

The **Marsh** Family in Fredonia
By Doug Shepard, 2012

The earliest local record for Henry Nelson **Marsh** is a property deed of 20 April 1837 from Ephraim **Marsh** (father?) of Pomfret NY to Henry Nelson **Marsh** of the same. It was for a 50-acre piece just over the Fredonia line in Dunkirk NY in the southwest corner of the Holland Land Company's Lot 27, Twp.6, Range 12, with Brigham Road as its eastern boundary. A copy can be obtained from the County Clerk at P.O.Box 170 / Mayville NY 14757 – 0170. (It is in Liber 18, p.415 of Deeds.)

Since H. N. **Marsh** was born in 1815, this acquisition was made when he turned 21. Although his obituary says that he first apprenticed with Benjamin **Bosworth** in the jewelry trade when he was 16 (*ca.* 1831), first advertisements with his name included were for **Taylor & Marsh's** "cash store" in the village. The *Censor* of 14 August 1839 reported that their dry goods store had been robbed. There are a series of small ads in the 1840s listing their offerings, which included beans, codfish and toys! The *Censor* of 22 April 1840 reported that the co-partnership of A. F. **Taylor** and H. N. **Marsh** had been dissolved. **Taylor** was to continue the business on his own.

The 1850 Census finds **Marsh** on Green (later Cushing) Street and listed as a "Goldsmith." This suggests that he was working at his trade but did not as yet have a jewelry store of his own. The next entry is on 11 May 1852 announcing that D. **Tucker**, the tailor, would be found over H. N. **Marsh's** Jewelry Store. On 1 June 1852 the store was described as directly opposite the Post Office and between **Magee's** and **Clement's** stores. (S. M. **Clement** had a dry goods store at today's 32 *West Main Street* in the 1850s.)

By the time of the 1855 Census, the family included Henry N., 38; Martha P., 37; Helen, 14; Oscar H., 10; and Eva ,6. Henry **Marsh's** obituary states that he first enlisted in Co.A. of the 68th Regt. in 1855 as a 1st Lieut. and became a Captain in 1861. In 1862 he formed a company of the 49th NY Volunteers. In their roster he is listed as Henry A. **Marsh**, Captain. There are several contemporary references to his being too frail for actual combat.

By 1860 he and Martha had added Charles, 6 months; and a "domestic," Amelia Chapin, 16, to their household. Oscar attended the Fredonia Academy beginning in 1859, when he was 15, through 1861. On 16 March 1865, Oscar, 20, married 18-year old Mary E. **Clark** in the Fredonia Baptist Church. The 1865 Census lists the two **Marsh** households next to each other. This probably reflects the two houses on the **Marsh** property on Cushing Street shown on the 1867 map of the village. By 1870 the Oscar **Marsh** family is living out on West Main Street with Oscar listed as a "farmer." Also in the family is Oscar's mother-in-law, Louisa **Clark**, 60 and a 16-year old "farm laborer," Charles D. **Story**.

There are several references to Henry **Marsh** dealing in real estate. In June 1857 he sold a lot on Eagle Street and in May 1881 he and O. W. **Johnson** owned 42 acres on Prospect Street. **Marsh** sold his half interest to G. N. **Tremaine** and E. S. **Ely** for \$2500. The land was going to be used to put a new street through and sell off the building lots. It was about then that Henry **Marsh** and his younger son, Charles, began their watch repair business as H. N. **Marsh & Son**

as advertised in the *Censor* of 23 March 1881. Henry, who soon retired with Charles taking over the business, died on 21 March 1883.