



Marcellus Historical Society News

Volume 25-4

Autumn 2020

St. Francis Xavier Church Steeple

On the site of St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church in Marcellus, there once stood a tavern, one of the most popular between Syracuse and Auburn. Built by Deacon Samuel Rice in the early 1800s, it was the third frame building to be erected in Marcellus and on its second floor, a young Catholic congregation in Marcellus, mostly immigrants from Ireland, began to hold services, beginning in 1854. For a dozen years or more, from 1854 to 1867, while a mission of St. Joseph's Church in Camillus, services for the growing Catholic community in Marcellus were conducted in the tavern.

In 1867, St. Mary's of the Lake in Skaneateles became an independent parish, with St. Francis Xavier Parish in Marcellus as a mission. That same year, a fund was started by Rev. Francis J. Purcell, the Skaneateles Pastor, for the erection of a proper church in Marcellus and with the loyal support of the congregation, the old tavern was torn down and on its site, the present Church of St. Francis Xavier, a large and substantial brick building, was completed in 1868.



For over 150 years, SFX Church has stood on the corner of South and Main Streets, its 100-foot steeple and cross serving as a welcome inspiration for all who pass by or enter or leave its portals. For 150 years, that steeple has witnessed thousands of baptisms, weddings and funerals, numerous first communions, confirmations, visitations and counseling sessions. It has welcomed twelve resident pastors and as many assistant pastors, and has seen the history of Marcellus pass by – a procession of farmers, mill workers, veterans, school children, parade celebrants, firemen, and politicians. It has seen our parish grow from a membership of about 20 to over 2000 people at present.

It has observed the acquisition of other property necessary for the functioning of a religious community including a parish cemetery, the building of a rectory next to the church, of a parish hall, of a three car garage, a church parking lot, and a religious instructional center – all attesting to the remarkable foresight and oversight of dedicated clergy and lay trustees through the years. Today that foresight continues to be exhibited as renovation, upkeep and modernization including handicapped accessibility have found expression in a number of worthwhile and most beneficial projects conducted by church leaders.

In its 150 years, it has weathered many storms, along with necessary maintenance and modernization throughout that long history. Recently, the steeple itself needed some major renovation and while the congregation has been remarkably generous over the years in maintaining church property, it now became necessary for this generation of parishioners to shoulder the burden of a major capital

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EVENTS SCHEDULE

*The tentative schedule of events is as follows:
Meetings*

No Meetings in 2020

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

Historical Society Officers for 2020

President: Doug Nightingale315-673-2539
E-mail: djn0409@windstream.net
Vice President: Chuck Paul315-673-4432
E-mail: cpaul@wcnr.com
Treasurer: Patricia Sanborn315-488-3610
E-mail: pasanborn@twcnr.com
Secretary: Karen Pollard.....315-673-1309
E-mail: karenpollard13@yahoo.com

Trustees and Term End

2022 Charlie Sanborn.....315-488-3610
2022 Harvey Eysman.....315-673-3933
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2020 Carol Armstrong.....315-673-3443
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2020 Jean Nightingale.....315-673-2539
E-mail: djn0409@windstream.net
2021 John Curtin.....315-673-3660
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2021 Correspondence Secretary:
Jean Nightingale.....315-673-2539

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

Telephone: 315-673-4839

Please direct comments or questions about the newsletter
to Doug Nightingale at the above address or email:
djn0409@windstream.net

Newsletters are sent via e-mail rather than regular mail to
members who have given us their e-mail address. If you
have not yet advised us of your e-mail address, please do
so at: histsoc@windstream.net. We do not publish or sell
member information. ~

From The President

It has been a trying time. The Steadman House will
stay closed until further notice. Even though we are
closed we continue to help people with research.
They either email or leave a message on the phone.
People still call about donating artifacts to our col-
lection.

The next news letter will be out after election day.
I ask that we all vote either in person or by mail in
ballots.

Stay safe and healthy.

Doug Nightingale

Steadman House Hours (Weather Permitting):

Sundays 1 to 3 pm (except meeting Sundays)

Thursdays 1 to 4 pm

Or By Appointment:

Doug Nightingale-673-2539

John Curtin - 673-3660

Meeting Times

**Regular meetings of the Marcellus Historical
Society will be at 2 pm on the 2nd Sunday of the
months of April, May, September, October and
November 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.**

Current Membership: 259

New:

Business Members: 21

**Remember: this is a non-profit organization
supported by dues and donations!**

Yearly dues cover the *calendar year* and if your dues
are not paid by the *end of March*, we must drop you from
the membership list.

**\$10. a year is a small price to pay
to help preserve our history!**

In Remembrance

Margaret 'Peg' Flitcroft June 4, 2020

Covid-19

The executives and the board have decided to keep the Steadman House closed until further notice. All our volunteers are in the high risk age group.

Hopefully by April of 2021 the doctors and scientist will have a better handle on covid-19. The newsletter will be out before next April's meeting.

Doug Nightingale

Attention !!!

**\$10/ Person per year—\$15/Couple per year
\$15/Family per year (includes children under 18)
Sustaining membership = 5 years (dues x 5)**

The Board of Trustees have agreed that dues need to rise. At the November meeting, those attending voted to raise dues. The changes will go into effect as of January 1, 2020. The changes are above.

For those who have paid for multiple years your dues will not be raised until you have to renew at the end of the years you have paid.

We will notify those of you that receive the newsletter by email when your dues are due by email.

If you have any questions our phone numbers and emails are located on page 2 of the newsletter.

Doug Nightingale

President

Wanted:

Member(s) of the Historical Society to help produce the **Quarterly Newsletter**. An interest in researching appropriate articles and a knowledge of Microsoft Office programs helpful. The Society files and computer at the Steadman House are available for researching and compiling the newsletter (Microsoft Publisher software is presently used).

Contact Doug Nightingale at 315-673-2539 or email djn0409@windstream.net ~

Ask a friend to join our Society to help preserve the Steadman House and Marcellus History.

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, Jean & Doug Nightingale, Carol Armstrong, and Chuck Paul for keeping the Steadman House open during scheduled hours; and the Village of Marcellus for mowing the grass~

AVAILABLE AT THE STEADMAN HOUSE

Have you visited the Steadman House recently?

Our indexed collection (at last count) consists of:

3,475 Artifacts

887 Clothing articles

814 Books

13 Clocks

7,010 Photographs

68 Scrapbooks with **55,427** referenced items

Family files and genealogies

Gift shop with Afghans, Books, Prints, Cards, etc. ~

Steeple

campaign – one that will light the future for those who will follow.

As part of an evaluation of the entire SFX campus, the steeple was inspected and found it to be in tough shape. Engineers assessed the steeple and determined that structurally, the masonry (brick) work was in good condition, as was the heavy timber framing of the upper section of the tower. However, the wooden exterior of top section of the steeple was deteriorating rapidly. Parts of the tower (primarily trim pieces) have been falling on the ground over the past year, large sections of the wall panels have rotted completely through, and wooden access hatch to the upper tower is split in half and has been open to the elements for years.

It was recommended that repairs be initiated as soon as possible – an expensive project particularly because of the difficult access (lift/scaffolding) requirements. Following the successful implementation of a capital improvement project in the spring of 2020, actual construction began in the late summer with brick and mortar pointing and cap work on the upper tower as well as repointing of the main structure's masonry joints where necessary.



This was followed by major reconstruction of the upper steeple, the availability of several articulating boom lifts, rather than scaffolding, enabling the project to move ahead at a steady pace, lifting workers up to hard-to-reach areas and confined spaces. Over the course of the late summer and fall, improvements to the steeple included replacement of the access hatch and ladder system in the interior, replacement of the upper and lower roofs, wall panel and trim replacement with durable composite materials, window-screen repair and treatment, soffit and fascia replacement, electrical improvements including extending power and installing light fixtures to illuminate the cross and belfry areas, as well as protecting the cross with gold leaf and replacing the lightning protection.

With the construction completed (pictures can be found on the Church website - <https://sfxmarcellus.com>), within the projected time period of 90 days, Rev. Daniel C. Muscalino, Pastor of St. Francis Xavier Church, mounted one of the boom lifts on Saturday, November 7, 2020 and blessed the Church and its steeple from high above the Village of Marcellus.

The Diocese of Syracuse truly stepped up on this project and several individuals, including Ed King, Mike King, Scott Clements, Rich Aupperle, P.E., a structural engineer who has worked on a large number of churches throughout the Diocese, Barry Kennedy (of Beken Electric) and Jim Boise (of Viau Construction) really helped to make this happen and kept it affordable for St. Francis Xavier Parishioners. SFX Trustee and Engineer Joe Durand, P.E., must also be recognized for all of the efforts and expertise he extended on behalf of his Parish. In the end, this project would not have happened without him.

The Parish of St. Francis Xavier has been a member of the Marcellus community for the last 165 years and the church on the corner of West Main is a reminder not only of its physical presence for all of those years, but also a living testimony to the faith of both the families that founded it and those gen-

Continued page 4

Steeple

erations that followed. Today's parishioners are the beneficiaries of a magnificent inheritance and it will be through their sacrifice and generosity that they are be able to pass on to the next generation the belief and traditions which have given their lives, both meaning and purpose. Like a tree with great roots, St. Francis Xavier's church is well grounded and deep-seated, providing strength and stability, as well as a continuity that links the past with the present and the future.



By John P. Curtin – November 7, 2020

Pandemic Scrap Book

I was reading another historic societies newsletter and they are asking people to write about their lives during the covid-19 pandemic.

I thought this was a great idea for our historical society to do the same. I'm asking not just our members but your friends, children and grandchildren about how their lives have been during the pandemic.

You can mail or email your thoughts to us.

The scrap book will be looked at one hundred years from now with awe.

I just finished reading about the 1918 pandemic just as our pandemic was starting. It took the author six years of research to write the book. The research was mainly about the doctors and scientists. The author had very difficult time researching the general public about the pandemic because they never wrote anything down. I hope our scrap book will solve this problem for researches of the future. Hope to here from many people.

Doug Nightingale

Recent Acquisitions

Martin and Brenda Collard obituaries and funeral cards. **Rusty and Dorothy Snell** Marcellus Observers.

50 Years Ago**Memories of Marcellus**

Business Member Directory
Please Patronize These Businesses

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**Become a Business Member of the Historical Society
 for \$25 a year and have your business listed in our
 quarterly newsletter.**

~ GIFT SHOP & MEMBERSHIP ORDER FORM~

Join Our Society Today !

\$10/ Person per year—\$15/Couple per year
 \$15/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 Katherine Heffeman.....\$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 (Autobiography).....\$15
 Ruth Anne Reagan Prints of Marcellus.....\$20
 Ruth Anne Reagan Prints Framed.....\$28
 Ruth Reed Cummings Prints.....\$8
 Jan Debevic Prints.....\$10- \$13
 Official Marcellus Afghans: blue.....\$45
 Marcellus, When Wool was King, Pictorial.....\$ 5
 Marcellus Through the Years; Chronology, Photos...\$ 5
 Index to Nile Mile Country; Names and more.....\$ 5
 Package of 10 note-cards picturing Marcellus.....\$ 5
 Shipping: \$5

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<u>Qty</u>	<u>Item Description</u>	<u>Cost Ea.</u>	<u>Total</u>
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Make Checks Payable To:
Marcellus Historical Society
PO Box 165
Marcellus N.Y. 13108

Total \$ _____
Shipping \$ _____
Dues \$ _____
Total Enclosed \$ _____

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

*******NEW Website Address:*******

www.marcellushistoricalsociety.org

NEXT MEETING :

Hopefully April 2021

INSIDE:

***25 Years Ago**

***75 Years Ago**

***50 Years Ago**

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