



Perinton Historical Society Historiogram

18 Perrin Street
Fairport, NY 14450

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Decades of I Do: Wedding Gowns of the 20th Century

By Vicki Masters Profitt

2013 was the year of *Downton Abbey*. The Fairport Historical Museum's "Fashions Inspired by Downton Abbey" exhibit featured costumes that came directly from the collection of the Perinton Historical Society and which represented the witty Dowager Countess, the demure Lady Sybil and the elegant Lady Grantham. Due to the tremendous response to that exhibit, we have once again gone into the PHS closets to bring even more costumes to light.

In 2014, the Fairport Historical Museum celebrates weddings. Our newest exhibit, "Decades of I Do: Wedding Gowns of the 20th Century," showcases eleven wedding gowns from area brides. Seven dresses come from the PHS collection, while an additional four are on loan from their owners. Wedding announcements and bridal photos accompany many of the gowns and serve to personalize each bride's story.

The earliest gown in the exhibit dates to 1903, when Alice M. Beaumont wed George H. Warner on October 1st. Alice, the daughter of Edward F. and Emma Sahlman Beaumont, was born in June, 1881. She grew up on George Street, and it was in the parlor of that home that Emma and George were married. The ceremony took place beneath a beautiful arch of evergreen and floral decorations as eighty friends and family members looked on. Dressed in white lansdown trimmed with Irish lace, the bride carried a bouquet of white roses to meet her groom.

Alice and George H. Warner, the son of George S. and Lena Peglow Warner, became parents in 1908 upon the birth of their first son, Leon. Three more sons, Hollis, Vincent and George, would follow within the next seven years. George supported his growing family by working as a foreman at the American Can Company in Fairport. The Warners lived at 25 Woodlawn Avenue for the majority of their 66 years of marriage, which ended only with George's death on March 25, 1970. Alice Beaumont Warner died twelve days later. They were buried at White Haven Cemetery.



Wedding photo of Alice M. Beaumont and
George H. Warner in 1903

Photo courtesy of the Perinton Historical Society

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~ Bob Hunt ~

Comments from your President

Greetings! Last month, I started my comments by talking about the big winter storm that was moving up the east coast. This month, the largest blizzard in a few years just finished this morning, the 13th of March, dumping a fresh new blanket of snow on the area. We measured 17 inches in the driveway before I

fired up the snow blower. After finishing up the driveway, I walked the machine over to 18 Perrin Street to clear the walks, as the museum is open tonight. After the snow stopped falling, the day turned out quite beautiful with bright sun and blue sky.

Last month, I mentioned that as soon as I finished writing my column, I was going out to cut a few branches from the forsythia bush. I did just that, and this is a picture (on the right) of the branch--in full bloom after just about eight days. If you receive your copy of the HISTORIGRAM by email, the photo is in color, so you can see the bright yellow flowers. But if you receive it by the US Postal Service, you will have to use your imagination. The blooms lasted that way for about two weeks. Cindy has cut another branch, along with a cutting from a flowering quince, so we should have more blossoms in a few days.



I am pleased to announce that the Technology Committee, with Catherine Angevine serving as Chairperson, has begun to meet, with the goal of getting our technical equipment more aligned with the 21st century. Computers, printing, copying, and audio/visual capabilities are all areas we need to improve upon, and we look forward to the recommendations of this important committee. It would also be great to be able to show our gift shop items and make sales on the internet.

I'm also pleased to announce that Matt Wells has stepped forward to chair the Property Committee, and will help us stay focused on important maintenance of our museum facility. If you have an interest in this area, please let me know, as we would like to have a committee of five members. Just like at home, there is always upkeep needed and the goal is to develop a long-term maintenance plan. One example is exterior painting.

As you all have probably heard by now, Stephanie and Matt Lawrence have sold the Green Lantern Inn. This week, I received a call from Stephanie who plans to donate a number of china cups, saucers, plates and other items to the museum gift shop. These china dishes were from the 1940s and were used in the operation for banquets and weddings. The Green Lantern Inn logo in green is on each piece. Keep your eyes open when visiting the gift shop, for they will be available for purchase in the near future.

The Float Committee is once again active, planning for this year's 4th of July parade. This is the 100th anniversary of the Main Street lift bridge, and I've heard rumors that the theme for our float might be centered around the bridge. Again, if you want to help on a great committee, please contact Chairperson Ann Castle.

Finally, I just reserved the building at Perinton Park for our annual meeting and picnic, scheduled for Tuesday May 20th at 6 pm. Save the date on your calendar!

Thanks and we will chat again next month.

Bob Hunt, President

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HISTORIGRAM

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Perinton Historical Society

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Stella May Holtz's bridal photograph
Photo courtesy of
the Perinton Historical Society

A very different style of gown was worn on June 30, 1927 when 17-year-old Stella May Holtz married Lewis Russell Comstock. Stella was born to Fred and Elizabeth Ornt Holtz on December 29, 1909. Like Alice Beaumont, Stella was wed in her parents' home. The Holtz family resided at 90 West Avenue, and the newly married couple lived with them there for more than a decade after their wedding.

Stella's gown, of white georgette trimmed with white lace, symbolized the higher hemlines and lower waistlines of the mid-1920s. Long gloves accentuated the short sleeves of the gown, and a circlet of faux pearls was affixed to the dropped waistline.

Lewis Russell Comstock was born in 1908 to Lewis J. and Alida Comstock. He was a machinist, and might have met Stella through her father, Fred Holtz, who had the same occupation. However it happened, Stella and Lewis met, married and celebrated 39 years of marriage before Lewis died in 1966. Stella survived her husband by nearly 23 years. After her death on May 3, 1989, Stella was laid to rest at Pittsford Cemetery beside her husband. The Comstocks had no children.

The PHS collection is not limited to Stella Holtz Comstock's wedding gown. Her wedding shoes are also on display, as well as an invitation to the wedding and Stella's bridal book, which was a gift from Lewis.

These are just two stories of the brides represented in this exhibit. We invite you to visit the museum during regular open hours to view these exquisite wedding gowns and to read the announcements of nuptials from the past, when "O Promise Me" was a popular wedding song and the Green Lantern Inn was the fashionable place to hold a wedding reception.



Going to the Mill with Eight Bushels of Wheat

William Henry Dobbin was born in 1840 in Garafraxa, a Canadian pioneer town. As a young man, Dobbin and his bride came to Fairport, where he eventually became a partner in the Dobbin and Moore planing mill and lumberyard. In 1912 and 1913, Mr. Dobbin dictated his reminiscences, with remarkable detail, to daughters Elizabeth and Helen.

In the February issue of the Historigram, we published a portion of the reminiscences of William Henry Dobbin, regarding the circumstances of 1859 which caused him to meet his future wife, Margaret Calder. In the essay below, Mr. Dobbin recalls a story told to him by his father, which vividly illustrates the tremendous challenges of daily life in the wilderness of Canada in the early 1800s. A simple task—taking wheat to the mill to be ground—became a six day quest for survival in the midst of a winter storm.

Speaking of winter, let's hope that as you read this, our own winter is now just a memory.

Bill Poray, Editor

By William Henry Dobbin

The nearest mill where they could get their wheat ground into flour was at Waterloo, about thirty five miles away, and each time father went to mill, which was with a yoke of oxen and a “jumper” (a home-made sleigh any pioneer could make with an axe and an augur), he took about eight bushels of wheat. This was a five day trip—two to go, one to stay there to get it ground, and two to return. During the day he was waiting for the grist to be ground, he was obliged to work on the miller’s farm at whatever kind of work happened to be going on, in addition to the regular toll for his grist. This was the miller’s custom with everybody, and it sometimes meant a day’s logging or ploughing with his oxen, or possibly hauling or chopping wood. As there was a large family to feed, and eight bushels was all that could be taken at a time, “going to mill” had to be done five or six times per year.

Upon one occasion that I’ve often heard my father tell about, when he started from the mill for home, it began to snow. This was in the month of December, and it snowed heavily all day, being about 20 inches deep by night. Going and coming they always expected to get to Mr. Wintermoot’s for the night, that being about half way. But upon this occasion, his oxen were tired out wading through the deep snow, and he was unable to make Wintermoot’s. He had a small bundle of hay on the sleigh, and unhitched the oxen and turned them round to eat the hay, while he partook of some cold lunch himself, and started out to find an old dry tree to make a fire. He soon succeeded in finding an old fallen tree, and made a fire in it, and spent the whole night walking backward and forward by the fire to keep himself from freezing.

In the morning he hitched up his oxen again and started on. There being no track, and the snow being so deep, he made very slow progress, and instead of reaching home that evening, he only got as far as the ford in the Grand River, which was six miles from home. The river was frozen over with ice which was not strong enough to bear the oxen, and when they went on it, they broke through and were in the water up to their necks. This was a dilemma out of which there was no way but for him to get into the water and break the ice ahead of the oxen. The water was up to his arms and it took about an hour for him to

break a way across, the oxen following, and the sleigh with the flour floating along behind.

When they got across to the other shore, he had to unhitch the team and unyoke them, so they could get up the bank. Then he pulled the sleigh up to the shore and carried the flour up on to the bank. While he was doing this, unnoticed by him, one of the oxen started on homeward, and as soon as he discovered it, he went in pursuit, and before he overtook the ox, he had gone about two miles. Then he had to bring him back and yoke him up with the other one, hook the chain to the tongue of the sleigh, and drag it up the bank. After loading the flour he made another start for home, which he reached at daylight in the morning of the sixth day. Father was all this time in clothes which were frozen like a steel coat of mail, but in spite of this and of the terrible exposure of the whole trip, he felt no bad effects from the experience, as he realized his best prevention from taking cold was to keep up vigorous exercise which he did by walking.

It seems hard for me to realize at the present time that my father ever endured such terrible hardships; walking thirty-five miles through such deep snow and cold, and spending two such nights and days, with no sleep and scanty food. No wonder he often remarked to his children he hoped they would never have to endure such trials and hardships as he had to pass through.

Windows? Yes.
Doors? Yes.
Blinds? Yes.
Mouldings? Yes.

We manufacture them all and lots of other things at our factory.
Bring your order.

Planing Mill and Lumber Yard, Main and
Parker streets, Fairport, N. Y. **DOBBIN & MOORE.**

Dobbin & Moore Advertisement, as published in a 1902 edition of the Monroe County Mail newspaper.



The Dobbin & Moore Planing Mill and Lumber Yard was located on the south shore of the canal between Main Street and Parker Street, outlined in this small section of the 1885 birds-eye view of Fairport, published by L.R. Burleigh.



The buildings to the right and center were part of the Dobbin & Moore Planing Mill and Lumberyard. The business was sold to the Fairport Lumber and Coal Company after the death of Clarence Moore in 1903. A bit of the old Parker Street bridge can be seen to the far left, indicating that this photo was taken prior to the current bridge's construction in 1912.

Howard Sharp's Collection of Wire Mesh Purses and Hatpins on Display through April 26th

Howard Sharp has collected many items over the last 30 years. As the owner of RV&E Bike and Skate, located at 40 North Main Street in Fairport (www.rvebike.com), it is not surprising to learn of Howard's passion for transportation. He was the 2011 Great Race Grand Champion, after all.

What is surprising about Howard is his interest in wire mesh purses. Through the years, he has amassed a collection of nearly 50 of the early 1900s purses. The eclectic collection contains enamel purses in Art Deco patterns with brilliant colors, a black mourning purse, several finger purses and even a purse with a gate closure. One of the most unique items in the collection is a black fringed creation with a compact at the top, and a lipstick container dangling from the fringe. Another is a seashell, which has been fitted with a clasp.

Founded in 1876, the Whiting & Davis Company was the most well-known and respected producer of wire mesh purses. The mesh purses from the early 1900s were rarely painted. However, when Art Deco came into vogue in the late 1920s, flat Armor mesh was painted in a variety of colors, many of which can be seen in Howard's collection.

Another item on loan to the Fairport Historical Museum for this special exhibit is Howard's collection of more than 100 hatpins. Created in a multitude of colors, ladies could choose the pin that best suited her outfit. The hatpins in Howard's



collection contain faux gems, painted porcelain and cameos. The hatpin holders themselves are also works of art.

Although hatpins were created as early as the 1400s, they became extremely popular in the late 1800s and early 1900s during the era of extravagant headpieces. Music hall actress Lillie Langtry's elaborate hats in 1903 necessitated the use of hatpins, and ladies across the world followed suit.



Volunteer at the Fairport Historical Museum

We are always looking for additional volunteers and would love to add you to our roster. Each museum shift consists of two volunteers who work a two-hour shift once a month. We especially need volunteers to cover Saturday mornings from 9:00–11:00 a.m. and Sundays from 2:00–4:00 p.m.

If you are interested in volunteering at the Fairport Historical Museum, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator Gail Black at gcblack@rochester.rr.com for more information.

Save the Date!

The 2014 Perinton Historical Society House Tour will be held on Sunday, October 5th.

Calling all docents! Contact Elaine Lanni to volunteer (eellaanii@gmail.com). Just a two-hour stint will allow you enough time to tour the rest of the featured houses.

Special Recognition Level Memberships

A membership and contribution of any amount is greatly appreciated and important to the future of the Perinton Historical Society. 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 memberships will be recognized once in the HISTORIGRAM and listed on the website and at the museum, unless those members prefer to be anonymous.

Business (\$100 and above)

Ed Bradford, Liftbridge Financial Advisors

Bob Ruhland, Keller Williams Realty

R C Shaheen Paint and Decorating Centers

Upcoming Events



At the Fairport Historical Museum

Tuesday, April 15

7:30 p.m.

Program:

*Abandoned: The Untold Story of
Orphan Asylums*

Presentation and book signing by
Michael Keene



At Perinton Park Pavilion

Tuesday, May 20

6:00 p.m.

Event:

Annual Meeting & Picnic for members
of the Perinton Historical Society

Photo by Keith Boas



At Greenvale Rural Cemetery

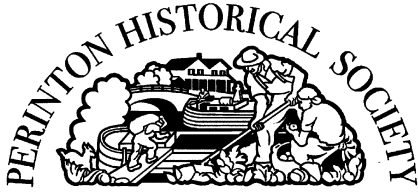
Tuesday, June 17

7:00 p.m.

Event:

Illuminated History tour featuring actors portraying
cemetery residents

Photo by Vicki Masters Profitt



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This home at 15 Perrin Street was located almost directly across from the Fairport Historical Museum. It was the residence of several generations of the Clapp family, including Perinton Town Clerk and Historian Charlotte Clapp. The house was razed in the early 1970s, the victim of Urban Renewal.

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 a.m.
Sunday	2:00–4:00 p.m.
Tuesday	2:00–4:00 p.m.
Thursday	7:00–9:00 p.m.

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

www.PerintonHistoricalSociety.org