

Perinton Historical Society Historiogram

18 Perrin Street
Fairport, NY 14450

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Carmen Peck Remembers Fairport

With Commentary by Bill Poray

The German invasion of Liege, Belgium in August of 1914 was the first battle of World War I. Former Fairport resident Carmen Peck was there when it happened. In fact, she was born as the artillery shelled the city. Her Romanian family's story of survival in war-torn Europe took them to Russia, France, England, and finally the United States, when Carmen was ten years old. Now 99 years of age, and living in Madison, Wisconsin, Carmen Peck has led a remarkable life.

Despite her father's concerns, Carmen enrolled in art school in the midst of the Great Depression. Money was scarce, but the determined young student worked her way through school and earned a Bachelor's degree in Fine Arts from the Dayton Art Institute. She continued her training at the Columbus School of Art, the Layton School, Illinois Wesleyan University and finally, the Memorial Art Gallery in Rochester, where she won the coveted Juror's Award in an important exhibition. Carmen was a wife, mother, teacher and artist during her 25 years in Fairport.

She also holds the unique distinction of having two exhibitions of her paintings at the Perinton Historical Society, the first in 1945, and the second, 47 years later, in 1992. She referred to the latter as her "coming home" exhibition.

Carmen and Hal Peck married in 1939. Through their sons, Jeff and Dan, I have had an opportunity to learn about their mother. Some of her most precious memories of Fairport and its people are reflected in her words:

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Carmen and Hal Peck at their home on Potter Place, Fairport

HISTORIGRAM

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Perinton Historical Society

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Our first stop was to the Farmers Market, where the stalls were literally filled with the harvest from this season.

They do not celebrate Halloween in Finland, so our friends were very interested in the many pumpkins available for home decoration and the making of jack-o-lanterns. We purchased a pumpkin to allow them the opportunity of carving their own jack-o-lantern. Also obtained at the market were vegetables we will be using for this evening's meal, which will be a typical Thanksgiving dinner, with turkey, dressing, mashed potatoes and giblet gravy, squash, scalloped corn, cranberry sauce, pumpkin bread and pumpkin pie. We always start the meal with a traditional item from Cindy's family called a shrub, which is sherbet with cranberry juice. We will often prepare a Thanksgiving-type meal when we have foreign guests since it is truly an American tradition, not followed in other parts of the world with the exception of Canada.

Next we walked both sides of Main Street to view the scarecrows created by merchants and organizations of the community. I must say, the Perinton Historical Society's scarecrow was best of show in my opinion, but at this time I do not know the results of the judging. (*Editor's note: We did not win.*)

During our walk, we met many local friends to whom we introduced our visitors. Our guests told us at the end of the morning what a wonderful and friendly community we live in. Of course we already knew that, but it was great to hear the comment from our friends from Finland.

I usually try to mention a few things happening at PHS in my comments, and I must start out with our recent, very successful bungalow house tour. It turned out to be a nice day for visiting the three homes on the tour, and I thank the home owners for allowing the visit. I also thank Deb Mabry and her committee for the excellent tour and program this year.

Lastly, I have been stripping decades of old paint from the front doors of the museum, getting them ready for a new coat of paint. I have asked many people, "What color should the doors be painted?" If I asked 12 people, I received 12 different answers. So it will be a committee of one, your president, who will select the color. Afterwards, you can say "Who was the Michelangelo genius who selected such an appropriate color?" Or it might be "What crazy person selected that ridiculous color?" I am prepared for all comments, good and bad.

I have enjoyed sharing my thoughts for October and will chat with you again next month.

Bob Hunt, President

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~ Bob Hunt ~

Comments from your President

I'm never sure what I am going to write about each month in the HISTORIGRAM, but today is Saturday, October 12, and we are celebrating the Scarecrow Festival in Fairport. As you may recall, it was an absolutely beautiful autumn day in our village and Cindy and I were able to share it with two friends visiting us

from Finland through the Rotary Friendship Exchange program. We spent two weeks in Finland in August of 2012 with this program, staying with Rotarians in their country.

After starting the day with blueberry pancakes, NY maple syrup, and freshly made NY apple cider, we walked to the village to enjoy the many activities taking place. First we noticed the streets and shopping areas filled with Safe Journey's 5K participants, who had just completed the race, and what a perfect day it was for the runners.



Thank You

*From Deborah J. Wilcox Mabry
2013 Perinton House Tour Chairperson*

This is an expression of my gratitude to everyone involved in our very successful 2013 House Tour, to the committee (Lucy, Elaine, Robin and Jeanne), to the PHS Board, to Pat May on publicity, to Jim Unckless on membership and mailing of tickets, to the homeowners, to the docents, to Keith Boas on photography and PowerPoint, to Alan Nowicki and for the rain holding off!

As you know, we had to think outside the box and come up with a plan for the 2013 House Tour. We knew what our topic would be, but we needed to figure out a way to pull it all together. We held a very informative presentation, on Tuesday evening, September 17th, where the members of the committee (Elaine Lanni, Lucy McCormick, Robin Ezell and I) talked about the American Craftsman Bungalow. We also presented information about the trolley and bungalows in the area towns of East Rochester, Pittsford and Penfield. We handed out a map of the bungalow homes in Perinton for use on a self-guided walking/driving tour. We then showed two PowerPoint programs (thanks to Keith Boas for the photos of 95 Midvale Dr., 150 Midvale Dr., and 2753 Baird Rd. and to Lucy McCormick for the pictures of the 33 Perinton bungalows). We had a great audience (approximately 123 attendees).

Then we held a special lecture at the Perinton Community Center on Sunday, October 6th, given by Alan Nowicki, Program Director from the Roycroft Campus Corporation. Mr. Nowicki talked about Elbert Hubbard; the building of the East Aurora campus, the Roycroft Press and its successful printing and publishing guild. He also spoke about this National Historic Landmark and the current restoration work being done. We had another great audience of approximately



To kick off our 2013 House Tour on October 6th, Alan Nowicki, Program Director at Roycroft, gave a presentation on the *History of the Roycroft Campus* in East Aurora. Photo by Keith Boas

125 attendees, and then went on our traditional house tour to visit three bungalows: 37 Parker St., 54 East St. and 752 Whitney Rd.

Heartfelt thanks to—

Our Homeowners: Mary Beato, Lauren Frasier, Lynn Scott, Sally and David Cohen, Barb and Chip Clay and Joseph Giunta

Our Docents: Marianne Hooper, Debi Brenner, Cheri Mascitti, Janet St. Pierre, Julie St. Pierre, Lisa Lodadio, Jim and Bonnie Smith, Pat and Warren Knapp, Mike Barker, Jen West, Peg Havens, Ciaren Hanna, Sue Broda, Anne Johnston, Bonnie Myers, Sue Templeton, Bob Ruhland and Sharon Catanese.

If you would like to be a part of this terrific committee in the future, please let me know. Plans for the 2014 House Tour will start later this year.



Special Recognition Level Memberships

A membership contribution of any amount is greatly appreciated and important to the future of PHS. Business memberships will be listed as supporters in each issue of the HISTORIGRAM, on the PHS website and at the museum.

The DeLand, Potter and Perrin membership levels will be recognized once in the HISTORIGRAM and then listed on our society's website and at the museum, unless contributors prefer to remain anonymous.

Business (\$100 and above)

Bob Ruhland, Keller Williams Realty, 2000 Winton Road South, Building 1, Rochester, NY 14618

R C Shaheen Paint and Decorating Centers, 121 South Main Street, Fairport, NY 14450

DeLand (\$100–\$249)

James and Barbara Boyle
Kevin Kesby
Georgia and Fritz May

Perrin (\$500 and above)

Bob and Cindy Hunt

In early 1942, we were living in Rochester where my husband, Hal, was working as an engineer at Kodak, designing air conditioning systems for the plant. The war had just started and when he decided to enlist in the Navy, he was 31 years old.

He learned that one of his workmates, Ken Van Dyke, was going into the Army and would be leaving his pregnant wife, Ruth, at the house they had rented in Fairport. They had an extra bedroom and we decided that I would go there with two-year-old Danny and live with Ruth and help her through the pregnancy and with the new baby, while our husbands were away at war.

The Van Dyke's house was on Potter Place, not far from the intersection with Church Street.



Young Danny Peck in Fairport
By Carmen Peck in 1943

Hal was commissioned as a second lieutenant and, although he'd hoped to use his engineering skills to improve air conditioning aboard submarines, he was instead assigned to a destroyer.

Within the first year of his service, however, Hal was involved in a serious training accident aboard his ship. He was sent to a naval hospital in Ithaca, where he spent many weeks recovering from back injury. I didn't have a car then, so I took Danny on the long bus ride to visit him as often as I could. The nurses loved Danny and used to give him candy and let him ride the halls in Hal's wheelchair. When Hal returned home on a medical discharge, we decided to stay in Fairport. We liked the idea of a small town and we loved the area.

Fairport also seemed so quiet and peaceful in a time when the world was at war. And, as it turned out, there was one house left for sale at the very end of Potter Place, between one of the Filkins farm cow pastures and the house of Mr. Brown, who was a builder and had put up a number of houses along the street. The upper floor of No. 73 Potter Place wasn't finished yet, but we fell in love with it and bought it anyway. And that's how we ended up in Fairport.

My best friend, Betty Koch, lived down the street, and we used to walk from Potter Place to Stolt's Market on the other side of town, pushing our baby carriages. It took an hour but we didn't have cars so we had to walk.



Joe Bieler on Potter Place, walking to his truck garden
By Carmen Peck in 1944

Sometimes we brought groceries home in the carriages, alongside our babies. But once a week we bought more and had it delivered, either by Stolt's delivery van or by Salmon's Delivery. Mr. Salmon had a horse and wagon and used to deliver things for people in the village.

I remember that when the bell on the lift bridge rang, everyone within hearing distance, especially the kids, would rush to the bridge to watch whatever boat was going by. If we got there in time, we used to go onto the bridge and ride up and down on it and watch the boat from above, which was fun. During the war, there were a lot of barges on the canal carrying things for the war effort, including metal containers that were being made by American Can.

Milk was delivered to our door every day by the milkman, and ice and coal were also delivered to the house on a regular basis. We had our own Victory Garden in our backyard where we grew everything—sweet corn, tomatoes, green peppers, peas and other things. I enjoyed the work, and

the vegetables were the best tasting of any I've ever had, before or since. Our next-door neighbor, Mrs. Brown, grew watermelons and we used to trade produce with her.

At Christmas, I used to make cookies. Then Danny and I walked over to Joe Bieler's house and Danny gave them to Mr. Bieler. I did that because I knew that Mr. Bieler lived alone and didn't have anyone to care for him at Christmas. Danny liked Mr. Bieler and enjoyed giving him the cookies.

Hal finished off one of the upstairs rooms at the house for me to use as a studio, covering the walls with natural, unbleached muslin, which provided good light for painting, and I painted happily there for many years. Later, after the war, I rented five rooms above French's appliance store in the center of town. It had previously been Hal's first office in Fairport for his engineering firm, before he moved to a house between the bank and Dr. McEachern's. During that time, I painted with Susanne Sealy, also of Potter Place, and some of my other students. Other than that, I painted alone.

Because I didn't have a car in those days, when I painted outdoors it had to be close to home. I had a lightweight easel and I took Danny with me and painted until he got hungry. Then we'd go home for a meal. That's how Clark's Orchard was painted, as well as the Oxbow and the Filkins farm (below). The painting of Joe Bieler (opposite page) I did at home,



Recent photo of Carmen Peck



The Filkins Farm, Hulburt Road, viewed from 73 Potter Place
By Carmen Peck in 1944

from life, since Joe used to walk right past our house every day on his way to tend his many gardens. That was before there were any houses across the street and only one or two on James Street.

Over the years, I did a lot of commissioned portraits of people in the town. Many of those paintings were brought by their owners to my exhibition for the Fairport Canal Days festival in 1992, where I gave a talk about what it was like being an artist in Fairport in the 1940s.

Carmen Peck has not lived in Fairport for more than forty years, yet many of our residents hold vivid memories of her, as a teacher, artist, neighbor and friend.

Her painting of the Filkins farm (left) holds special interest for those of us interested in local history. Some might remember that it was Carmen who first raised the prospect of relocating the house when it was to be razed to make way for the construction of Minerva Deland School. Today, the home, which was relocated two tenths of a mile west in 1954, is a designated Fairport landmark.

Among the many paintings featured at the 1992 Perinton Historical Society exhibition were several of local scenes, including the Main Street lift bridge, West Avenue, the Oxbow, and Brooks Hill.

Carmen Peck's unique artistic perspective, coupled with her vivid memories, provide us with a view of our community which might otherwise be lost. Special thanks go to Carmen and her sons for sharing her story.





Photo by Vicki Masters Profitt

Fritsch Vintage Halloween Collectibles Display

Thanks to John and Susan Fritsch for sharing part of their vintage Halloween collection with the Fairport Museum during the month of October. Our visitors enjoyed seeing Halloween doorstops, puppets, noisemakers and more during the run of this mini-exhibit.

Be sure to read *Collectibles on Parade* (above right) to learn how you can feature your collection at the Fairport Museum!



Photo by Vicki Masters Profitt

Holiday Shopping

Autumn has just begun, but the holiday shopping season is in full swing! Don't forget to stop by the Fairport Historical Museum Gift Shop for a wide array of enticing and unusual gifts that will appeal to everyone on your shopping list.

Author Pat Gorthy to Visit Museum

Children's author Pat Gorthy will give a presentation and sign copies of her book, *Peppermint Summer*, at the Fairport Museum on Saturday, November 9th from 9:00–11:00 a.m. Hear all about 10-year old Emily Taylor who makes the journey from Rochester to Lyons along the Erie Canal in the 1860s. The book will be available for purchase for \$10.

Collectibles on Parade

Do you or someone you know have an interesting collection that you'd like to exhibit at the Fairport Historical Museum? We are looking for unique items that can be displayed in the cases located in the museum atrium. Each month, a new collection will be featured.

For information about loaning your collection to the *Collectibles on Parade* program, please call our director, Vicki Masters Profitt at 585-233-1204 or send an email to—director@perintonhistoricalsociety.org



Photo by Vicki Masters Profitt

Cuddle Up a Little Closer with our Cold Weather Costume Exhibit

As the leaves on the trees change, so do the exhibits at the Fairport Museum. Although our *Downton Abbey* exhibit has ended its run, a new display has arrived in its place. Now through December 21st, visit the Fairport Museum to view our cold weather costume exhibit featuring nine exquisite coats, cloaks and capes, and several fur muffs—all from the collection of the Perinton Historical Society.



PHS volunteers and their Tweets from the Perinton Historical Society display, at the Fairport Scarecrow Festival

Crowing about PHS

By Lucy McCormick

Tweets from the Perinton Historical Society was the theme of this year's entry in the Fairport Scarecrow Festival. A ginormous, bright-blue Twitter bird, representing the online Twitter social networking site, took center stage, flanked by a flock of colorful birds and birdhouses. A dozen "tweets," or short messages, about the PHS completed the display, touting PHS benefits and events, including the displays of *Vintage Halloween Collectibles* and *Cold Weather Fashions*.

The scarecrow display was the product of no fly-by-night, birdbrain outfit, but rather a top-flight decorating team: Sue Broda, Ann and Harold Castle, Sharon Catanese, Anne Johnston, Suzanne Lee and Anica Harris, Lucy McCormick, Bonnie Myers, Sue and Dave Scheir, Sue Templeton and May Thomson.

How tweet it was!

With Appreciation for our Volunteers

November is the traditional month to give thanks, and the Board of Trustees of the Perinton Historical Society wishes to express its appreciation to a group of members who are instrumental in the operation of the Fairport Historical Museum—our volunteers! We are very fortunate to have a devoted group of smiling volunteers who arrive each month for their scheduled two-hour shifts at the museum.

Special recognition goes to Volunteer Coordinator Gail Black for her efforts in scheduling, covering shifts and helping out whenever needed.

Thank you all for your time and your dedication to helping the Perinton Historical Society preserve our local history—*Today for Tomorrow*.

Mark Your Calendars Upcoming Events

At the Fairport Historical Museum

Saturday, November 9

9:00–11:00 a.m.

Presentation and book signing with Pat Gorthy, author of the children's book *Peppermint Summer*

Tuesday, November 19

7:30 p.m.

Rare and Unusual Photos of Fairport and Perinton, and the Stories Behind Them. (See photo on last page.)

Presented by Bill Poray

Saturday, December 7

9:00–11:00 a.m.

Book signing with Michael Keene, author of *Folklore and Legends of Rochester: The Mystery of Hoodoo Corner & Other Tales; Murder, Mayhem & Madness: 150 Years of Crime & Punishment in Western New York;* and *Madhouse: The Hidden History of Insane Asylums in 19th Century New York*

Saturday, December 14

9:00–11:00 a.m.

Book signing with Fairport native Donovan A. Shilling, author of *A Towpath Tale; Adventures on the Old Erie Canal* and *Rochester's Movie Maina*

Tuesday, December 17

7:30 p.m.

Christmas Party—Please bring a dessert to pass.

Deck the Halls to Shopping Malls: American Christmas Traditions and How They Grew, presented by Christopher Bensch, Vice President of Collections for the Strong



GREAT WAY TO RAISE MONEY FOR PHS!

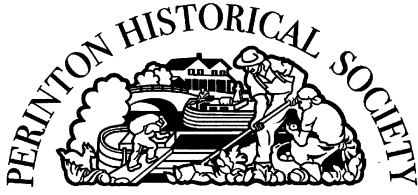
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Fairport Historical Museum

18 Perrin Street, Fairport, NY 14450

The museum is open to the public on
Saturdays, Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays
at the hours listed below:*

Hours

Saturday	9:00-11:00 am through 12/21
Sunday	2:00-4:00 pm
Tuesday	2:00-4:00 pm
Thursday	7:00-9:00 pm

***Note:** The museum will be closed
on Thursday, 11/28, Saturday, 11/30 and
Sunday, 12/1, for the Thanksgiving holiday.

Group tours, presentations and special
projects are by appointment. Please call and
leave a message at 223-3989.

www.PerintonHistoricalSociety.org



Do you recognize this Fairport Landmark?

Please plan on attending the PHS Program on
November 19th at 7:30 pm at the Fairport Historical Museum.
Presented by Town Historian Bill Poray, the program
will include an amazing collection of rarely seen
photographs of Fairport and Perinton, and
the stories behind them.