

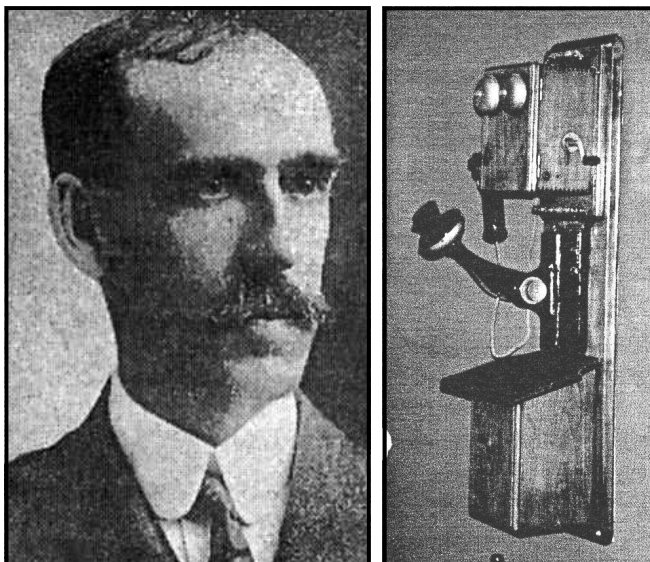


Marcellus Historical Society News

Volume 19 Issue 2

Spring 2014

History of The Finger Lakes Telephone Corp.



Frank W. Knapp and the first residential telephone in Marcellus (installed in his home)

The first telephone in Marcellus was a public pay station installed by the Central Telephone Company of Syracuse in 1895. It was installed in a barber shop located on the South side of Reed Street just off of North Street. This small building later served as Dr. Joseph Walsh's office and is still standing. This telephone stood about six feet tall with a long goose neck transmitter and a wet cell battery box made of butternut wood.

In 1903, Frank Knapp, a prominent local attorney, started the Marcellus Telephone Company as an Independent (of the Bell System) Telephone Company solely owned by him. The Marcellus Telephone Company began with sixteen subscribers all on one telephone line extending from Marcellus to Marcellus Falls. Some of the subscribers were: Mr. Knapp, The First National Bank, The Crown Woolen Mills, the Moir family, The Onondaga Paper Company, the Lawless family, Mr. Allen V. Smith and Mr. Roy Smith.

In 1925, James A. Clary, Sr. purchased the company from Mr. Knapp and in January of 1926 incorporated it as The Finger Lakes Telephone

Corporation serving 425 subscribers. Mr. Clary was a former New York Telephone Company employee who left the Company in the early 1920's and purchased the telephone company in Vernon, New York. His intention was to operate both companies, but late in 1926, his health broke and he sold Vernon. He died in 1927, at the age of 34, of cancer which developed from injuries incurred while serving in the Signal Corps of the U. S. Army during World War I.

His widow, Mary A. Clary, decided to continue running the company, which she did during the Depression and World War II. Mrs. Clary also was a former New York Telephone Company employee who started as an operator in Auburn, New York and, upon marriage, resigned as a Supervisor of Chief Operators in New York City.

From 425 subscribers when Mr. Clary purchased the company in 1925, the number dropped to 360 in 1932 as a result of the Depression. During these years, growth was very slow, but the service rendered by the telephone operators was very personal. If a caller could not remember the called party's telephone number, all he/she had to do was give the name of the called party and the operator would complete the call.

Another service that the operators performed was to ring the Village Fire Siren upon the report of a fire in the Community and then direct the Volunteer firemen to the scene of the fire. This service was provided free of charge to the Community until 1952 when the Company converted to an automatic dial system.

(Continued on page 4)



The Finger Lakes Telephone Corp. on North Street

EVENTS SCHEDULE

The tentative schedule of events is as follows:

Sunday, May 18, 2014 2 p.m.

Bruce Widger

“More Film on Local Farmers”

Saturday, June 7, 2014 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

OPEN HOUSE - OLDE HOME DAYS

Sunday June 8, 2014 1 p.m.

Annual Picnic

No Meetings During July, August and September

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

President: Peg Nolan673-1765

E-mail: peganolan1@hotmail.com

Vice President: Kathy McLaughlin

E-mail: mclaughlink@hotmail.com.....

Treasurer: Patricia Sanborn488-3610

E-mail: pasanborn@twcny.rr.com

Secretary: Carriebeth Pottinger...673-3187

E-mail: cb90009@aol.com

Trustees and Term End

2014 Tom Leonard.....673-4273

E-mail: tomleonard35@yahoo.com

2014 Doug Nightingale.....673-2539

E-mail: djn0409@windstream.net

2015 John Curtin.....673-3660

E-mail: jcurtin2@windstream.net

2015 Bob Wilson673-2550

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 ...

April 15th and still snowing! What an old fashion winter we have had. I am sure we will all be glad to see Spring.

The Society has been busy through the winter giving tours and doing research. We have a full schedule for spring when we will be giving tours to the fourth grade classes as well as showing the second grade classes our collection.

Be sure to come on June 7th for our Open House when we will be open from 10 to 2.

We have contracted to have the trim on the house painted as soon as the weather permits.

Peg Nolan

Mary Jane Domurat

Marcellus Historical Society has lost a good friend and a dedicated member: Mary Jane Domurat passed away on March 2nd. She had been a Board member since 2000. In the late 1990's Mary Jane took over writing the **Memories of Marcellus** column in the *Marcellus Observer*, later named the *Eagle Observer*. We all looked forward to her column every week and her friendly smile welcomed customers at the Post Office where she worked for many years. She will truly be missed by everyone. Our sympathies go to her family.

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

Lyle Welker - February 20, 2014

Mary Jane Domurat - March 2, 2014

Beverly Schmidt - April 8, 2014

Our Thanks for Cash Donations from:

Peg Nolan
 Agnes H. Kennedy
 John P. Curtin
 Agnes H. Kennedy
 Town of Marcellus (Grant for Utilities)
 Reagan Companies
 Marietta House
 GE Foundation Matching Gift
 (from Carol Schoeneck)
 Chris Bedford
 Philip & Gwen Olenych
 Kathleen Carroll & Family
And In Memory of Mary Jane Domurat
 Marcellus Postmaster
 Hollis & Nancy Abbott
 Barbara Bailey
 Michael & Mary Ellen Kelly
 Roger & Joan Field
 Alice & Tom Mahan
 MCS Transportation Dept.
 Peg Nolan
 Charlie & Patricia Sanborn
 Vera Shappy & Family
 Richard & Patricia Lathrop
 John & Maureen Curtin
 Kathryn J. Coyne
 Melinda Mulroy Wax

Recent Acquisitions

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



Peg Nolan for printer ink, red & black 1920's dress; **Unknown** for Daisy Girl Scout apron; **Susan Pollard Burnette** for several MCS yearbooks; **Anonymous** for yellow shirt

with 2010 Marcellus Mural, blue shirt with 2011 Marcellus Mural, Cat's Meow wood plaque of Driver Middle School; **Karen & Ed Pollard** for several MCS yearbooks; **John & Esther Weeks** for letters from T. J. (Tommy) Sullivan's barn on Dublin Road; **Garrett Wiggers & Kathy Norman** for items from Marjorie Edson's estate: plate with names of her 5th grade pupils at MCS, her 1929-30 Oswego Normal School yearbook, a 1902 Hamilton College yearbook, many Marcellians; **James Dyer** for "Annie Get Your Gun" school program, letter to Rev. H.A. Olcott, Frances Chase 1848 letter, Louisa Fellows letter from Polly Chafee.~

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 snow plowing and lawn maintenance.*

Renewed Members

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

Timothy Aherin, Dave & Sally Bailey, Bruce & Helen Baker, **Chris Bedford**, Ron & Elizabeth Bond, **Mike Brilbeck**, Harold Brinkerhoff, Louis & Phyllis Budell, Kathleen Carroll & Family, Victoria M. Clark, Phillip & Helen Clarke, Patrick & Sarah Cox, Kathy Coyne, Tim Coyne, Regina Dillon, **William Farrell**, John Patrick Feeney, Helen Fenlon, **Bud & Peg Flitcroft**, Gene Hares & Family, Gary & Judy Kavney, Frank Kelly, **Agnes H. Kennedy**, Eileen B. Kennedy, Tom Leonard, **Richard & Serena Linck**, Jim MacLachlan, John Martens, Jim & Peg McNally, Beverly A. Mulvaney, Francis P. Murphy Jr., Robert Negus, **Helen & Don Newell**, Jon Nicholson, Philip & Gwen Olenych, Robert & Manuela & Caroline Reagan, William Schneider, James & Edith Seymour & Family, Raymond & Janet Smith, Jeffrey & Mary Beth Smith & Family, Russell & Dorothy Snell, Garth & Gerry Snyder, Leda Stopyro, Martha Taffaro, Clinton & Sara Tallman, Janice C. Thornton, **Richard Tuttle**, Patricia Vile, Millicent Welker, Bill & Janet Whyland, **Ben & Sharon Wiles**, Bob & Kay Wilson, Cliff & Sally Wilson, David Wilson, **Margaret Woods**. ~

Current Membership: 329

Not renewed from 2013: 59

New: None

Business Members: 27

Not renewed from 2013: 7

New: 2

Please renew your membership!

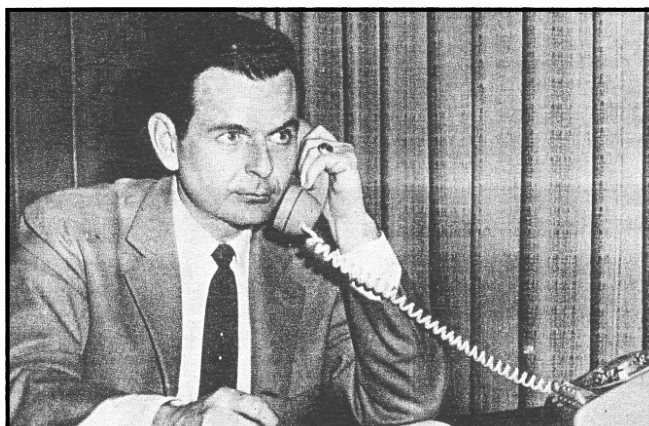
We depend on dues to help maintain our collection and the Steadman House.

Memories of Marcellus Index

Over the years, Peg Nolan has indexed Mary Jane Domurat's columns that appeared in the Marcellus Observer and the Eagle Observer. The nearly 37,000 references to those articles provide a valuable research aid. ~



Mrs. Mary A. Clary



James A. Clary, Jr.

(Continued from page 1)

As a result of these services, stacks of five pound boxes of candy were given to the operators by local businessmen at Christmas time and Jim Clary, Jr. enjoyed them very much.

Between 1940 and 1942, Mrs. Clary made arrangements to acquire the two rural telephone companies which served the communities of Rose Hill and Borodino respectively. Telephone lines were completely rebuilt and the Communities' magnets service was restored. In 1947, a satellite dial office was built between the two communities so that those rural areas had dial service five years before Marcellus did.

In 1950, after service in the U. S. Navy during World War II and graduation from Holy Cross College, James A. Clary, Jr. returned to Marcellus and assumed management of the Company.

It was immediately obvious to Clary that the entire telephone system had to be completely rebuilt and converted to a dial system. This entailed obtaining short term financing from the First Trust and Deposit Company of Syracuse (now Key Bank) and the Chase National Bank of New York (now Chase Manhattan). It also entailed obtaining long-term financing from the Berkshire Life Insurance Company of Pittsfield, Massachusetts and the sale of Preferred Stock within the Community.

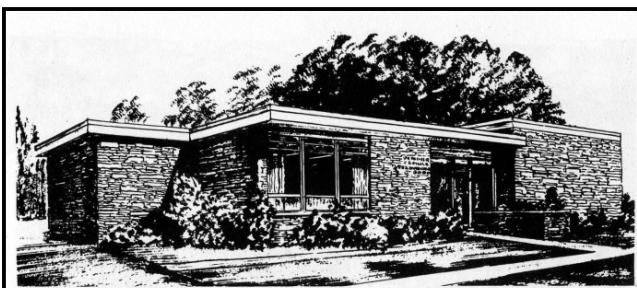
All of these financial requisites were successfully met and the Finger Lakes Telephone Corporation was converted from a Magnets (hand crank) System to an Automatic Dial System, which enabled its subscribers to dial directly (without charge) four-hundred thousand subscribers in the Syracuse Metropolitan Area.

The Conversion to Dial Ceremony was conducted on a November evening in 1952 at the telephone

office. Those in attendance included the local Preferred Stockholders, telephone officials from the Independent Industry and the New York Telephone Company, Banking officials from both banks and pastors of the local churches in Marcellus. Marcellus Town Supervisor, Morris Mulroy, Marcellus Mayor V. S. Kenyon, Village Councilmen Seymour Parsons and Lester Norris pulled the switches to cut out the old and cut in the new. This ceremony was also covered by Collier's Magazine, a national publication. The story came out in a February, 1953 issue.

The 1950's and 1960's saw an ever growing movement out of the urban areas of the nation into the suburbs and even into the rural areas. Marcellus and surrounding areas, being immediately adjacent to Syracuse, benefited from this trend and, of course, so did the telephone company.

(This article is from the files of the Historical Society)



Finger Lakes Telephone Corp. on South Street

Notes: The Finger Lakes Telephone Corporation became a subsidiary of Mid-Continent Telephone Co. in 1966 and merged with Midstate Telephone Corp. in 1969. When Mid-Continent merged with Allied Telephone of Little Rock in 1984, the name was changed to Alltel of N.Y. Alltel changed to a computerized system in September of 1988 and in August of 2006, it became Windstream.

One Hundred Years Ago in Marcellus

Marcellus Observer May 1, 1914

HISTORY FOR OUR OLD HOME WEEK MARCELLUS 1794-1914, 120 YEARS, IN BRIEF

**Historical Sketch of Marcellus,
Prepared by Mr. Geo. L. Amerman,
in Connection with Plans for Old Home Week,
July 21-25.**

The town of Marcellus was given its present classic name by Simeon DeWitt, surveyor, from Marcellus, a celebrated Roman general and statesman. It originally included many of the surrounding towns, the present township as erected in 1840 being only about one-tenth of its original size.

It was settled at about the same time on the east and west hills, in Tyler Hollow and Clintonville, by sturdy men of character who mostly came from Massachusetts, Connecticut and Vermont. The first permanent settlers of Marcellus village were Hon. Dan Bradley and Deacon Samuel Rice: Mr. Bradley, father of Isaac Bradley, came in 1795 and erected the second frame house in the town; Deacon Rice, grandparent of Dr. Israel Parsons, built the tavern, where the Catholic church now stands. The Seneca turnpike was a development of the Great Indian Trail running east and west through the State. Dr. Elnathan Beach was the first physician, the first postmaster, appointed in 1799, and the first sheriff of Onondaga county.

The first school was started in 1796 in a log house at the rear of the present Presbyterian church with Dan Bradley as its teacher. The first church was organized in 1801, the Eastern Religious society of Marcellus in 1802, its first church edifice was built in 1802, at that time "the only meeting house between New Hartford, Oneida county, and the Pacific ocean." The present Presbyterian church was built in 1851, the present Methodist church in 1877, the St. Frances Xavier's Roman Catholic church in 1867, and the present Episcopal church was built, after two of its church buildings had been destroyed by fire on the corner of Main and North streets, now occupied by the Knapp block.

The Coyne store building, once famous for containing the Harrison Tippacano headquaters, was built of local brick in 1840. The Erie canal was built in 1825, the Syracuse and Auburn branch of the New York Central railroad in 1836. In 1835 the township had 511 persons liable for military duty, and the village had 4 stores and 80 dwellings. The population of the town since 1830 has not varied from

2,600. Since 1850 the village has had a normal growth. The present school building was built in 1892 at a cost of \$14,375, and, after being placed under the State Board of Regents, graduated its first class in 1893.

In agricultural products Marcellus has always excelled and especially, during the early days, in sheep raising and in its wool market. Manufacturing has always been an important factor and her woolen mills and paper mills have made Marcellus noted, the Crown Woolen Mills company entering the field in 1890 with Mr. Edward Moir as general manager and superintendent.

Marcellus celebrated the 100th anniversary of the American Independence in 1876 when the "Centennial History of Marcellus" was written by Dr. Israel Parsons and published by Edmund Reed, who also established the first newspaper in Marcellus, the "Observer," in 1879.

The village of Marcellus lies on Nine Mile creek, 673 feet above sea level, and nestled between hills which are noted for their beauty and fertility. The Auburn & Syracuse Electric road furnishes easy connection with those places and with Skaneateles, while from north to south runs the Marcellus & Otisco Lake steam road, furnishing freight transportation for the great agricultural yields as well as access to Otisco Lake, one of the gems of the Central New York "finger-lakes."

Marcellus today, in 1914, offers you pure air, pure water, a wholesome and healthy locality, with all the advantages of 1794, one hundred and twenty years ago - and some more.

George L. Amerman.

Marcellus Observer April 10, 1914

VOTES FOR WOMEN

VICTORY IN 1915

Mrs. F. R. Hazard and Mrs. L. O. McDaniel of Syracuse will hold a public meeting in the offices of F. W. Knapp, over the postoffice in Marcellus, Tuesday April 14, at 3:30 p.m. Mrs. Hazard and Mrs. McDaniel are widely known for their activities along suffrage lines and the people of Marcellus should need no urging to avail themselves of this opportunity to hear and met them. The time is set at 3:30 for the convenience of the majority and it is hoped that it will bring out a large and enthusiastic gathering.

**If You Can Keep a Cool Head in These Times
Perhaps You Just Don't
Understand the Situation**

Marcellus Observer June 19, 1914

Commencement Next Week.

The graduation exercises of the M.H.S. will be held next week. An interesting program has been arranged and much interest is being manifested by friends of the class.

Program.

Sunday, 8 p.m. – Baccalaureate sermon, M.E. church,
by Rev. R. B. Cook
Monday, 8 p.m. – Class Night, Parish House.
Wednesday, 8 p.m. – Commencement Exercises,
M.E. church.
Saturday – High School Picnic, Owasco Lake Park.

Class Roll.

Florence A. Bowden, Winifred M. Day, Elizabeth A. Hellganz, Clara B. Lutesinger, Merle Waite, Mildred E. Walker, Norma L. Walsh, Violet M. Welsh, Louise Woodford, Edward C. Knapp.

Class Officers.

President – Edward C. Knapp.
Vice President – Florence A. Bowden.
Secretary – Norma L. Walsh.
Treasurer – Merle Waite.
Class Colors – Maroon and White.
Class Flower – Dark red rose.
Class Motto – Tonight we launch: where shall we anchor?

Class Night.

Selection – Men's Quartette.
Class History – Merle Waite.
History of Historian – Mildred E. Walker.
Vocal Solo – Violet L. Welsh.
Prophecy of Class – Norma L. Walsh.
Prophecy of Prophetess – Louise Woodford.
Vocal Solo – Mildred Waite.
Senior Charge – Edward C. Knapp.
Junior Response – Norman Woodford.
Vocal Solo – Helen E. Welsh.
Class Will – Florence A. Bowden.
Selection – Men's Quartette.
Admission 15c; students 10c.

Commencement.

Organ Prelude – Miss Florence Dye.
Invocation – Rev. Walter Cook.
Salutatory – Clara B. Lutesinger.
Selection – Orchestra.
Address, "The Prize Winner" – Rev. F. W. Stanton,
Immanuel Baptist church, Syracuse.
Selection – Orchestra.
Valedictory – Edward C. Knapp.
Presentation of Diplomas.
Postlude – Miss Florence Dye. ~

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

Non-Profit Organization
 U. S. Postage Paid
 Marcellus, NY 13108
 Permit Number 165

Web Site Address:
mhs.villageofmarcellus.com

Address Service Requested

NEXT MEETING:
Sunday, May 18th, 2 p.m.

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

Postal Customer
 Local

INSIDE:

- * *Finger Lakes Telephone Corp.*
- * *1914 Historical Sketch of Marcellus*
- * *M.H.S. Commencement 1914*
- * *100 Years ago in Marcellus*

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Join Our Society Today!

\$5/Person per year ~ \$9/Couple per year
 \$12/Family per year (includes children under 18)
 Sustaining Membership = 5 years (dues x 5).
 Number Joining? _____ New Members? _____

Available Collectibles

The New Pucker Street, Since 1953 by John Curtin.. \$28
 Pucker Street by John Curtin \$26
 The Town He Loved So Well by James Quinn \$20
 Around Marcellus by Leslie Church Kraus \$20
 Nine Mile Country by Kathryn Heffernan..... \$20
 Centennial History of the Town of Marcellus \$15
 Olden Day Stories by Lawrence F. Mahoney \$10
 Otisco Lake Community by Roger Trendowski \$23
 Otisco Lake Map 1868 \$13
 Farewell Old Girl by J. Michael Kelly \$15
 Ruth Anne Reagan Prints of Marcellus \$20
 Ruth Reed Cummings Prints \$10
 Jan Debevic Prints.....\$10-\$13
 Official Marcellus Afghans: blue, green..... \$45
 Marcellus, When Wool Was King, Pictorial \$ 5
 Marcellus Through the Years; Chronology, photos... \$ 5
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