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# MARCELLUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

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ISSUE NO. 01

JULY 1996

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## OUR FIRST NEWSLETTER!

We have wanted to put out a newsletter since the beginning of the year, and have planned on doing just that. Well, this is our first issue, and we hope it is of interest to you. I would be happy to hear your comments and suggestions and would also like your input for future issues. We currently plan to put out a newsletter bimonthly, and would like to include your ideas.

I want to include information pertaining to our members, such as birth announcements, anniversaries, other special occasions, vacation destinations and local events. Our goal is to make the newsletter informative, entertaining and just plain fun.

For now, we are mailing the newsletter to our members, and to other local historical societies. In the future we would like to mail it to all Marcellus residents occasionally. If you know of anything going on that concerns one of our members, call Bill at 463-4160.

In this issue you will read about our current projects, our new museum progress, and a little about local history. You will also find a meeting and speaker schedule for the entire year, and a membership form. I would like to encourage you to pass the membership form onto a friend or neighbor. If you can attend some of our meetings - great. If not, I hope this newsletter will help to keep you informed.

- Bill Reagan, Editor Interim

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### SEEKING YOUR FAMILY HISTORY

The society has begun a program called the Family History Preservation Program. The goal of this program is to collect as many family histories with Marcellus ties as possible. Anyone wishing to add his or her family history to our collection is encouraged to do so.

If you need assistance compiling your family history, contact the project coordinator, John Curtin at 673-3660. Please encourage other Marcellus residents to consider submitting their histories.

### PHOTOS WANTED

Have any old Marcellus photos tucked away in your attic? How about in a closet somewhere? The society wishes to add any historically significant photos you may have to our collection.

These may be photos of people, places and businesses of Marcellus. Any photos dating from the 1960's and back are desired. If you do not wish to give the photos to the society, we can copy them and return them to you within two weeks. Please check your photos closely...

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**HISTORICAL NOTES -- by Bob O'Neal**

Why did you join a historical society? Was it because you feel sentimental? Did you want to become involved in your community? Or do you just love history? Was history your favorite subject in school? Do you love historical dates? Here is a quiz to test your knowledge. In what year did the following occur?

- 1) The British signed a peace agreement with the Zulu chiefs.
- 2) Joseph Stalin and Leon Trosky were born.
- 3) Lord Beaverbrook, E.M. Forster, William Beveridge and J.C. Maxwell were born.
- 4) Paul Klee and Albert Einstein were born.
- 5) The public was granted unrestricted admission to the British Museum.
- 6) A daughter was born to William Gibbons of Marcellus on May 3rd.
- 7) In Marcellus, a weekly, The Marcellus Observer, began publication.

What year was it? The Observer editor's salutatory article, dated April 17, 1879, stated that the Observer would serve civilization and Christianity. Unless you are related to William Gibbons, or a descendent of the publisher of the Observer, you may not have passed the test. You may not be interested in the parts of history listed above, until you find out that they are connected to something that may be of significance to you personally.

The quiz may have been easier if I only included easily recognized names like Stalin and Einstein. Or, I might have added even more unfamiliar items if it was for a Trivial Pursuit game. In this introductory column, I hope to get some debate going about how our local past fits into the art and science of history. My quiz presented one way to define history, dates and events. But history is more than dates and events. It is more than just memories. The Marcellus Historical Society has collected items from it's town that represent the memory of its citizens. History is events or objects explained.

In upcoming newsletters, I would like to explain more about 1879's Marcellus. I will relate items from the Marcellus Observer to my limited knowledge of the outside world. A wonderful thing about Marcellus is that it has not grown too much. Continuity is one theme we can look at. That is how it is in 1996, Marcellus is similar and yet different to an earlier day. Take for example our street addresses. Sometimes we don't need them if we have a good landmark. For example, a new store with the address "At The Willow Tree." Was that 1996, or 1879? I'm sure you probably guessed correctly. If you look in the 1879 Observer, you find the real name of that store. If you don't get a chance to look, join me again in the next issue for information on "the store by the willow" and other local stores of that era.

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**THE FABRIC COLLECTION -- by Bonniebelle O'Neal**

Many years ago I read a book entitled "The Subversive Stitch," about how badly women were treated throughout the ages, as seen by needle workers often dreary and poverty ridden lives. The book gave stitchery a black eye from women as well as men. Yet, generally before the 1800's, men would proudly show off household needlework (some of which they did themselves) and devoted pages on various sewing subjects in that great new 1700's rage, the encyclopedia. Today, men, and a majority of women, don't know the difference between crochet and crewelwork.

The Industrial Revolution of the 1830's initiated the decline, despising workers who couldn't match a machine's output, but prizing their finished product. It took only about 20 years for "fancy work" and about 50 years for plain sewing to be degraded to a nonessential occupation. Unfortunately today's attitude toward clothes, and especially fancy work, jades our ideas of how to view yesterday's rare prizes. There used to be literally billions of hand-wrought fiber products. Commonly converted into rags, not many are left. Marcellus has been blessed with having many more of these items than any other local historical society I've ever seen.

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### NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Let me start by saying welcome to all of our many new members. Your support of our goals is greatly appreciated. We currently have many active members, but can always use more. We have enough projects going on that just about everyone should be able to find something of interest. We are currently planning an autumn historic homes tour, an open house in our existing museum, and two new historic publications among other things. Watch this newsletter so that you don't miss out on any upcoming events or meetings you may find of interest. Again, thanks for joining, and I hope to meet each of you as the year progresses. - Bill

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### Agnes Welsh Celebrates 104th

Congratulations to Agnes Welsh on her upcoming 104th birthday, July 30th. Miss Welsh is the sister of 97-year-old Sarah Welsh, and is the oldest living Marcellus resident. She has resided at Van Duyn since 1992. She worked at the Crown Woolen Mills in Marcellus for many years.

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### THREE MORE TRUSTEES TO BE ELECTED

In May the society voted to increase our number of Trustees from three to six. We plan to seek nominations or volunteers to fill the new positions at the July meeting. A vote will be held at the meeting to confirm anyone nominated. A Trustee's role is to watch over the direction in which the society is heading, and they have a vote in any major decisions relating to society business. The term is three years.

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### NEW MUSEUM UPDATE

Society President Bill Reagan has been meeting with local officials, including Mayor Fred Eisenberg, with regard to locating suitable land for a future museum. Bill has also received the application packet for one of the grants, which the Society will attempt to receive for the new museum. This grant is made available through the National Endowment for the Humanities. A planning meeting will be arranged for late July to discuss the society's museum goals. Any member may attend. Call Bill at 463-4160 for information.

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### MEMBERSHIP DRIVE UPDATE

As of July 1st, we now have 172 members! This is fantastic considering we only had 31 in January, and that we had set an initial goal of 100 by the end of the year. We need the support to get our new museum. Our new goal was set at 202 members by the end of the year, one for each year of Marcellus' existence. Please pass the membership form on to a friend, and feel free to photocopy it.

### PHOTOS WANTED

*Continued from front page*

Please check your photos closely, they might seem like nothing special to you, but may be a rare one of a kind to us! To submit photos contact the project coordinator, Bill Reagan, at 463-4160. Also, see if anyone you know has any old photos.

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### THE FABRIC COLLECTION -- *Continued from page 2*

The Marcellus Historical Society's collection includes an 1830/40 summer jacket worn by a revolutionary war veteran, a petit wedding dress, a locally homemade corset, a pair of tiny boots for a three year old, a night shirt, a gold embroidered purse, and many other articles. The importance of restoring and preserving all of the fabric articles, which are housed in the old museum space, is essential. My future articles will highlight specific items in the collection and you may call me with any questions you have. 673-4577

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**MEETING SCHEDULE**

The tentative speaker and presentation schedule for our 1996 meetings is as follows:

July 9th	7:00 pm:	James Reagan with interesting and humorous Marcellus stories.
August 13th	7:00 pm:	John Gallinger, His father Roy owned the Marcellus Observer.
September 10th	7:00 pm:	Jan DeBevic & Bonniebelle O'Neal, Historical clothing.
October 6th	2:00 pm:	At the Rose Hill Baptist Church, history and tour of church.
November 3rd	2:00 pm:	Jane Tracy, Onondaga County Poorhouse.
December 1st	2:00 pm:	Christmas dinner, history of the Marcellus Fire Department.

**The Marcellus Historical Society Officers**

President:	Bill Reagan	463-4160
Vice Pres:	Sidney Tuthill	673-2990
Treasurer:	Richard Smith	673-1532
Secretary:	Joyce Murphy	673-2528
Secretary:	Doris Hagget	673-3567
Trustee:	George Hagget	673-3567
Trustee:	Robert Negus	689-7861
Trustee:	Mike Plumpton	673-3453

**General Meeting Schedule**

October Thru May: 1st Sunday 2:00 pm  
 July Thru September: 2nd Tuesday 7:00 pm

At The Masonic Temple  
 46 East Main Street, Marcellus  
 (location subject to change)

**Membership Form- Pass on to a Friend**

Please include me as a member of the Marcellus Historical Society

Check one:  Single \$3.00  
 Any couple \$5.00  
 Family with children \$7.00

Payable To: Marcellus Historical Society

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Addr: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ No. of children: \_\_\_\_\_

Clip and Mail to:  
 Mr. Richard Smith  
 3 Meadow St.  
 Marcellus, NY 13108

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

AFFIX ADDRESS LABEL HERE