



MARCELLUS

HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

Volume 7, Issue 4

Fall 2002

Car 220 as a diner in Marcellus, N.Y.



Do you know where this diner was located?

The above picture appears in **The Rochester Syracuse and Eastern "Travelectric" 1906-1931** by William R. Gordon and James R. McFarlane which was published in 1961. The book is a history of the interurban electric train service operating in central New York in the early part of the 20th century. Car 220 actually was used by the Empire State Railroad Corp. which operated between Syracuse and Oswego. The line that ran through Marcellus was the **Auburn & Syracuse Electric Railroad**. One restored Trolley Station can be seen on Falls Road and another is located east of Elbridge (not at the original sites of stations). ~

The Drs. Parsons' Carriage

At our meeting in September, the membership voted to restore the carriage belonging to Dr. Israel Parsons (1821-1904) and his son, Dr. John Parsons (1861-1932). The carriage was donated to the Historical Society by the Parsons family and was made in Skaneateles by the Packwood Co. Bob Warner of Warner's Auto Body will restore the body for the cost of materials. The carriage top will be restored by Sherman Hollow Coach of Penn Yan, at a cost not to exceed \$1000. We are applying for a grant to cover the cost of the restoration and plan to have the completed carriage on display at the June Open House.

Peg Nolan ~

From The President ...

As I look back on this past year many things have been accomplished at the museum. The renovations have made it a more comfortable and pleasant place to work and visit. All of our Marcellus Observers have been put into acid-free boxes and the new research area has many documents covering churches, cemeteries, scrapbooks, census records and much more for people doing genealogy or just interested in Marcellus history. Volunteers have been busy sorting through hundreds of pictures and organizing them in photo albums. Next summer we will work on indexing the albums.

With the museum being opened on Tuesdays and Sundays, I have met wonderful people from Marcellus and all over the country – some came to do research, others to browse and talk about their days in Marcellus. We have answered over fifty requests from people searching their family history.

We want to thank Mary Tuthill for her generous donation which was used to purchase insulation for the museum backroom. This will allow us to better control the temperature.

In October, we met with Mr. David Palmquist from the New York State Education Department concerning our application in January of 2001 for an absolute charter. He advised us of changes we should make to improve the Historical Society and the museum.

I will be spending three months in Florida this winter and will continue transcribing Parsons papers and helping people search their family histories.

A sincere THANK YOU to the Board and the volunteers for their support and work during the past year and HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO ALL.

Peg Nolan ~

In Remembrance

Stanley E. Munro - August 25, 2002

Levi Seymour Parsons - September 6, 2002

~

EVENTS SCHEDULE

The tentative schedule of events is as follows:

Sunday, November 10, 2002	2 p.m.
<u>Hugh Norris</u>	
"Funerals in Marcellus Over the Past 60 Years"	
Sunday, December 8, 2002	1 p.m.
<u>Holiday Dinner</u>	
Sunday, January 12, 2003	2 p.m.
<u>Vanessa Belcher</u>	
"The History of Marcellus Free Library, and How The Library Will Contribute To Our Future"	
Sunday February 9, 2003	2 p.m.
To be announced.	
Sunday March 9, 2003	2 p.m.
"Old Barns"	

*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 2002

President:	Peg Nolan.....	673-1765
	E-mail: pegenolan@hotmail.com	
Vice President:	Bruce Widger	673-9142
	E-mail: DrBWWidger@aol.com	
Treasurer:	Hollis Abbott.....	673-1753
	E-mail: habbott1@twcny.rr.com	
Secretary:	Joyce Murphy.....	673-2528

Trustees and Term End

Mary Jane Domurat (2002).....	673-4896
Dick Smith (2002)	673-1532
John Curtin (2003).....	673-3660
	E-mail: jcurtin2@twcny.rr.com
Mary Tuthill (2003)	673-2990
Tom Leonard (2004).....	673-4273
	E-mail: TomLeonard35@msn.com
Doug Nightingale (2004).....	673-2539
	E-mail: djn0409@dreamscape.com

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

Election of Officers at November Meeting

The annual election of officers will take place at the November 10th meeting. The slate of nominated officers:

President:	Peg Nolan
Vice President:	Bruce Widger
Secretary:	Joyce Murphy
Treasurer:	Hollis Abbott
Trustee:	Mary Jane Domurat
Trustee:	Dick Smith

Additional nominations will be accepted from the floor. ~

Holiday Dinner December 8th at 1 p.m.

The annual holiday dinner will be held at the Marcellus Fire Station at 1 p.m. December 8th and will be catered by the Hill Top Restaurant in Skaneateles. The price is \$11. per person.

The menu is: roast beef, ham, ziti, tossed salad, mashed potatoes, vegetable, bread, coffee, tea, punch and desert.

Please have your payment in by November 23rd. ~

Renewed Members

The following people have renewed their membership since our last newsletter :

Dorothy Bartlett, Pat Blackler, Richard A. Brown, Joy L. Buffan, Frank & Doris Kelly, Florence M. Odell, Lewis L. & Elizabeth C. Selover, Dale & Joyce Sims, Mary Tuthill. ~

Recent Acquisitions

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

Henry Palmowski for fodder chopper; **Fran Randall** for four Marcellus Fire Dept. Auxiliary Jackets; **Doris Phillips** for Margaret Tice's tapes on Marcellus History; **Frank Kelly** for US Army WW II coat; **Doris Kelly** for WW I Army hat that belonged to her father; **Audrey Riggall** for two baby books; **Smith Family** for kerosene cook stove; **Gary Alletzhauser** for 1794 half-penny coin; **Leda Stopyro** for Onondaga Central School 50-year Anniversary book; **Garth Snyder** for World War II ration coupons and root chopper; **Jan & Frank DeBevic** for two mannequins (1 child & 1 woman) and child's hat and dresses; **Dorothy MacDonald** for US Navy WAVES uniform with overcoat and a New Testament. ~

Museum Hours

The Museum will be open Tuesday Evenings from 7 to 9 p.m. thru December 17th. ~

A Newspaper article from about 1911 or 1912

BURIED FOR 70 YEARS, STEER HIDES ARE FOUND ON SITE OF OLD TANNERY

Discovery by Workmen at Marcellus While Excavating for Barn Revives Weird Tales About Murder

Buried for seventy years, thirty steer hides in excellent condition and valued at nearly \$800, were unearthed in Marcellus yesterday morning on the site of an old tannery which was abandoned, according to legend, soon after a murder had been committed within its walls, and the victim thrown into one of the vats.

The hides were found while A. Leroy Stone was excavating for a barn. He had no idea the vats were on the site chosen for his stable and was amazed at the discovery. The tannery was torn down after employees had refused to work in it, claiming the building was haunted by the ghost of the man who had been murdered.

In anger, the owner of the tannery, Jos. Phillips, who has been dead for many years, tore down the building, which was built on a side hill, and leveled off the site, bringing the earth down on the vats. So hastily was this work done that Mr. Phillips failed to remove the hides that were in the process of tanning, and they remained buried until yesterday.

DISCOVERY CAUSES EXCITEMENT

The discovery yesterday caused considerable excitement in Marcellus and practically the entire population turned out to inspect the hides and visit the scene of the murder which is supposed to have been committed about seventy years ago.

Incidentally the unearthing of the hides revived the legends of ante-bellum days and everywhere in Marcellus yesterday residents gathered to discuss the find.

The tannery was located on ground recently purchased by Mr. Stone. It is on the west side of the village adjoining old Seneca turnpike and but a short distance from Mr. Stone's home.

While men were digging into the side hill, where Mr. Stone intends to build a stable, the horse drawn scraper struck an obstruction which proved to be a corner of what seemed to be a box. Workmen with shovels were sent to the spot and had soon dug around one of the vats, made of three-inch pine boards, nine feet long, four feet wide and about two feet deep.

One of the workmen remembered the story of the old tannery and immediately started to find other vats. Six of the boxes, buried in a row where the side hill had been scraped down on them when the old tannery was razed, were found.

TWENTY HIDES IN ONE VAT

In one of the first unearthed were found about twenty hides. They nearly filled the box where they had been buried, and with the exception of the one on top each was in good condition. The hides were of steers and calves, some of them containing the horns. Each was cut in two pieces when found.

As each layer of hide was removed it was taken to the rear of Mr. Stone's home. On some of the hides were discernible numbers and names of farmers who lived in the vicinity of Marcellus eighty years ago.

The vats were in good condition, the remains of seventy years not having penetrated the three-inch pine boards apparently, and it was necessary for one of the men to use an ax for several minutes before he was successful in splitting one of the sections.

According to Mr. Stone, who is 65 years old and has lived in the neighborhood of Marcellus since his birth, the weird stories concerning the old tannery have been many and the history of the building was often a topic of conversation among the villagers decades ago.

NO PROOF OF MURDER

Aged residents said last night, however, that if a murder had been committed at the place it had never been followed up nor the guilty man punished. They declared a man employed at the tannery who, they said, was an uncle of a former Marcellus resident named Richards, had some trouble with two other tanners, one of whom was named Curtis.

One morning when the tannery was opened the man was found lying in one of the vats dead. Rumors were current that he had been murdered, and one by one the employees of the tannery left, refusing to work because they declared the place was haunted.

Mr. Stone was besieged yesterday by souvenir hunters, and nearly every person in the village asked for some memento of the tannery in the shape of a piece of the hides. Some wanted sections with which to tap their shoes. Many were accommodated, while to others Mr. Stone presented horns, a large number of which had been found by the men while they were excavating.

Mr. Stone will excavate further today with the hope of finding more reminders of the pioneer days of Marcellus. ~

The Marcellus Observer April 28, 1894

BRIEF SKETCHES OF EARLY AND LATER TIMES IN MARCELLUS.

Water Power on Nine Mile Creek.

The beautiful stream, Nine Mile Creek, whose waters continue to flow with unabated force through the town, was early made available for milling purposes. The first mill built on it was a saw mill, erected by Deacon Samuel Rice and Judge Bradley in the fall and winter of 1795-6. It stood a little south of where the ruins of the old stone grist mill now are on the same side of the creek. It showed a considerable enterprise and push to attempt such an undertaking so soon after their arrival here, for it was a great task in those days when the population was sparse and conveniences for building so few. It was accordingly built under many disadvantages and at considerable expense. The inhabitants were so few that the proprietors of the mill had to send for miles around in order to secure sufficient help to assist in raising it. It was finally raised and completed and proved of incalculable benefit to the young and growing community.

For several years after, there was no grist mill in the place, so that the people were compelled to go to Manlius, twenty miles distant, or to the Red Mills, as they were called, at Seneca Falls, twenty-five miles away, to get their grinding done, which took about three days.

During the year 1800 Major May and his father-in-law Sayles, built a grist mill near the above mentioned saw mill, which was not only a great convenience to the inhabitants near by, but for many years drew a large custom from Camillus and Onondaga.

Since that time there have been erected on the stream, many other mills of different kinds, some of which have either burnt up or for some reason have been removed, discontinued, or abandoned. And yet only a limited portion of the available power of the creek has been utilized. On the whole stream there have been some twenty-five or more mill sites occupied, of which twenty at least have been in this town.

There are now in operation in this town, or capable of being operated, fifteen mills and factories. Commencing at Marietta there is a large and extensive modern roller mill run by the Rathbun Brothers, originally built by Lester Mills as a grist mill, forty or more years ago, and run as a custom mill for many years by him and others and was

bought and transformed at considerable expense into a roller mill by F. A. Rathbun. There was once a saw mill near it built in 1861 by S. Dady, now of this village, for one Beebe, which did good work for a number of years but is now abandoned as a mill and used as a shed.

...Submitted by John Curtin

(More about the mills of Marcellus in later issues.) ~

Follow-up on the Clift Family

(See the article about the watering trough in the last issue)

John Curtin found the following tribute to Hiram Clift written by Mrs. C. M. Woodford in a 1934 Marcellus Observer:

"Hiram was the eldest of eleven children born to Joseph and Abigail Clift and left his mark on this community. He taught in the school behind the Presbyterian Church. He instilled in his students the joy and importance of reading and respecting their parents. He retired in 1824. Upon the death of his son he sold the farm and purchased the James Dunlap home, where he and his wife and daughters lived until their passing. His daughter Mattie studied music and played the organ in several churches in the community and trained the Church Choirs. May was a respected school teacher and was the power behind organizing St. John's Sunday school. The daughters made a bequest to the Marcellus Free Library of \$6000 in memory of their father for a building to house the library. The old Gasper home was purchased from the Smith family and in 1934 was dedicated. The Clift family not only gave the gift of money but fostered high ideals of morality and strict

Web Site

The Historical Society web site can now be reached directly at: mhs.marcellusny.com

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Web Site: mhs.marcellusny.com

Next Meeting:
Sunday, November 10th at 2 p.m.

INSIDE:

- * *Dr. Parson's Carriage*
- * *Election of Officers*
- * *Holiday Dinner*
- * *Marcellus Diner*
- * *Tannery Murder*
- * *Mills on Nine Mile Creek*
- * *Hiram Clift*

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

~ GIFT SHOP & MEMBERSHIP ORDER FORM ~																																					
Please use this form or a copy of it to join the society and to order our historic collectibles.																																					
<p style="text-align: center;">Join Our Society Today!</p> <p>\$5/Person ~ \$4/Senior ~ \$12/Family ~ \$25/Patron Basic Membership = 1 yr. ~ Sustaining = 5 yr. (Multiply dues by 5 for sustaining membership) Number Joining? _____ New Members? _____</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Available Collectibles</p> <p>Official Marcellus Afghans: green, cranberry, blue; \$45 Centennial History of the Town of Marcellus..... \$15 Images of America, Otisco Lake Community..... \$17 Pictorial History of Early Marcellus..... \$ 5 Marcellus, When Wool Was King, Pictorial..... \$ 5 Marcellus Through the Years; Chronology, photos \$ 5 Index to Nine Mile Country; Names and more..... \$ 5 Marcellus Bicentennial Mugs..... \$ 4 Postcards(5), 1960's B&W, 4 churches, post office \$ 1 Package of 10 note-cards picturing Marcellus..... \$ 5 Colored 8 x 10 picture of Driver Middle School..... \$ 8</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1874 Marcellus Painting</p> <p>Matted: 8x10, \$10; 11x14, \$22; 16x20, \$50; 18x24, \$75 T-Shirts: Child, \$8; Adult, \$9 (2X, \$11) Specify Size Sweatshirts: Adult; S,M,L, \$16 (2X, \$18) Specify Size Hats, \$10; Mugs, \$8; Mouse Pads, \$7; Tote Bags, \$9 Shipping: \$2 per book/ mug, \$4 other</p>	<p>Name: _____</p> <p>Addr: _____</p> <p>City: _____ Zip: _____</p> <p>Phone: _____</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="4" style="text-align: center;">Order Form</th> </tr> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Quantity</th> <th style="text-align: left;">Item Description</th> <th style="text-align: left;">Cost Ea</th> <th style="text-align: left;">Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">_____</td> <td>Holiday Dinner</td> <td style="text-align: center;">\$11.</td> <td style="text-align: center;">_____</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">_____</td> <td>_____</td> <td style="text-align: center;">_____</td> <td style="text-align: center;">_____</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">_____</td> <td>_____</td> <td style="text-align: center;">_____</td> <td style="text-align: center;">_____</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">_____</td> <td>_____</td> <td style="text-align: center;">_____</td> <td style="text-align: center;">_____</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">_____</td> <td>_____</td> <td style="text-align: center;">_____</td> <td style="text-align: center;">_____</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">_____</td> <td>_____</td> <td style="text-align: center;">_____</td> <td style="text-align: center;">_____</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">_____</td> <td>_____</td> <td style="text-align: center;">_____</td> <td style="text-align: center;">_____</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Make Checks Payable to: Total \$ _____ Marcellus Historical Society Shipping \$ _____ PO Box 165 Dues \$ _____ Marcellus, NY 13108 Total Enclosed \$ _____</p>	Order Form				Quantity	Item Description	Cost Ea	Total	_____	Holiday Dinner	\$11.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
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