

**Press release template for a *Speakers in the Humanities* event.**

Directions: Edit all red-bracketed text. Remember to change the font color to black.

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Central New York Genealogical Society  
presents  
From Muscles to Motors on the Farm: Henry Ford and  
the Great American Tractor Wars, 1910-1930

***March 14, 2015***

Dewitt, New York –In collaboration with the New York Council for the Humanities, the Central New York Genealogical Society presents the lecture, *From Muscles to Motors on the Farm: Henry Ford and the Great American Tractor Wars, 1910-1930* by Dr. Milton Sernett on Saturday, March 14, 2015 from 1:00-3:00 pm at Pebble Hill Presbyterian Church, 5299 Jamesville Rd., Dewitt, NY 13214. This lecture is free and open to the general public. This event is made possible through the *Speakers in the Humanities* program with the support of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

**From Muscles to Motors on the Farm: Henry Ford and  
the Great American Tractor Wars, 1910-1930  
A lecture by Dr. Milton C. Sernett**



The Fordson, first mass-produced in 1918, gave farmers an affordable source of mechanical power. Henry Ford's entry into the tractor business sparked a conflict in the farm machinery industry that had long-term consequences for American life on and off the farm. The transition from horse power to tractor power, from muscles to motors, took place during an era of rapid social change in American life. Farm families were trying to adjust to new marvels everywhere - airplanes, automobiles, and electricity on the farm, telephones, radio, consolidated rural schools, indoor plumbing, rural free delivery, better roads, and refrigeration.

The lecture use rare images from the archives of the great tractor manufacturers and depictions of the seasons of

agricultural work before the factory farm replaced the family farm. These visual cues will encourage the sharing and preservation of memories of farm life among all members of your community.



Dr. Milton C. Sernett, Professor Emeritus of African American Studies and History, Syracuse University Dr. Milton C. Sernett, Professor Emeritus, taught at Syracuse University for over thirty years. He has published seventeen books and numerous articles and essays, many of them dealing with American abolitionism, the Underground Railroad, and African American history. His current book project is a history of the "the great tractor wars" of the 1920s and the influence of Henry Ford on American farm life.

Other books written by Dr. Sernett and related to his lecture include:

*Say Cheese!: The Story of the Era when New York State Cheese was King*  
*The Horse and Tractor Wars: Letters & Lessons from an Old Horseman*  
*Farm: A Walk through Agricultural History with Jared van Wagenen*

Since its launch in 1983, the Council's *Speakers in the Humanities* program has brought distinguished scholars on a wide range of humanities topics to audiences across New York State. All *Speakers* events are free and open to the general public. Each year, hundreds of non-profit organizations and community groups take advantage of this program, including community centers, religious organizations, museums and historical societies, and libraries. The *Speakers* program is an easy, affordable way for organizations to bring top humanities programming to their community.

For more information about this event, contact [CNYGS@yahoo.com](mailto:CNYGS@yahoo.com). For more information about the *Speakers in the Humanities* program, visit [www.nyhumanities.org/sih](http://www.nyhumanities.org/sih).

#### **About the New York Council for the Humanities**

Founded in 1975 and supported by Federal, State, City, and private sources, the New York Council for the Humanities helps all New Yorkers become thoughtful participants in our communities by promoting critical inquiry, cultural understanding, and civic engagement through grants and programs.

#### **About the Central New York Genealogical Society**

The Central New York Genealogical Society was formed in 1961 for the purpose of preserving, publishing and sharing genealogical information and resources. During its six meetings held from March through November, the Society sponsors experienced genealogists to share their expert knowledge on the research and publication of ancestral information, and to educate in the professional standards of genealogy. Workshops and seminars are held occasionally, to assist beginners with their research. All meetings are open to the public.