



# Perinton Historical Society HISTORIGRAM

18 Perrin Street  
Fairport, NY 14450

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## Fairport Museum Document Makes Its Way Into a National Publication

The Fairport Museum is a great place to find out about the history of Fairport and Perinton. The museum is not only a place to display local artifacts but it has also developed into a first class research center for the study of local history.

The Perinton Historical Society has been collecting documents and finding aids since 1935 to assist researchers in their quest for specific information about people, buildings and events in Fairport and Perinton. Several years ago, the museum started to open the the first two Mondays of the month exclusively for researchers. The Society receives dozens of inquiries every year from all over the country.

While most researchers gather information for personal or family reasons, some researchers actually get their research published. A recent article in the current issue of *Paper Money* is about local resident Edward McGinnis and

the Fairport National Bank and Trust Company. The article entitled *E.C. McGinnis National Bank President and Cashier* was written by Karl Kabelac, former head of the rare books department at the University of Rochester. Karl is a numismatologist (a specialist in numismatology which looks at coins and metals and their relation to history.) Karl spent several hours in the Fairport Museum gathering facts for his article and even borrowed a business card of Mr. McGinnis which is illustrated in the article.

In the 1920's and 30's the United States Treasury Department issued bank notes with the name of the local bank, and the signatures of that local bank's president and cashier. These National Bank Notes, as they are called, were produced for tens of thousands of banks throughout the U.S. The bank note from the Fairport National Bank is one of only eight banks discovered to have the signature of both the president and cashier as the same person.

If you would like to learn more about Edward McGinnis and the Fairport National Bank (which is still standing on South Main St.) pick up a copy of the March/April issue of *Paper Money* from your local newsstand or book store.

### ✦ Our Mission ✦

*"The Mission of the Perinton Historical Society is to promote Community interest in the preservation of local records and artifacts for posterity, and for the enlightenment of the people of our town of Perinton"*

## The Last Thirty Years

(Part 4 of 4)

If you were to make a short list of four of the most influential members of the Perinton Historical Society in the last 30 years they would be Bernadette McDonough, Matson Ewell, Ruth Ewell, and William Matthews. All of them have used their special talents and dedication to lead the Perinton Historical Society into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

**Bernadette McDonough:** Raised in Manhattan, Bernadette and her husband Peter, moved to Fairport in 1969. This was a transition period for the Society. The founders of the Perinton Historical Society were gone and the leaders at the time were moving on. Leaders such as Bill Carr, Jim Welch, Helen Martin, Marjorie Merriman, Adelaide Clark, Clayton Bridges, Helen King and Electra Barber had all worked many years to keep the Society in the public eye. They were now looking to pass the torch on to a new generation of leaders.

Bernadette came to her first covered supper sponsored by the Society shortly after moving to Fairport. She was immediately recruited and asked to be treasurer, a position she held for 4 or 5 years. Bernadette was in the vanguard of this new leadership team serving as president from 1974 to 1976, Board of Trustees from 1978 to 1991 and as second vice president from 1992 to the present. She will

have served the Society for a total of 36 years this year!

During her term as president and board member, Bernadette and her husband Peter, who was the mayor at the time, pushed for a community museum in the former library building. She also served as village historian and liaison between the Society, the village and the school district. Today she is an important link with the past history of the Society and finds speakers for our monthly meetings. Bernadette's guidance and council has made our work on the Board much better as we face new challenges.

**Matson Ewell:** A native Rochesterian, Matson Ewell joined the Society in 1975 at a crucial time. Urban renewal was being discussed and the debate was beginning about the fate of the Fairport Public Library. Matson, along with other Society members, were instrumental in the negotiations to move the Society from the Crosman Center to the former Fairport Public Library on Perrin Street. Matson's love and care of this building was to continue for the next 27 years.

Matson served as president of the Society from 1977 to 1979 and was on the Board of Trustees from 1980 to 1989. Even after his term expired, Matson continued to attend Board meetings as Director of the Museum. Matson also filled in for jobs around the museum and coordinated volunteers. His ability as speaker and teacher influenced many people in the community. Both Matson and Ruth were honored for their work in the Society by being elected Citizens of the Year in 1999.

**Ruth Ewell:** Ruth was the Headmaster's secretary at the Harley School and joined the Society in 1975. She was corresponding secretary on the Executive Committee from 1977 to 1983 and again from 1991 to 1994. But Ruth's real talent was as

### *Perinton Historical Society*

#### *~ Trivia ~*

In 1992 the Society sponsored an exhibit of local artist Carman Peck's paintings. This was the second exhibition of her works. The first was sponsored by the Society in 1945 and was shown in the Fairport Library.

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editor of the *Historigram*. Her articles and columns chronicled the history of the Society for 20 years from 1982 to 2002. Ruth attended every monthly meeting and wrote about what was said by the speaker that night. In her articles, Ruth had the ability to transport the reader back to the meeting even though they may not have attended that evening. Ruth also contributed essays on local topics which she added to our files. Ruth Ewell's contribution to our understanding of local history and the history of the Perinton Historical Society is immeasurable.

**William Matthews:** Bill's interest in local history began with a bus tour that followed the route of the old RS&E trolley. Affectionately known as "Trolley Bill", Matthews started out on the Executive Committee as corresponding secretary in 1995, treasurer in 1996 and president from 1997 to 2003. He enjoyed renovation projects in the museum and was responsible for the moving of the brick out-house to the Potter grounds, the trolley waiting station now overlooking the Erie Canal and a wooden voting booth now located on the Ewell property. However, Bill's real talent was in finance. Through his leadership, he encouraged the Board of Trustees to make more astute financial decisions and diversify our portfolio. The endowment fund doubled in a few short years and the Society is in a much more sound financial position than it has been at any time in our history. Bill's last project was heading a committee to rewrite our by-laws. The finished document was passed last year by our membership and will influence how the Society is run for many years to come.

As we enter the 21<sup>st</sup> century with a new set of trustees, the future looks bright. We have some talented and diverse people on the Board. Perhaps we'll look back in 2035 when we will be celebrating our 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary and praise some of these very people for their dedication and work for the Perinton Historical Society.

## Wanted: Volunteers for Canal Days June 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>

The Perinton Historical Society is going to have a booth at Canal Days this year. This event is a fund raiser for us. We sell our gift shop items and offer memberships to help pay for heating and lighting bills at the museum. The booth will be coordinated by Bill Keeler and we will again be sharing the tent with the Landmark Society of Western New York.

What Bill needs now are volunteers that can spell him for an hour or two on Saturday June 3 (9 AM to 6 PM) or Sunday June 4 (9 AM to 5 PM). There will be two volunteers at the booth at all times.

If you are going to be in town that weekend and can spare an hour, please call the museum at 223-3989 and leave your name and number where you can be reached. You can also sign up at the museum, or fill out the form on the back of this newsletter and drop it in the mail slot at the museum. Bill will make out the schedule on June 1 and call you back.

## Museum to Offer Expanded Hours this Summer

The Board of Trustees has approved additional summer hours for the Fairport Museum beginning July 5 thru August 30. During that time we will be open Sunday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., the first two Mondays of the month from 8 a.m. to noon and Thursday evenings from 7p.m. to 9 p.m. These extra hours are a service to the community and this program allows tourists and residents more opportunities to visit our museum during good weather.

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## Fairport Museum to Host Landmark Society Coffee Walk

Every year the Landmark Society of Western New York has several "Coffee Walks" in various towns and villages throughout the area. This year the Landmark Society will be organizing a walking tour of the village of Fairport given by our own Perinton town historian Jean Keplinger. The tour will be on Saturday July 22. The walkers will begin their tour at the Fairport Museum where they will be given light refreshment before going on the 90 to 100 minute tour of the village.

If you or a friend would like to go on the "Coffee Walk" it will be July 22 at 9:30 AM and will finish before noon. The tickets are \$14 for either Landmark Society or Perinton Historical Society members (\$16 for non members) and advance registration with the Landmark Society is required. You may call 546-7029 extension 10 or order your tickets on-line at [www.landmarksociety.org](http://www.landmarksociety.org). Tickets tend to go fast, so if you plan on going you should make your reservations early.

### *Perinton Historical Society*

#### *~ Trivia ~*

Marjorie Snow Merriman, whose father once owned a store on South Main Street in the village, was the first president of the Society in 1935 for 3 years. When the Society became chartered in 1951 and the Board of Managers was replaced by an Executive Committee and Board of Trustees, she came out of retirement and became one of the first Trustees for the Society.

## Browsing the Gift Shop

If it has been a while since you visited the Museum Gift Shop, there are many items for purchase to show your hometown pride. We offer below descriptions of a few unique memorabilia that has been shared in previous editions of this newsletter that you may have missed. The gift shop is open during regular museum hours printed on the back page of this edition. Another opportunity to see some items will be during Fairport's Canal Days at the Society's booth. Visit soon as quantities are not guaranteed to remain in stock. If you have an idea for a gift item, perhaps something you have seen in your travels, feel free to let us know.

The shop has color reproductions of the 1872 Town of Perinton map. The map comes from the *Atlas of Monroe County* and was originally hand colored with pink, blue and green watercolors. Color copies are available unframed in the gift shop for \$10 each.

Another gift item are color reproductions of vintage Fairport postcards mounted behind mylar in attractive cardboard folders. Four Fairport scenes from the early 1900's are for sale. They are the Green Lantern Inn (Henry DeLand's house), the oxbow, the Potter Memorial building and the old Rochester, Syracuse and Eastern trolley station. Each copy is \$3 each.

The Fairport Museum gift shop is offering coffee mugs as well. These handsome white mugs have a blue handle and blue rim with a drawing of the Fairport Museum on the front. They are being sold in the gift shop for \$6 each plus tax.

Finally, we have vintage paper weights with scenes of Fairport from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. These attractive glass weights have a velor pad on the bottom and come with a black velor tie bag and a brief history of the scene under glass.

The pictures are of trade cards from the DeLand Co and Crystal Springs Water, scenes of South Main Street, North Main Street, the Green Lantern Inn, the Main Street Lift Bridge and many other vintage shots. The paper weights are \$19 plus tax.

So, the next time you are on Perrin Street during regular museum hours, spend a moment in the gift shop for truly unique gifts for that discriminating local historian.

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# Annual Meeting and Picnic Scheduled for May 9

The annual Perinton Historical Society picnic and meeting will be held rain or shine in the shelter at Perinton Park on Fairport Road near the canal at 6:00 PM on Tuesday May 9. Hot dogs, hamburgers, decaf coffee and lemonade will be provided by the Society. Members coming to the picnic are requested to bring their own plates, silverware, and a dish to pass. Please make reservations by calling the museum at 223-3989 and leaving a message. Please indicate:

1. How many people will be coming
2. Whether you would like a hot dog or hamburger
3. What dish you would like to bring (salad, hot dish or dessert)

After dinner will be the annual meeting. Four members will be up for election to the Board of Trustees. Each nomination is for three years. The nominees are: May Thomson who is running for Treasurer, David Wild at-large Trustee, Bernadette McDonough Vice-President and Jim Unckless at-large Trustee.

So come join us for a pleasant evening at the park.

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## Proxy Vote for Board Members of the Perinton Historical Society

I \_\_\_\_\_ am a member in good standing of the Perinton Historical Society. I cannot attend the annual meeting May 9, 2006 but would like to vote for the following nominees for a three year term to the Board of Trustees.

May Thomson, treasurer \_\_\_\_\_

David Wild, at large \_\_\_\_\_

Bernadette McDonough, vice-president \_\_\_\_\_

Jim Unckless, at large \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Signature and date \_\_\_\_\_

This form can be delivered and dropped in the mail slot, or mailed to the Perinton Historical Society, 18 Perrin Street, Fairport, NY 14450

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## Canal Days Volunteer

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Day available: Saturday June 3 \_\_\_\_\_ Morning \_\_\_\_\_ Afternoon

Sunday June 4 \_\_\_\_\_ Morning \_\_\_\_\_ Afternoon

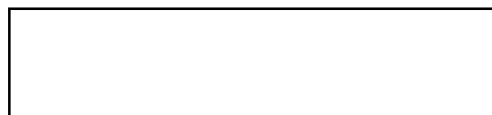
Bill Keeler will call you June 1 to reconfirm and schedule you for an hour to watch the booth.



Perinton Historical Society  
18 Perrin Street  
Fairport, NY 14450

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## FAIRPORT HISTORICAL MUSEUM

18 PERRIN STREET, FAIRPORT, NY 14450

**\*Summer Hours**  
7/5-8/30/06

### REGULAR HOURS

Tuesday	2 p.m. - 4 p.m.
Wednesday	2 p.m. - 4 p.m.*
Thursday	2 p.m. - 4 p.m.* & 7 p.m. - 9 p.m.
Sunday	2 p.m. - 4 p.m.

The first two Mondays of every month the Archives open for  
Community Researchers only from 8 a.m. to noon.

Visit our website:

[www.angelfire.com/ny5/fairporthistmuseum](http://www.angelfire.com/ny5/fairporthistmuseum)

*Group tours, presentations and special projects by appointment.  
Call 223-3989 and leave a message.*