

Underwear Factory Burns Community Goes Without!

By Bill Poray

Louis and Margrette Reed bought a building lot at auction in May of 1898, and hired Henry Lovejoy to begin construction of their home at what would later be numbered 70 West Church Street.



The Reed's underwear factory was located behind the family home at 70 West Church Street. Built in 1904, the two-story, 20 x 40 foot building was lighted by electricity. Twelve machines, powered by a gasoline-fueled engine, were used in the manufacturing process.

An abundance of windows were installed in the new home to provide natural light for Mrs. Reed's dress making business, which she operated from the house. The contractor had previously built several notable homes in Fairport, including the William Newman house at 11 West Church Street and the home of Doctor Magill at 41 South Main Street, which for years has been the Keenan Funeral Home.

Mrs. Reed closed her dress shop in January of 1904 to focus on an exciting new business venture. Construction began in the backyard of her home on a two-story wood frame factory building, 20 x 40 feet in size. The "underwear factory," as it was called by residents, opened in July of 1904, and produced a line of corset covers. Reed advertised her product as a perfect Christmas present for ladies: "My Seamless Corset Covers, in any of three grades, 25 cents, 39 cents, and 50 cent qualities, lace trimmed, very pretty."

THE MONROE COUNTY MAIL
 THURSDAY, MAY 12, 1904

Mrs. L. R. Reed has begun the erection of a building 20 by 40 feet, and two stories high, on the rear of her Church street property, which she will use as a corset cover factory.



*Reed's Ree-Detta's
 Pat. Appld. For.*

The
REED
 Corset Covers
 and
Ree-Dettas

DAINTY
 DISTINCTIVE
 COMFORTABLE
 COOL
 STYLISH
 POPULAR

FOR SALE BY
S. MOREY & SON



Greetings from your President

April 14, 2021:

The snowbirds, Cindy and Bob, have migrated back north to Georgetown Commons and writing this month's column from my office in the basement.

~ *Bob Hunt* ~

Speaking of migrations, there is an interesting article in the 2021 Old Farmers Alamac by Katherine Swarts entitled "Birds on the Wing," regarding facts and fallacies about avian migration.

The question of where songbirds and swallows go in winter puzzled humanity for millennia. Early observers came up with various theories, which were mostly wrong. Well into the 20th century, many people believed that migrating hummingbirds rode on the backs of geese, although geese actually start migrating long before hummingbirds do.

Songbirds fatten up for migration, with some doubling their weight to guarantee maximum energy. They are helped by a hormonal change called hyperphagia, which drives them to eat more and store more body fat. I think I've had hyperphagia for about five years, as I also have stored up body fat. I guess I need to migrate more.

All 23 of the avian orders include long-distance migrants. The yellow-bellied sapsucker, a variety of woodpecker, spends summer in Canada and the northeastern United States, and flies as far south as Panama for the winter. If "migration" is defined as an annual journey of significant distance to and from the same geographical area, fewer than half of bird species actually migrate. Irregular migrations, called interruptions, occur when birds temporarily relocate due to changes in food supplies.

True migrants don't follow the food supply, at least not by conscious decision. They start out before any reduction in food becomes obvious, responding to subtle atmospheric and daylight differences. Many birds migrate during the nighttime to reduce the risk that hungry hawks and falcons will spot them for a snack during daylight hours.

Birds that fly the longest distances have the longest and most sharply pointed wings, the best aerodynamic design for lengthy flights. Ruby-throated hummingbirds, just 3½ inches long, have flown 1,245 miles without a break. That is about the distance from Cocoa, Florida, where we stayed this winter, to Fairport. We needed many breaks, but I guess birds can use the restrooms while flying. Many take a straight line across the Gulf of Mexico to Central America.

The blackpoll warbler is a 5½ inch songbird. The boreal forest is this bird's favorite breeding territory. It migrates 2,300 miles to South America and the Caribbean.

Migrating birds can fly high as well as far, with songbirds flying at altitudes of 2,000 feet and geese and raptors flying at more than 30,000 feet.

Arctic terns are the migratory champions, nesting in the Arctic every summer and then flying to Antarctic latitudes for another summer. During their 30-year lifespan, these terns travel the equivalent of three round trips to the moon.

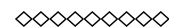
One last little known fact: Whatever the time of year, there are always some birds on the move for migration.

Finally, on this day in history, April 14th:

- 1828: The first edition of Noah Webster's dictionary is published.
- 1860: The first Pony Express rider arrives in San Francisco with mail from St. Joseph, Missouri.
- 1865: Abraham Lincoln is assassinated in Ford's Theater by John Wilkes Booth.
- 1912: The Titanic, the unsinkable ocean liner, strikes an iceberg on her maiden voyage. 1,500 lives are lost.
- 1918: American pilots engage in first dogfight over the western front near Toul, France.
- 1969: The first major league baseball game is played in Montreal, Canada.
- 1981: America's first space shuttle, "Columbia," returns to Earth.

Thanks for your support of PHS, it is appreciated. I'll chat with you again next month.

Bob Hunt, President
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HISTORIGRAM

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Perinton Historical Society*

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The Fairport Museum is once again open to visitors!
Stop by to see our new exhibits. The museum is open Sundays and Tuesdays from 2:00–4:00pm and Saturdays from 9:00am–1:00pm.

Upcoming Programs & Events

**Saturday, May 8 from 10:00–11:00 a.m.
at the museum**

Event: Sticker Cards for Mom

**Tuesday, May 18 at 7:00 p.m.
VIRTUAL PRESENTATION**

Program: Treasures in the Attic:
A Fascinating Photographic Discovery

Presenter: David J. Whitcomb, Esq.

Registration required through the Fairport Public Library—
fairportlibrary.org

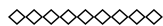
**Saturday, June 12 from 10:00–11:00 a.m.
at the museum**

Event: Thumbprint Cards for Dad

**Tuesday, June 15 from 6:00–8:00 p.m.
at the museum**

Event: PHS Members Only Open House
(in lieu of annual meeting and picnic)

Event: Author appearances by Don Shilling and
Karen Shughart



Make a Special Card for Mother's Day

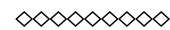
Drop by the Fairport Historical Museum on Saturday, May 8 between 10:00–11:00 a.m. for story time and to make a card to celebrate Mom. No registration required.

Make a Special Card for Father's Day

Father's Day is coming soon. Stop by the Fairport Historical Museum 10:00–11:00 a.m. on Saturday, June 12, to make a thumbprint card for your dad, granddad, or a special person in your life.



We'll also enjoy a picture book about a thumbprint family. Will Trixie ever find peace and quiet in a house with nine brothers and sisters? Come find out! Free event. No registration required.



Celebrating PHS Members on June 15th

Each year, PHS members normally gather together for an annual meeting and picnic at a Perinton park. Since last year's event was canceled due to the pandemic, we would like to try something new in 2021 to celebrate our members.

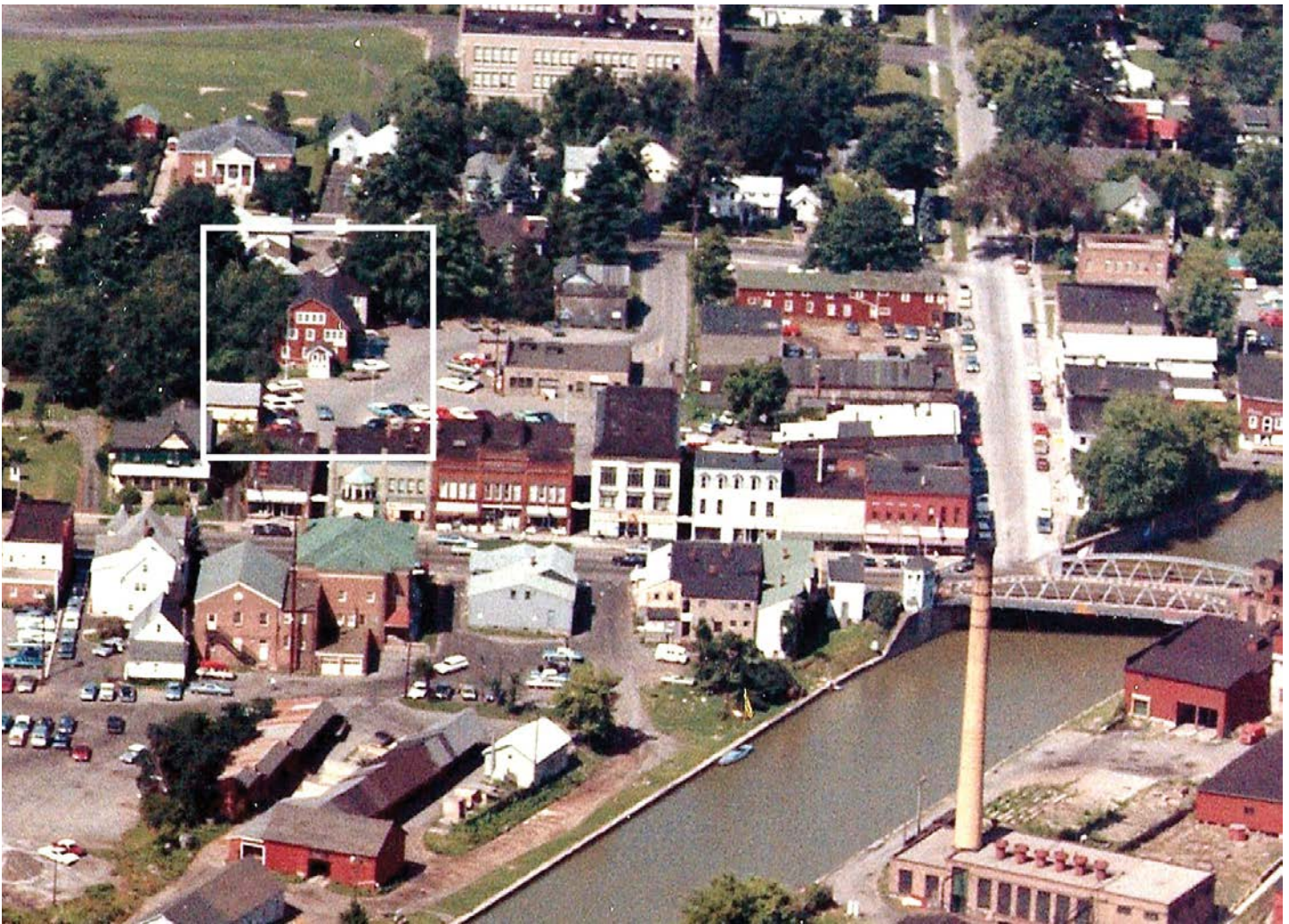
PHS members can drop by the Fairport Historical Museum on Tuesday, June 15 any time between the hours of 6:00–8:00 p.m. for an open house. We will have gift bags, cookies from Wendy Ruhland's Cookies in a Wink, author appearances, music, games and prizes. During this event, PHS members will receive 10% off regularly-priced items in the museum gift shop and 50% off clearance items. Cash and checks are accepted as payment in the gift shop.

Members will have the opportunity to stroll the beautiful museum gardens, which have been maintained by the Greenbrier Garden Club for more than 40 years. Displays will feature photos and information about the fall PHS House Tour and about volunteer opportunities. Ballots for the PHS budget and board of trustees will be accepted on this evening.

The PHS has flourished since its founding in 1935 thanks to your support. We hope you can join us for this special event celebrating our members.



For information on becoming a member of the Perinton Historical Society, visit our website at—
www.PerintonHistoricalSociety.org



ELEVEN WOMEN WERE IN PERIL

FIRE DESTROYED THE REED
FACTORY AT FAIRPORT,

ESCAPE WAS CUT OFF BY FLAMES

Men at Work Near By Secured a
Ladder and Rescued the Employees.
The Fire Started From a Gasoline
Stove--Adjoining Property Damaged

Headline in the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle,
March 27, 1907

After fire destroyed the underwear factory, manufacturing relocated to a barn formerly owned by the Bown carriage builders, located behind commercial buildings on South Main Street. *Photo circa 1950s.*

In its first years, the Reed Company thrived, so much so that shortly before the fateful fire, space was rented to store inventory in what was known as the Hooker building at 43 West Avenue. Fortunate indeed, as it prevented all their finished goods from going up in flames.

The smell of gasoline, charred wood, and burning underwear filled the air on West Church Street on a Tuesday afternoon in March of 1907. Fairport's newspaper made the announcement: "Reed Factory Burned and Girls Narrowly Escape." Lydia McKinley was heating pressing irons on a small gasoline-fueled stove when the unit malfunctioned and burst into flames.

On the second floor of the building were eleven women, ages 19 to 52. One of the women, Minnie Wolf, ran down the wooden staircase to the Reed home, less than forty feet from the factory, and used the telephone to call for help. The growing fire blocked the only stairway to safety for the remaining ten women. With no fire escapes, the employees were trapped.

A crew led by John Wemes was digging a nearby basement

when they heard screams coming from the factory. The men found two ladders at nearby homes and attempted to rescue the screaming women perched in the second floor windows, but the ladders were too short. As the Fairport newspaper reported, two ladders were “hastily spliced together and the women were assisted through the window and to the ground. In the excitement, two girls tried to descend at the same time and the ladder broke, throwing them to the ground, but without serious injury.”

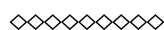
Only days after the fire destroyed the factory, arrangements were made to rent a large barn previously used by the Bown Company related to their carriage making operations. The barn was located where the Fairport Village Landing parking lot is found today. (See highlighted area in aerial photo on previous page.) The company was insured, and allowed for the quick purchase of machines and equipment necessary to restart the business of producing “The Reed Corset Covers and Ree-Dettas,” advertised as being “Dainty, Distinctive, Comfortable, Cool, Stylish, and Popular.”

By 1912, with the underwear factory bursting at the seams, the Reed Company built an addition to use as a stockroom. As the deafening sound of rows of sewing machines filled the old Bown barn, evidence of the popularity of Reed’s products was close at hand. The “fancy undergarments” were awarded to Fairport’s female dance contest winner at the 1915 Labor Day celebration. Her partner went home with a pair of pants, courtesy of Fairport tailor Sam Jacobson.

Even in the underwear business, eventually the bottom falls out. The Reed Company couldn’t keep up with bigger competitors, and the machines fell silent soon after a factory sale held at the Bown barn in August of 1916. For a while, the factory was resurrected by the Horseheads Glove Company. The local newspaper urged residents to financially support the new enterprise: “Why not invest at home in a stable, profitable line manufactured in a Fairport factory, now idle, that will re-employ those thrown out of employment, directed by Fairport businessmen who are successful in business...” The newspaper’s advice likely cost residents their investment, as the glove business quickly fizzled.

By 1919, the old Bown barn again produced underwear, this time under the management of D.E. Sicher and Company of New York. The factory was put under the charge of Fairport resident Howard Hopkins. It was said that the operation was in good hands, for according to reports, “He knew the business from the bottom up.”

Readers may remember the old Bown barn factory as the eventual home of Gundlach, maker of photographic equipment, and later, Dynamic Optics. Like many other buildings and homes on South Main Street, West Avenue, and Perrin Street, the barn that became the second home of the Reed Company, makers of Fairport’s finest underwear, was lost to urban renewal in the 1970s.



Special Recognition Level Memberships

As of April 15, 2021

Business (\$100)

Lucien A. Morin II, Partner, McConville Considine Cooman and Morin, Attorneys and Counselors at Law
100 Packetts Landing, Fairport, NY 14450
Phone: 585-223-2170, Web: lmorin@mccmlaw.com

Barranco’s Clothing and Shoes

32 North Main Street, Fairport, NY 14450
Phone: 585-388-1270

Fairport Village Inn, Wayne and Patty Beckwith

103 North Main Street, Fairport, NY 14550
Phone: 585-388-0112, Web: thefvi.com

Robert Ruhland (aka Mr. Perinton), Keller Williams Realty

2000 Winton Road S. Bldg. 1, Rochester, NY 14618
Phone: 585-303-6607, Web: bobruhland.yourkwagent.com

DeLand (\$100-\$249)

None this month

Potter (\$250-\$499)

None this month

Perrin (\$500 and above)

Anonymous (1)

Donation in memory of

Jack Slaybaugh by Doug & Jean Whitney



Perinton Historical Society

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

<i>President</i>	Bob Hunt
<i>Vice President</i>	Vicki Proffitt
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Jim Unckless	Matt Wells
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MUSEUM

<i>Director</i>	Vicki Proffitt
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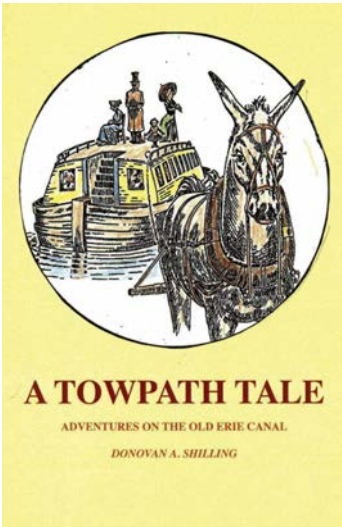
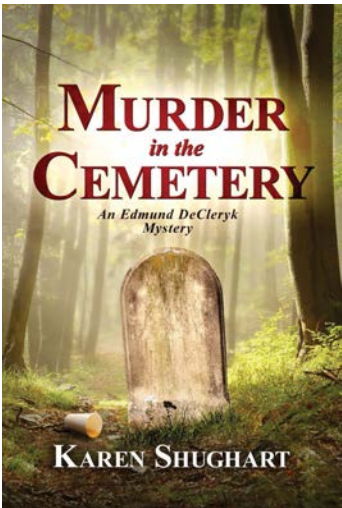


Treasures in the Attic: A Fascinating Photographic Discovery

Tuesday, May 18th at 7:00 pm., join David Whitcomb for a virtual talk on his incredible find of photos and the equipment appearing to belong to James Ellery Hale, a successful portrait photographer who, in the 1880s, moved to Seneca Falls, New York, where the first women’s rights convention was held in 1848. Mr. Whitcomb, a local lawyer who had bought the Geneva, New York, building to expand his practice, pushed an access panel out of the way and poked his head inside. He saw an attic with a vaulted ceiling and crawled in, thinking he might find a few items to sell at a flea market. What he discovered transported him back more than a century to an era when suffragists were campaigning for women’s rights and photography portrait studios had started to crop up in American cities.

David J. Whitcomb is the founder/owner of Whitcomb Law Firm, P.C. In addition to his law practice, Mr. Whitcomb is the Assistant City Court Judge for the City of Canandaigua where he handles civil and criminal matters, including evictions for the city court.

This event is free and is open to the public.
Co-sponsored by the Perinton Historical Society and Fairport Public Library. Registration is required through the Fairport Public Library and is limited. To register, visit <https://fairportlibrary.libcal.com/event/7643809>. Or call the library at 585-223-9091.



Authors to Attend PHS Members-Only Event

Local authors Don Shilling and Karen Shughart will be at the PHS Open House on Tuesday, June 15th from 6:00–8:00 p.m. signing their books.

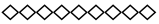
Fairport native Don Shilling has written dozens of books about local history, including *A Towpath Tale*, *Rochester’s Movie Mania* and *They Put Rochester on the Map*. A selection of Don’s books will be available for sale this evening. Various prices, cash only.

Karen Shughart is the author of two books, *Mystery in the Museum* and *Murder in the Cemetery*, which follow the exploits of Edmund DeCleryk.

In *Murder in the Museum*, the murder of retired college professor Emily Bradford, is solved when Ed discovers a map dated 1785 and a manuscript written in 1847 that were unearthed during an archaeological dig in Toronto, Canada.

In book two, *Murder in the Cemetery*, artifacts discovered during a trip to England, and a diary dating back to the early 1800s, help Ed solve the murder of his childhood friend, George Wright. Ed’s wife, Annie, head of the historical society, helps Ed solve crimes, but she also likes to cook. Her recipes are listed at the end of each novel.

Additional information can be found at KarenShughart.com. These titles sell for \$15 each, cash only.



Treasurer's Report

By *Linda Wiener*

The following is a summary of the financial status of the Perinton Historical Society for the fiscal year which ended August 31, 2020.

Income

Membership Dues	\$ 14,346
Grants	4,195
Donations	5,474
Gift Shop	1,490
Special Events	2,139
Miscellaneous	125
Investment Income	<u>290</u>

Total Income \$ **28,059**

Expense

Museum Operations	\$ 5,469
Building	5,800
Gift Shop	1,102
Museum Collections	1,868
<i>Historigram</i>	2,463
Office Expense	2,382
Insurance	1,354
House Tour	934
Special Events	198
Membership Programs	731
	<u>453</u>

Total Expense \$ **22,754**

Net Income / (Loss) \$ **5,305**

Net Assets

Cash & Equivalents	\$ 57,220
Gift Shop Inventory	7,967
Community Foundation	<u>79,850</u>

Total Assets \$ **145,037**

Sales Tax Payable	\$ 10
Deferred Revenue	10,945
Temporarily Restricted	79,850
Unrestricted Net Assets	<u>54,232</u>

Net Assets \$ **145,037**

Notes

Cash and equivalents include funds in bank accounts and CDs that are available in one year or less. Of this, \$41,625 as compared to \$39,844 on 8/31/19 was held in checking and money market accounts. The remainder is in a CD.

The Community Foundation Funds are available upon written approval from the PHS Board of Directors. These funds are considered long-term investments. The value of these funds was \$79,850 on 8/31/20 as compared to \$85,734 on 8/31/19. The interest and dividends earned are returned to PHS annually in the form of a grant which totaled \$3,695 for 2020 and \$4,269 for 2019.

Deferred revenue is exclusively related to 2020–21 membership dues received prior to 9/1/20. These funds are recorded on the Balance Sheet at year-end. On 9/1/20, the balance is reported as Membership Dues income for 2020–21.

The Society's primary sources of income are from membership dues, grants and donations. Primary expenses include general operations of the museum, gift shop and membership programs (e.g. *Historigram*, annual meeting, and House Tour).

Income increases over 2019 were primarily related to dues, \$887, and donations, \$223. Decreases in revenue included grants, \$1,168, special events, \$1,120, and gift shop sales, \$451.

Expense variances included a decrease in building related repairs, \$6,220 and maintenance, \$5,832. Other decreases included depreciation, \$2,109, and museum collections, \$421. Increases included office expense, \$1,568 primarily COVID related purchases of masks, sanitizer and cleaning products. Other increases in expense included museum operations, \$582, gift shop, \$698, for restocking items, *Historigram*, \$289.

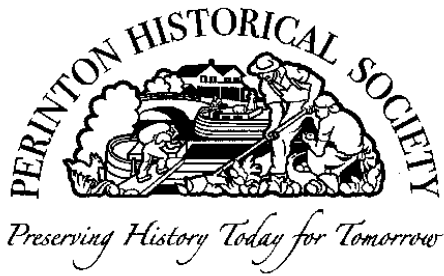
PHS files and pays New York State sales tax annually related to gift shop sales, files 1099s with the IRS to report payments to certain vendors that exceed \$600, and files an Informational Return (990-N) with the IRS. PHS is registered with the New York States Charities Bureau but is exempt from filing an annual return.

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Perinton Historical Society

Mission

To promote interest in preserving and sharing local history through education and accessibility.



Non-Profit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Permit No. 149
Fairport, NY 14450



Visit your Local Museum!

A great burst of youthful energy marched through the front doors of the Fairport Historical Museum on a recent Saturday morning. A large group of happy, energetic children, blissfully free of adult supervision, walked to their neighborhood museum. They were polite, friendly, and inquisitive. Please kids, come back anytime. This museum is here for you, your families and the entire community.

Fairport Historical Museum, 18 Perrin Street, Fairport, NY 14450

The museum hours are Saturdays from 9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m. and Sundays and Tuesdays from 2:00–4:00 p.m. Free admission. Group tours, presentations and special projects are by appointment.

Please call and leave a message at **585-223-3989**. www.PerintonHistoricalSociety.org