

BRANT – FARNHAM HISTORY

QUARTERLY JOURNAL

VOL. XIII WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2013 WHOLE NO. 46



On the GIAMBRONE FARM , Ellis Road, Brant NY

The man in the center of this photo (or 4th from left) is John Giambrone. On the work horse is his son Billy Giambrone, who at the time of the photo was approximately 4 years old. John is also the father of lifelong Brant residents, Joe Giambrone and RoseAnn Gernatt. Joe and RoseAnn believe that the first and last young men are “Pecoraro” cousins from Buffalo. The others were unknown summertime laborers. The photo was donated to the Brant Farnham Historical Society by Bill’s wife, Sally. Do you know of any other Farnham or Brant residents that relied on Horse Power? Please tell us about it! Here are a few stories we found in our archives.

From the December 25, 1992 Brant-Farnham History Quarterly Journal, Vol III, Whole No. 12; The cover page of this past issue, and titled “*Logs for Calkins Saw Mill*” depicts a photo of a team of 8 horses moving a barn from one location to another. The Barn is up on some kind of wagon. Amazing! This was common practice according to Sherman Falk, one of our historical society members. Within this same issue is another story, but sadly, it does not have a happy ending. The story: **Frances Morgano Muscato** by Angela Pero... “*The bridal couple [Frances Morgano and Frank Muscato Jr.] settled in the home in which Katherine Muscato lives, the widow of Charlie Muscato. Frank Jr. and his brothers: Russell, Joseph, Herman, Charles and Sam were all farmers. Needing a tenant house for the migrant laborers they decided to purchase the abandoned one room school house #2 on the Milestrip Road. This they would move onto their property; the corner of Milestrip and Brant-Reservation Road. With a team of horses and all the boys assisting, they were able to move it to its new location. They were just placing it in position when suddenly a murderous wind acted up; the men were unable to hang onto the swaying building. Frank Jr. was pinned underneath, crushing him to death. 10 weeks after their matrimony Frances became a widow. This was on March 24, 1921. A local paper reported as follows: “Frank Muscato Jr., aged 26 years was killed instantly last Thursday...”*”

From the Spring 2000 Brant-Farnham History Quarterly Journal, Vol X, Whole No. 39; The Story: **Daisy Mae (Erick) Winters** submitted by Jeannie Haberer (Daisy's granddaughter): *"...besides farming Herbert Winters (Daisy's husband) worked for the Town of Brant's Highway Department and he would clean the roads of snow using a blade attached to a team of horses. [Daisy and Herbert were married March 22, 1919. Herbert passed away 12 years later in 1931]"*

...**Sherman Falk** was born and raised in the town of Brant. He recalls that his family had 2 Teams of horses. Clydesdales were the chosen breed, because his Dad, Ed, just loved them. One team had names of Colonel and the "off horse" was called Jim. He didn't remember the names of the other team, however, he does remember his dad taking the teams to the Clinton Bailey Market in Buffalo. His dad would leave about 4PM and arrive in Blasdell late in the evening where he would feed, water and rest the horses. There was some kind of livery stop. He would then leave sometime during the night, to arrive early morning at the market. After dropping off his produce, he would make the trip back home, stopping to rest in Blasdell. Going to market was a 3-day trip.

...at **102 years young, Teddy Schaefer** from down on the lake in the town of Brant, with a twinkle in his eyes, tells stories of taking a team of horses from Grand Island where he lived as a young lad, crossing the Niagara River to Tonawanda on a ferry, because the Grand Island bridges were not yet built!

...at one of our historical meetings, **David Berns** said he and his grandfather would use a mule team to plow the fields in Farnham. They would also use the mule team to cultivate tomatoes at Henry and Maryann Carbeck's home. **Angelo Militello** remembers this as well!

...Many Farnham neighbors will recall **Sam Sicurella Sr.** raking his hay using a team of horses. (as late as 1980) He raked hay on land behind Jim and Cheryl Russell's home, an open field that stood beside the Farnham Post Office, in addition to many other fields. One of the horses was named Tank-a-Tank and she was huge! She was also employed as one of the riding horses at Lonesome Pine Riding Stables, in Farnham. Her back was so wide that when you sat on her, your legs extended straight out sideways!

From the 1964 Quartos Sesquicentennial Book of the Town of Brant 1839-1964: "According to the New Topographical Atlas of Erie County, printed by Stone & Stewart; In 1866, the Town of Brant had 293 families and 344 Horses or Colts." The sizes of farms were more often judged by the number of horses kept than by the number of acres tilled. **From the same book:** "Dr. Johnston made house calls in his horse and buggy."

... **For close to 6 years**, we had a wonderful Morgan-Belgian cross work horse on our Brant-Farnham Road farm. His name was Pete and he was a deep chocolate brown with black mane and tail; the most handsome horse with a disposition of a Teddy bear. "Pete - go bring the

cows home", my husband Bill would say and away Pete would run, to the end of the pasture to "tell" the cows it was time to come home and eat. And they followed him home every time! When Ernie Falk (from Milestrip Rd) was alive, he loaned us his Lehley* buggy, which according to the metal plate, was made by the "Lehley Wagon Co. Farnham, NY". Pete would pull our family around town, with Bill holding the reins. In fall, our kids would ride with a blanket to keep them warm while enjoying our "Amish" moments. I often wonder what happened to that buggy after Ernie passed away. Pete would also pull the mudboat through the woods as our family would work to gather maple sap from buckets that hung on each Maple Tree. Bill of course did the most work - for us it was just fun to be there for the ride. Daily Bill would take our horse Pete out to check buckets and collect the sap. After collecting about 50 gallons, he begins boiling the sap. It takes about 40 gallons of sap to make 1 gallon of Maple Syrup. At first Doc Grennell owned the maple tree woods on Hammond Rd., and we would trade him some of the syrup for the use of his trees. In later years, we were able to buy those same woods from the Grennell family.

You cannot believe how easy it was to put up hay with a horse! Almost relaxing in a way, believe it or not. Pete was a horse that loved to work. Our daughter Jolene (and sometimes our good neighbor Sandy Kaczmarek) would walk Pete back and forth, to and from the barn, hitching and unhitching the single tree, so that the rope and hay forks would be ready and in place for the next 8 bales of hay to head straight up and then slide over to the hay mow. We relied on the hay track, the ropes, the grapple hay forks and Pete to work in perfect timing. When it didn't work just right - look out below!!! The hay would fall fast and hard - 8 bales all at once! It was a family event that we looked forward to each year. Sometimes Lajos "Louie" Asboth or Clark Borngaber would help us out too. Our sons, Ron and Sam would take care of the bales on the wagon or the pulling the slack on the rope or help in the hay mow. Bill was in charge of inserting the hayforks at just the right angles to hold the "package" of 8bales in place, at this point; Bill would yell "READY" which was the go-ahead to start walking Pete. As Jolene walked Pete to the "stop-spot", the bales, already pulled up to the rooftop would slide over to the mow. Bill would tug the trip rope which dropped the bales. Pete knew when to stop just from the *feel* of the rope. I was up in the hay-mow, stacking the hay. Many neighbors would stop over to watch us put the hay up, the old fashioned way - with a hay track and horse.

Pete's easiest job was to be one of the manger animals for the Annual Christmas Barn Mass. (Held at our home for approximately 17 years with Priests from St. Anthony's Church, Farnham celebrating the services.) He always got plenty of attention from those in attendance. After Pete passed away, we purchased a Belgian-Percheron horse called Bess. She was a good worker too, but not as friendly as Pete was. Pete was a one of a kind horse and we still miss him.
Submitted by Bill and Patty Friend

...and because we know you are wondering about the Lehley Wagon Company ~ *This information was provided from the 1939 Town of Brant history booklet:* "George Lehley* established himself as a wagon maker in 1877 in Brant Center. He hired 10 or 15 men who worked steadily building buggies, surries, cutters, wagons and parts. But at the advent of manufactured carriages and wagons Mr. George Lehley shifted to the hardware business." Can anyone tell us why the metal tag on Ernie Falk's Buggy read "Farnham, NY"?



Billy Giambrone on the work horse, at the Ellis Rd Farm ~ take notice of all the harnessing!

Photo donated to the Brant-Farnham Historical Society by Sally Giambrone (Bill's wife)

"Harnessing up" involved a horse collar, bridle, leather trace lines, straps and buckles, better known as tack. As you can see from the above photo, it was heavy, complicated bundle and each component had its purpose. To avoid tangling, the farmer had to be diligent about putting the harnesses away after use so that it was all in order and ready to go for the next job.

..... **FARMING WITH HORSES**

"In 1920 there were 20,142,455 horses on Farms in the U.S. ... the use of horses to do all the farm work did not cease because the horses were not dependable, reliable and adaptable. Horses lost out because tractors could do the various jobs faster, thus more economically. " 1

"In the 1930's, the Great Depression was in full swing and small farmers just barely eked out an existence. The aftermath of the depression lingered into the 1940's. Larger farms had tractors, but a lot of small family farms still could not afford tractors" 2

"Suggestions [of commands "to go"] include a short whistle, a kissing noise exaggerated, a clicking or clucking noise (and "giddeup" seldom works unless the individual animal has been used to it). It is a good habit to say "whoa-BACK" to standing animals for a backing command as they may not hear the simple "back" and feel the tension on the lines and get a crossed signal. For this reason make sure that the animals are listening: **LOOK AT THE EARS!**

"GEE" (as in gee whiz) is the universal English-American command for right turn. "HAW" is the command for left turn. It is always a good idea to speak to the animals by name often. Before giving any command, **WATCH THE HORSE'S EARS AND MAKE CERTAIN ALL ANIMALS ARE LISTENING AND EARS ARE FACING BACK.**" 3

1 Horses in Harness by Charles Philip Fox copyright 1987

2 Growing Up Farming with Horses in the 1940's Farming with Horses was a Memorable Experience of My Childhood, Stewart Lodge

3 WORK HORSE HANDBOOK by Lynn R. Miller copyright 1981



...and while we are on the topic of Farming...

How about some of those **BRANT STRAWBERRIES?!!**

Photo donated by Rose Dispenca Trask.

Maria Inglut, lifetime Brant resident was kind enough to put names to those she could recognize in this photo. (Bill, Doris and Rose are siblings, their mom is Marie) Maria's father was William Dispenca.

B&E Trolley crossing at Commercial St., Farnham NY

Photo by Lynn Walters @1909

The B&E Trolley or Buffalo & Lake Erie Traction Co. ran across Commercial Street (shown) in Farnham and under the railroad. The trolley tunnel can be seen on the right side of the photo. It looks like the car had some kind of a mishap.

Note Holy Cross Lutheran Church steeple in back left of photo. (Holy Cross WILL BE celebrating 150 YEARS in 2014!) The Farnham Fire hall today would stand in the left side of the photo.

Vol X Spring 2000, Whole no. 39: Daisy Mae (Erick) Winters submitted by Jeannie Haberer: ...Grandma (Daisy) met Grandpa, her future husband, Herbert Winters at the Farnham Dance hall which was across the street from Pizzolanti's which was owned by Augusta Schwert. ...When attending the dances she would take the street car from Angola [where she lived at that time] to Farnham and one night they missed the last car (which was at midnight) and they walked from Farnham to Angola along the trolley tracks. [The Dance Hall mentioned in the above story would have been on the front right side of this photo and Pizzolanti's to the left side of the photo.]



New York (State) Legislature. Senate - 1908 Documents of the Senate of the State of New York, Volume 6

[Case No. 4124]

XXXV

June 26, 1907.

IN the matter of the application of the Buffalo and Lake Erie Traction Company (street surface) under section 68 of the Railroad Law, as to crossing the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern railway (steam) in the village of Farnham, Erie County.

This application by the Buffalo and Lake Erie Traction Company, under section 68 of the Railroad Law was filed with this Board June 26, 1907. It asks the Board to determine the manner in which the applicants railroad shall cross the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern railway at a point about four hundred and fifty ft. east of Commercial street in the village of Farnham, Erie county. A copy of an agreement between the applicant company and the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern Railway Company was presented to this board on this date as to this crossing by Kenefick, Cooke and Mitchell, attorneys for the applicant, from which it appears that the applicant's railroad is to cross the steam railway in an undercrossing. No hearing in this matter was held.

This Board hereby determines, under section 68 of the Railroad Law, that the railroad of the Buffalo and Lake Erie Traction Company (street surface) shall cross the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern railway (steam) at a point about four hundred and fifty ft. east of Commercial Street in the Village of Farnham, Erie County, below the grade of said steam railway, in an undercrossing. This Board also hereby determines, under section 68 of the Railroad Law, that the proportion of expense of such crossing to be paid by The Buffalo and Lake Erie Traction Company and The Lake Shore and Michigan Southern Railway Company shall be as set forth in said agreement.

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175
YEARS!**

As part of the
Town's 175th
Celebration we
are preparing a
Historical
Memory Book

**The Brant-Farnham Historical Society would like to publish the histories of Families who are
CURRENTLY LIVING IN THE TOWN OF BRANT AS WELL AS THOSE WHO ONCE LIVED HERE
It has been 25 years since the last history book, but ...we can't do it alone. We need YOUR help!**

Record your family's history for future generations.

**The Town of Brant consists of the Village of Farnham and encompasses all miles between the borders of
Lake Erie, North Collins, Angola and the Cattaraugus Indian Reservation!
We ENCOURAGE the participation of ALL TOWN Residents
From one end to the other and everywhere in between!**

**If stories are handwritten, please print legibly.
Please try to keep the biographies as brief and as factual as possible.
You may email family stories/biographies and any photos to
historian@brantny.com**

or

**Mail via US Postal Service to:
Brant-Farnham Historical Society
PO BOX 228
Brant, NY 14027**

Check out the Town of Brant Historical Website for more information

**All histories and stories must be in by January 31, 2014
Our plan is to have the book ready for the 2014 Brant Summer Festival.**

**We are also interested in any old photos or memorabilia of the Town of Brant
You may like to contribute for this publication.**

**Won't you please consider donating copies of photos (but not photo-copies)
Or you may loan photos to us and we will make the copies.
Be sure to include names/places and dates of photo content whenever possible.**

**Did something happen in our Town / Village that you would like to write about?
Please do so - we are always interested in "how things were" or
"what you recall from a special Town or Village event" etc.**

Do you belong to a Social Club or Group within the Town Borders? (Fire Company, Church, Scouts, Political etc)

**Do you work within the Brant Town boundaries?
Own or work on a farm? Ride a tractor? Bale Hay?
Milk cows? Trim grapes? Pick Strawberries, Raspberries or Apples?**

**Have you attended any functions or activities that you can share a story with us?
Weddings/ funerals/ Memorial day services/ Christenings/ Confirmations/ Pancake Breakfasts/
Installation Dinners/ Strawberry Festivals and Brant Summer Fest celebrations/ Bingo / Towel Bingo/
Cow Chip Bingo/ Barn Mass/ Parades/ Football
And any general or funny stories about everyday life and people**

**Did you attend the Brant or Farnham Schools?
Tell us what you remember about The School Plays - Teachers - Bus Drivers - Snow days
- Summer Vacation and Awards Ceremonies
How you felt when the schools closed.**

**Present and past Businesses: The Brant Store, Pizzolanti's, Pero's Bowling Lanes, local Farm Stands
The Stories are endless....we just need YOU to tell them.
Please consider submitting something for this 175 year booklet. We don't want to leave you out!**

**Expressing our Sympathy to friends and family
Our community sadly misses:**

Eleanor (Schwert) Chiavetta Mamie C. (Vara) Hauck
Mary (Muscato) Cureo Eleanor (Catalano) Gier
John De Maria Rose Marie(Catalano) DeMaria
Fannie E. (Beach) Hamm William F. Graci
Peter F. Gugino David G. Mason
And any we may have unknowingly omitted*

May they rest in Peace

** If you have names you would like mentioned in this section, please contact us.*

CORRECTION to June 25, 2013 Newsletter, Article titled
HOLY CROSS 150 YEARS By Beverly Wasmund

In 1974 the 100th anniversary celebration was held at
the Brant Fire Hall. Should have read: “ *In 1964...*”

Farnham & Brant and This & That

Ethel Morgano, Formerly of Brant NY, recently celebrated her 100th Birthday on June 9th, 2013 with her children, Kathryn and Douglas, her 3 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren along with her friends at McGuire Group’s Seneca Health Care Facility, where she has lived since 2008. Ethel was married to Sam (now deceased) and they lived together on their farm in Brant NY, growing fruits and vegetables. After their children were grown, Ethel and Sam moved to Orchard Park. Together, they enjoyed taking cruises and traveling around the country.

Sonnie and Josie (Korbar) Catalano of Brant, celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on April 11, 2013. The event was celebrated by a stretch limousine ride to Russell’s Steaks, Chops and More. Also attending were their children, Lisa, Greg and Sandy and their grandchildren, Krissy and Kimi, and Sam Fullone as well. (Josie celebrated her 83rd birthday Sept 6, 2013.)

The **Josephine and Anthony Muscato** farm located at on Milestrip Rd, Brant, once had a 3-seater outhouse according to son-in-law Vinnie Leone. ☺

Would the Person who “*borrowed*” the 1936-1937 Brant-North Collins Phone Book from the Historical Display at this year’s Brant Summer Festival : PLEASE RETURN IT?? Thank you!

According to the August 29, 2013 edition of *THE SUN*, The bid for the paving improvement project for Railroad Avenue and Detroit Street [Farnham] was awarded to Milherst Construction Inc. in the amount of \$104,647.

Sept 18, 1899 was the date of the tragic Fire in Farnham. Visit the historical Room at the Brant Town Hall for more details.

President Obama visited UB at Buffalo NY on August 22, 2013.



MEMORIES

by Sherman Falk (That’s Sherman in the above photo!)

In the early stages of World War II (1940’s) a Canadian twin engine airplane believed to be a DeHaviland was forced to make an emergency landing at the Angola Airport. The airport was located on Hardpan Road in the Township of Brant. Located at the airport was a tower with a rotating beacon which was a navigation aid to aircraft.

The aircraft involved in this incident had evidently got off course and entered United States airspace. Being at night and getting low on fuel the situation was getting quite serious when they saw the beacon. Knowing that an airport existed, they chose to make a gear up landing, not knowing the conditions on the ground.

The pilot, considering all conditions made an exceptional belly landing, with only minor damage to the aircraft’s structure and no injury to flight personnel. Of course during this type of landing the propellers of the aircraft were badly damaged. After inspection of the engines, a decision was made to replace them. This of course took considerable time to get replacement engines and equipment to complete the operation.

After the repairs were completed the aircraft was moved to Rte 20 on a Sunday morning. Traffic on the highway was stopped so the aircraft could take off.

I recall standing in the front yard of my parent’s home and listening to the drone of the engines, as they preflighted them prior to take-off.

Once the aircraft was airborne and climbed above the tree line, it was visible to me as it started on its journey back to its home base.

At this point, I would like to say “*thanks*” to Bertha Notaro for her input. She told me one of the men on the airplane married a girl from Angola. Also she assisted in defining the time and season of the event; teams were bowling at Pero’s Lanes. This places it at early evening and likely the fall season.

If anyone reading this article has further information of the incident, please contact me by phone or mail.

Respectfully,
Sherman G. Falk

8675 Rt 62.....South Dayton, NY 14138.....Phone: 716-988-3582

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Courier EXPRESS



WET. HI 60°
 Periods of rain. High
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 on Page B-14.

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SECTION A

Deputy Killing Spurs Massive Hunt

As we enter the fall, I'm reminded of so many things: back to school time, election campaigning, football season, and an event in my childhood that will never be forgotten.



Sgt. Bill Dispenca

My father, William Dispenca, a Detective Sergeant for the Erie County Sheriff's department and his partner Deputy William Dils were conducting a burglary investigation on November 5th, 1977, on Sherman Avenue, in North Collins. They went to question the suspect, Efrain "Frankie" Rodriguez. As they approached the house, Rodriguez, ran up the stairs to a second floor apartment, slamming and locking the door behind himself. My father, along

with Deputy Dils pushed through the door while Rodriguez ran to the back bedroom and shut himself in.

As the Sheriffs approached the bedroom door, Rodriguez fired two shots. The first hit Deputy Dils and the second whistled over my dad's shoulder. My dad dragged Mr. Dils out of the line of fire and called for help on his radio. Rodriguez then jumped out of the window and escaped. A large manhunt was initiated and concluded with Rodriguez's capture that weekend in North Collins.

Mr. Dils died that afternoon at Our Lady of Victory Hospital in Lackawanna. My mother, Annette, anchored my brother Billy and I all weekend, as she had for so many years. The wife of a police officer is a special wife and mother, and that she was. We were frightened. Many of our family members, neighbors and friends called the house and came over. As the manhunt was underway, police were in full force everywhere. I remember hearing on the news they used bloodhounds as part of the manhunt. We never saw my dad all weekend as he was a critical part of the search.

Rodriguez's trial occurred in the summer of 1978. I remember my mom taking her

vacation and going with my dad every day downtown. Rodriguez was found guilty of murder on Deputy Dils and attempted murder of my father.

Our small town, Brant, New York had quite a hero residing there. Growing up in Brant as a farmer, and after serving in the United States Air Force, my father became an Erie County Sheriff attaining the rank of Detective Sergeant. An avid pilot, he also served on the Lake Shore School Board, and Judge for 19 years for the Town of Brant.

My parents would be celebrating their 52nd wedding anniversary this September, had they both not lost their battles with cancer over ten years ago. To this day, I cannot run into someone at a Lake Shore school or political event where somebody does not mention my parents and what an impact that they had made in their lives. I am a lifelong resident of Brant and live in the house my dad's grandparents purchased when they came over from Italy over one hundred years ago. We raised our children in this house. Sweet memories run deep, which we celebrate in their lives.

Submitted by: Maria Dispenca Inglut



**The Farnham Volunteer Fire Co
Annual Memorial Day Chicken BBQ
May 27, 2013**

Photo by Evan Russell

The Farnham Volunteer Fire Department's Memorial Day Chicken BBQ is a long time tradition.

In years past, a Memorial Day Parade down Commercial St. from Rt 5 to the Fire hall, complete with marching band, various local politicians, church leaders and youth groups was part of the celebration. In more recent years patriotic music is provided by a "stationary" Middle school band.

On 5/27/13 the current Mayor Julie Gibbons presided over the ceremonies which included prayerful reflections by Rev. Laurie Carson (Holy Cross) and Fr. James Fliss (St. Anthony's).

Following the ceremony, as always, is the Chicken BBQ. Each year, people from our neighboring communities take this opportunity to get together for the Memorial Day remembrances, while at the same time supporting the Fire Company and enjoying visiting with those attending.

** The Farnham Volunteer Fire Company was organized 1923 **

The Historian's Notebook:

Hello! The Brant-Farnham Historical Society has been busy throughout the summer months. The 10th annual Brant Summer Festival was successful and the Historical Display well attended. This year we focused on the Civil War and our Town of Brant Veterans of that War. You can find a "mini" display of "Brant and the Civil War" at the Town Hall in the Historical Room.

In order to make this newsletter a success, much help is needed. We are inviting anyone who has a story to tell or a photograph to share, please contact us. We welcome your ideas and suggestions. You may submit articles/photographs to historian@brantny.com or in person to Beverly Wasmund, Jo Battaglia or Patty Friend. You may also bring them to the Town and Village Halls.

175 years flew by!

***Don't forget that 2014 is the 175th
Anniversary of the Town of Brant.***

Any ideas you have for celebrating this event- let us know!! We are going to prepare a SPECIAL HISTORY BOOK. All Residents may submit photos and family histories to the website above or directly to your village or town historian! More information can be found inside this newsletter.

**The BRANT-FARNHAM
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

If you would like to help us collect and preserve the history of Brant Township, you can become a member of the Brant-Farnham Historical Society. Membership rates are \$10.00 – Individuals, \$15.00 Families for January through December.

Our newsletter is published quarterly on the 25th of March, June, September and December. Articles for publication should be submitted no later than the last day of the month preceding each issue.

Historical Meetings are held the 3rd Wednesday of each Month; 7:00PM at the Brant Town Hall. You are also welcome to visit the Historical room during the Town Clerk's office hours.

HISTORIANS

Farnham: Bev Wasmund and Jo Battaglia

Brant: Patty Friend

**From: The Brant-Farnham Historical Society
P.O. Box 228
Brant, NY 14027**

TO: