco station along the east side of the gorge road. The bed is still visible along the gorge road today. It curved around the front of the Haney residence at the base of Glover road, and crossed to the west side of the gorge road, then headed south along the east side of the Martisco Paper Mill. The railroad cut behind the house just south of the paper mill, and ran for a quarter mile just west of the gorge road and crossed over the Nile Mile Creek behind the lower Crown Woolen Mill. The tracks then continued south along the present sewer plant road and crossed North street at the base of the high school driveway.

The railroad then followed the creek behind the apartments on North street, then near the end of Paul street, crossed the creek again and ran along Limerick street where it then crossed Main street at the base of East Hill. The Marcellus and Otisco Lake Railway's village station was on the right side of Station Lane. The tracks then proceeded out of the village through the Marcellus Park and ran behind Nightingale Mills, crossing South street road near the bridge over Nine Mile Creek, and headed south to Otisco Lake.

The railroad provided freight service to the mills in Marcellus and Marietta for many years. In 1914 passenger service was discontinued on the railroad because of the construction of a stone road built around Otisco Lake in 1913, and the increased popularity of the automobile. In 1921 David Sims bought the railroad at a foreclosure sale and operated it until 1930 when Allen V. Smith took over control. In 1940 the tracks from Nightingale Mills to Otisco Lake were abandoned because trucks were cutting into the railroad's freight business. At this point the railroad became one of the shortest shortlines in the country, at only 2.84 miles. Over the years engines included No. 2, a 4-4-0 Brooks; No. 3, a 2-4-2T Baldwin; No. 12, a 0-6-0 Alco Brooks; No. 7185, two Shay 2 truck Limas; No. 7187 and No. 7025, and a diesel B-B Vulcan. Engineers on the line included Jim Miller, Jim Dillon, Henry Welsh and Bob Muldoon.

Lack of Revenue continued and on July 18, 1959 the train took its last trip. Engineer Robert Muldoon and Trainman, freight handler and switchman, John Murphy were cold the line was closed. The diesel was sold to a firm in West Virginia.

The freight station was located on what is now called Station Lane. Bob Muldoon lived in a house on the south end of the property. After the termination of the Railroad, Clifford Hayden purchased the property and started a business named Crawler Equipment in what was the Engine House. He lived in the Robert Muldoon house. He later sold the house and moved it to its present location. The station house was torn down. The Crawler Equipment building is now S & S Tractor. ~ (See pictures on page 4)

EVENTS SCHEDULE

The tentative schedule of events is as follows:

Sunday, April 13, 2014 2 p.m.

Bruce Widger

"Film on Marcellus and surrounding Farmers"

Sunday, May 18, 2014 2 p.m.

"Early Businesses in Marcellus Falls"

Saturday, June 7, 2014 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. *OPEN HOUSE - OLDE HOME DAYS*

Sunday June 8, 2014

1 p.m.

Annual Picnic

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 2014

Historical Society Officers for 2014		
President: Peg Nolan	673-1765	
E-mail: peganolan1@hotmail.com		
Vice President: Kathy McLaughlin		
Treasurer: Patricia Sanborn	488-3610	
E-mail: pasanborn@twcny.rr.com		
Secretary: Carriebeth Pottinger	673-3187	
E-mail: cb90009@aol.com		
Trustees and Term End		
2014 Mary Jane Domurat	673-4896	
E-mail: mjdomurat@msn.com		
2014 Tom Leonard	673-4273	

E-mail: mjdomurat@msn.com		
2014 Tom Leonard	673-4273	
E-mail: tomleonard35@yahoo.com		
2015 John Curtin	673-3660	
E-mail: jcurtin2@windstream.net		
2015 Bob Wilson	673-2550	
2016 Jamie Johnston	673-1160	

2016 Harvey Eysman......673-3933

Correspondence Secretary:

Jean Nightingale......673-2539

The Marcellus Historical Society,
P.O. Box 165, 18 North St., Marcellus, NY 13108,
publishes this newsletter and mails it quarterly to its
members and advertisers.

Email address: histsoc@windstream.net

Please direct comments or questions to Hollis Abbott at the above address or email: habbott1@twcny.rr.com

From The President ...

Thank you to the volunteers who helped to decorated the Steadman House for the holidays: Pat and Charlie Sanborn, Cathy North, Amy North, Maureen Curtin, Jean Nightingale and Mary Jo Paul. The house looked beautiful! Your help is greatly appreciated.

On Dec. 5th, close to 250 people visited for "Children to talk with Santa" and have their pictures taken and on Dec.7th, we held an Open House. Thank you to all the volunteers who helped with these events.

Dec. 8th was our Holiday Dinner at the Fire Station. Members enjoyed a great meal and had a delightful time.

Thank you to Bob & Kay Wilson for donating the direction signs in the village to the Steadman House and to the Village Highway Dept. for putting them up.

We are grateful to the William C. Pomeroy Foundation for the historical plaque designating the Steadman House as being on the National Registry.

To everyone for your support of monetary donations, artifacts and written history a big **Thank You!** Without your support we couldn't function.

I am looking forward to the coming year and hope to see you at the Steadman House!

Peg Nolan

MEETING TIMES

Regular meetings of the Marcellus Historical Society will be at 2 pm on the 2nd Sunday of the months of April, May, June, October, November and December except when Easter or Mother's Day occurs on the 2nd Sunday - in which case, the meeting will be on the 3rd Sunday of the month.

Steadman House Hours (Weather Permitting):

Sundays 1 to 3 pm (except meeting Sundays)
Thursday Afternoons 1 to 4 pm
Or By Appointment:
Peg Nolan - 673-1765
John Curtin - 673-3660

Members are being asked to give us their email address so that we can contact them with information such as meeting programs and changes.

Please send to histsoc@windstream.net.

In Remembrance

Pauline Reynolds - January 18, 2014 Robert Lee - January 23, 2014

Robert J. Mahan, Sr. - January 27, 2014

Our Thanks for Cash Donations from:

Jodell McVey **Chris Christensen Mary Tuthill** MCS Class of 1963 **Jerry Orton** John & Rose Phillips **Kathryn Kelly Bruce & Mary Widger** Roger & Joan Field George & Bev Schmidt **Hollis & Nancy Abbott** (for computer) James & Laura Duncan (in memory of Jean Moir Miller) Bill & Donna Renner John & Carolyn Longuil **Barbara Parsons Hildreth** (in memory of Murray "Mo" Helfer) **Barbara Parsons Hildreth** (in memory of Joe Nolan)

Renewed Members

Since our last newsletter with **Sustaining members** in **bold print** and New members underlined:

Carol Abbott, Brian & Debi Abbott & Family, Mark & Lynn Abbott & Family, Dr. Gary & Vanessa Belcher, Judith G. Bryant, Bill & Kathy Bush, Chris Christensen, Paul Decapio, Harvey & Donna Eysman, Jean Forster, Elizabeth Foster, James Hamilton, Beverley Haney, Earl & Evelyn Hudson, Kathryn Kelly, Tyrone & Sylvia King, Robert Lee, John & Carolynn Longuil, James Lozott, Mary McGreal, Kathy McLaughlin, Jodell Z. McVey, Ted & Judy Morton, Marni Nolan, Peg Nolan, Jerry Orton, Barbara Patrick, John & Rose Phillips, Carriebeth Pottinger, Florence Pottinger, Bill & Donna Renner, Neil & Diane Schneider, Sheila Schweitzer, Joanne Sedgwick, Ruth Slovenski, Kathy P. Smiley, Richard & Frances Smith, Patricia Sposato, Roberta M. Welsh, Frank Withey. ~

Current Membership: 241 Not renewed from 2013: 145

New Members: 2 Business Members: 32

Please renew your membership!
We depend on dues to help maintain
our collection and the Steadman House.

Life Memberships were awarded at the November 2013 meeting to the following members for their generous contributions to the Marcellus Historical Society:

Hollis A. Abbott
John & Rosemary Coyne
Barbara Parsons Hildreth
Robert & Alice Mahan
James & Donna Quinn
Mary Tuthill
Billy Vinzant
Bruce & Mary Widger ~

Steadman House Contributions

We are grateful to the following people for their donations of time, labor and materials at the Steadman House: Pat & Charlie Sanborn and Jean & Doug Nightingale for keeping the Steadman House open during scheduled hours; Bruce & Mary Widger for Newsletter mailing; and the Village of Marcellus for plowing driveway and parking lot. ~

Recent Acquisitions

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

Gerry & Libbie Young Family for old Marcellus Observer, Pathfinder magazines, Farm Journal, Boy Scout Handbook; Florence Pottinger for West to East Aerial view of Marcellus; Chris Christensen for West to East Aerial view of Marcellus; Peg Nolan for Christmas decorations; Warner's Auto Body for Candy canes, Christmas tree; Chuck Paul for L. D. Paul advertising ashtray; Pat & Charlie Sanford for meeting photos; Virginia Unckless for Marcellus postcards, Isaac Sherman information; Sheila Farrington Schweitzer for chart of descendants of Phillip & Martha Cody, photo of Henry James' smokehouse, photo of Marietta United Christian Church, photos and newspaper clippings of Rose Hill Seed House and employees, M & OL booklet and newspaper articles from 1949 (see page 4) and 1950 souvenir ticket, 1917 ASC postcard, Clintonville newspaper article, photo of H. Case, family photo possibly of Chapman family, Rachel Baker article; Pat & Charlie Sanborn for photos of June 2013 2nd grade class visit, Santa's visit 2013, Steadman House decorations 2013, Hollis Abbott for photos of Town Hall mural and "First National Bank" printing on the Town Hall, Peg & Bob Shields for Hugh Hall 1985 drawing of "Autumn in Marcellus"; Barbara Spain for Minstrels of 1949 program by American Legion Post 297, 1995 & 1996 Marcellus Observers. ~



GRAVURE SECTION, SUNDAY, December 11, 1949



M. & O. L. TRAIN, puffing along, north of Marcellus Falls in 1906. At throttle of Engine No. 1 is Engineer Miller.



MARCELLUS AND OTISCO LAKE RAILROAD

One of the shortest railroads in the United States, the M. and O. L. R. R. is still in operation between Martisco and Marcellus. Originally constructed in 1897 as an electric railroad, it was later reorganized and built as a steam railway, reaching Otisco lake in 1906. Pictures of this famous short railway appear on this page. A complete history of the M. and O. L. may be found in the news section of todays Post-Standard Photos Coursesy Syracuse Chapter, National Rullway Historical Societs.

Newspaper Clippings From Sheila Schweitzer ENGINE NO. 2 of the M. & O. L. R. R. and employees pictured in 1907. Left to right are Edward Taylor, master mechanic; James Dillon, engineer; Timothy Nolan, conductor; Patrick Dillon, father of the engineer; Daniel Casey, laborer; Edward Rosser, brakeman; John Stewart, general manager; Charles Roach, fireman, and Robert Muldoon.

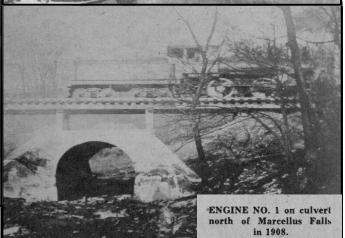


PRESENT PERSONNEL of M. & O. L. R. R. Left to right are Robert Muldoon, engineer; Mrs. A. Morroco, station mistress, secretary and treasurer of corporation, and George Murphy, trainman.









Marcellus Free Library Celebrates 100 Years

The Reading Room located upstairs in the Knapp building was the beginning of the Marcellus Free Library. This room was organized in 1913 by the Civic Club. In 1913 Elizabeth Chapman gifted two bookcases with shelves, double top desk, two barrels of corals and curios and two hundred and fifty volumes. The Civic Club met in October of 1913 to organize the Library and they appointed George L. Amerman as first part time librarian. A provisional charter was granted by the NYS Board of Regents. The library then received a matching grant from the NYS Library Fund for the purchase of books. Grants, gifts, membership fees and local fund raising made it possible for the library to function until after 1941.

In 1916 the First National Bank was planning a new building and made arrangements for the library to use the second floor, provided that the Library Board could contribute \$2000 toward the cost of the building. The Library Board trustees with chairman Frank W. Knapp began plans to raise the necessary funds. The Library moved to the new bank building in August, 1917 and an endowment fund was begun for the library.

In 1928 the Clift sisters gave \$6000 in memory of their father, Hiram Clift, for the building fund. When George and Maggie Smith owners of the house on Slocombe Avenue since 1885 decided to sell the house, the Board agreed that with the building fund and interest from the endowments they could buy the house. The house was purchased and remodeled for the new library with an apartment upstairs for the caretaker. The new library was dedicated on June 7th, 1934 and a plaque was placed on the front of the house in memory of Hiram Clift. In 1976 an addition was put on the library and an Open House was celebrated in 1977.

The Library opened its new building at 22 Maple Street in May 2008.

Submitted by Peg Nolan ~

Marcellus Observer January 2, 1914 THE LIBRARY

The trustees of the Marcellus Free Library met Monday, at which time Mrs. Webster of the State Library of Albany was present, and a general discussion in regard to the work line was had, and as an outcome the trustees signed the State charter and the work will go on at once. Those in charge of the library are much encouraged with the help they are receiving, but in the near future a thorough canvas

of the town, both in the village and the surrounding country, will be made, and it is earnestly hoped that every individual appealed to will lend their hearty support to this worthy cause, by donations of either money, books or periodicals. ~

Marcellus Observer April 10, 1914 THE MARCELLUS FREE LIBRARY

The librarian reports the library open and ready for business on the regular days as posted.

Apparently the public appreciate the privilege of taking out books; on the opening afternoon twelve books were loaned. The record for this first afternoon is interesting both as "history" and as showing the nature of the books loaned, which may be taken as a fair sample.

Margaret Knapp—Twenty Years at Hull House.

Mrs. Amerman—T. Tembarom.

Mrs. Gillett—The Luxury of Children and Other Luxuries. Miss Reed—Westways.

James Hogan—The Adventures of Tom Sawyer.

Harold Powell—Squirrels and Other Fur Bearers.

Cameron McKenzie—Freckles.

Duguld Amerman—The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn. Vernon Whitfield—Heart of Oak Reader, vol. 4.

Poter Amerman—Joan of Arc.

Robert Whitfield—The Iron Boys as Foremen. Harvey Woodford—Tales of the Round Table.

On Saturday evening 17 new borrowers signed the application book and 40 books were loaned as follows: Adult Action, 19; adult classified, 3; juvenile fiction, 10; juvenile classified, 8; total, 40.

The calls upon the library thus far have demonstrated the need of adding more books at once to certain classes and the committee in charge will see that the additions are made as soon as possible. Some good books have been donated and others will be purchased and placed on the shelves for circulation.

All who have not become members of the library association, thereby assisting and adding one dollar a year to this worthy cause, are urged to come to the library and join. Don't wait to be personally solicited. The committee hopes to issue neat membership cards to all who have or may become members of the association, and with cooperation Marcellus will soon have a library of which it may justly be proud.

The library welcomes the privilege and opportunity of doing its share towards making "Old Home Week" a success. Let us make our library a convenient place for meeting old friends and making new, for registering the names of all who visit our village that week, and for advertising this new village enterprise.

An interesting talk on local history by Rev. Dr. Beauchamp has been arranged for and the date will be announced in the near future.

Watch this space for Library news. ~

One Hundred Years Ago in Marcellus

Marcellus Observer January 2, 1914

Duck Dinners Expensive

Michael Waters, who lives near The Falls, foiled six duck thieves who attempted to rob him of several choice fowl near 1 o'clock Christmas Day. "Mike" was hiding under a bush close to his house and saw a party of young men from Camillus shoot four of his ducks. He rushed out of his hiding place and succeeded in rescuing three ducks, while the marauders fled with only one. The next day Mr. Waters brought the three rescued ducks to Camillus to show to Justice House. While in the village he spent some time in O'Hara's café, and when he came out the ducks had been stolen from the rig. Mr. Waters took out warrants for the men, but the offenders finally came to a private settlement and paid about a dollar a mouthful for their Christmas ducks. Mr. Waters says that he has lost 51 fowls in the same way during the past two years. ~

Marcellus Observer February 13, 1914 MAKES OLD PEOPLE STRONG AND WELL

I want to get the news to all old people about Rexall Olive Oil Emulsion, a remarkable new food-medicine which I firmly believe is the best remedy ever made to overcome the weakening, debilitating effects of increasing old age. It helps to rebuild wasted tissues, strengthen the nerves, and give new energy and a lively feeling to the body. It contains no alcohol or dangerous drug. It may not make you feel better for a few days, but if you do not feel much better and stronger before you have taken a quarter as much as you have of other medicines that have not helped you, I will gladly give back your money. Rexall Olive Oil Emulsion contains pure Olive Oil and the Hypophosphites which, though they have long been endorsed by successful physicians, are here for the first time combined. The result is a real body, nerve and bloodbuilding food-medicine that we believe is superior to anything else in overcoming debility, weakness and liability to disease, and to tone and Strengthen the nerves and enrich the blood. You who are weak and rundownyou who are often troubled by various cold weather ailments, use Rexall Olive Oil Emulsion to get and keep well and strong. It is a sensible pleasant-tasting aid to renewed strength, better spirits, glowing health. If it doesn't help you, come and tell me and I will give back your money without a word. That is how much faith I have in it. Sold only at the 7,000 Rexall Stores, and in this town only by me. \$1.00.—Austin C. Marble, Marcellus. ~

Marcellus Observer February 20, 1914 Earthquake Ruins Reservoir

Many startling stories are related concerning the experiences of individuals at 1:35 last Tuesday, when the earthquake shock was felt, but none we have heard are quite so serious, brought so close home, or of such definite loss and inconvenience as the destroying of a fine reservoir on the farm of E. L. Knowles on West Hill from Marcellus village. ~

Marcellus Observer January 23, 1914 Baker Hill

Several teams are hauling ice from Mud Lake. ~

Marcellus Observer February 27, 1914

A hundred people in five sleighloads enjoyed the ride to Marcellus and return, given by the L.O.T.M. last Saturday night. One load was made up of Marcellus Maccabees and their wives. After the ride, supper was served at Maccabee Hall, followed by games and a good time. The proceeds of the affair will go toward paying for the new piano and other improvements which the Knights and the Ladies are adding to their hall. The chances on the chair which the L.O.T.M. are raffling will be drawn Thursday, March 19. ~

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Marcellus Historical Society P.O. Box 165, 18 North St. Marcellus, NY 13108-0165

Web Site Address: mhs.villageofmarcellus.com

NEXT MEETING: Sunday, April 13th, 2 p.m.

(Your dues are paid through Dec. 31st of the year on the label.)

Non-Profit Organization

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Permit Number 18

Marcellus, NY 13108

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- * 100 Years ago in Marcellus

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