



PERINTON HISTORIGRAM

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EDITOR Ruth Ewell

Calendar of Coming Events

- Tuesday, February 15 -- Meeting at Museum, 7:30 p.m. (details below)
Tuesday, March 14 -- Pot Luck Supper at Museum. The auction which had been announced has been cancelled. Instead, we will be privileged to hear a talk by Jean Keplinger, Town Historian (details next month).
Tuesday, April 11 -- "The Civil War - Then and Now: A Living History" by Kevin Gorman and Alex Johnson (details later).
Tuesday, May 16 -- Annual Picnic and Election of Officers (details later).

February Meeting, February 15, 7:30 p.m. in the Merriman Clark Room

We are indeed fortunate to have Peter McDonough as our speaker. He will present a slide review of toys from 1850 to the present. All those who know Peter are aware of what an enthusiastic person he is, and toys are one of his major interests. He promises his talk will bring back memories of happy childhoods.

The meeting is open to the public, so do come and bring a friend!

Costume Display

We were thrilled with the wonderful publicity given the display "One Hundred Years of Fashion" in the Messenger-Post papers recently. If you missed seeing this exhibit, you will have an opportunity at the February meeting.

October House Tour

The house tour will take place this year in the Village of Fairport on Sunday, October 15. We are pleased to announce that Lorry McMahon, who chaired the great tour in 1998, has once again agreed to take on this responsibility. If you would be willing to show your house, or if you could be a house captain, do call Lorry at 223-6034.

New Members

Jerry and Joanne Williams have given the gift of two year family memberships to Sally and Dick Keenan of Fairport, Jan and Mike Osborn of Rochester, and Jed and Kathy Williams of Penfield. We welcome these new members, and we thank Jerry and Joanne for making these gifts. What a great idea to give a gift of membership!

The Picture Book Project

The Fairport book project is well underway. Despite the holidays, many of the ten volunteers came to the museum to do research on their topics. The book will be divided into ten chapters, with each volunteer responsible for weaving a story about their assigned topics using twenty photographs and captions. The working title is "Fairport

on the Erie Canal." Some of the topics include: Churches and Schools, Landmark Homes and Buildings, Glad Hand Week and Fairport Families at Work and Play. Bill Keeler is the acting coordinator and editor. His job will be to write the introduction, coordinate the chapters, take photos of artifacts used in the book, reduce, enlarge and find better photos of the selected material and secure the copyrights for all photographs used in the production.

So far, many unusual photographs and stories have been uncovered by the volunteers. One story involves the Cobb Preserving Plant that operated in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and was located on the canal near the Turk Hill Road bridge. Whenever a bad batch of fruit or vegetables was found after canning, the cans were simply dumped into the canal. How times have changed!

If any member, or a group of two members is interested in researching a topic for the book, there is still one remaining chapter open. Please call Bill Keeler at 385-2057.

The Fairport Museum Enters the New Millennium

Almost to the day, museum computer software for cataloging our collection came in with the new year. The Fairport Museum has acquired a software package called "Past Perfect" that will catalog and index our collection. Last year, the society obtained from the Fairport Public Library two computers, one of which will be used for this new software package. Bill Keeler has begun the slow methodical process of entering 65 years of records and notes into the computer. The average is about 50 records a day that detail artifacts, archives, books and photographs found in the museum.

When this project is completed, researchers will be able to find and locate just about any type of information about our collections. This new software will also allow us to update our information and give us an opportunity to take the first total inventory of our collection since 1979.

As with any large project undertaken by the society, there is a need for volunteers who would be interested in entering data into our new system. There is a special need for someone with library or cataloging experience to enter the museum's library books into the computer. The museum recently acquired a set of Library of Congress Subject Headings books from the Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society through the Rochester Regional Library Council to help us meet professional standards in our entries. Anyone interested please call Bill Keeler at 385-2057.

Report of January Meeting

This meeting was held in the Elma Gaffney Room of the Fairport Public Library. In his opening remarks, Historical Society President Bill Matthews expressed thanks to the library not only for hosting us but also for the chairs and computers which they have recently given to the museum. Bill remarked, too, on how much we are enjoying the former library building on Perrin Street which is now the museum. Bill's "historic five minutes" concerned the "Spruce Goose," a giant sea plane built in 1947 by Howard Hughes and flown just once by him. Bill saw it in Long Beach, California, a number of years ago. In 1992 it was taken apart and moved to a museum in Oregon.

Our speaker, Ruth Rosenberg-Naparsteck, is the Rochester City Historian and the author of "Runnin' Crazy - A Portrait of the Genesee River" and "Rochester: A Pictorial History." Ms. Naparsteck began her talk by emphasizing the importance of water power to industry, which is why the Genesee was a major factor in Rochester's development.

Report of January Meeting (continued)

The earliest settlers in this region were mostly from New England and spoke of coming to "the Genesee country." They had heard of the rich soil here. They travelled along what is now routes 5 and 20 or along what is now Ridge Road. After the Erie Canal was opened in 1825, settlers had an easier way to come. They felt the canal was a safe way to travel as they said "you couldn't get lost going that way."

Ships sailing into the Genesee from Lake Ontario made their way into the harbor by the light of lanterns placed on top of butternut trees at the harbor; by 1821 we had a lighthouse at Charlotte to show the way.

Ms. Naparsteck spoke of the many moods of the river which she experienced by hiking and camping along it. She feels you have to be alone with the river to come to know it. Some of the people in Rochester's history which she mentioned were: Nathaniel Rochester, a community developer; Elisha Johnson, an inventor and five times mayor; Seth Green, who became known world-wide as the father of fish culture; Mary Jemison, "the white woman of the Genesee," who spent 50 years of her life along the river; and, above all, Sam Patch, who attempted to jump over the falls into the river on November 13, 1829 (Friday, the 13th). He had successfully jumped Niagara Falls twice, but this time he didn't make it. His body was found in 1830 and is buried in the cemetery on River Street in Charlotte. Many people still claim they see his ghost rising from the mist on the Genesee.

Ms. Naparsteck announced that it would be possible to order her books ("Runnin' Crazy" and "Rochester: A Pictorial History") for \$39.95 ^{each} and also a children's book by Peter Spier, "The Erie Canal," for \$9.95 through the Perinton Historical Society. The Society would receive a percentage of the price as a donation. If you are interested in doing this, call Ruth Ewell at 377-8208.

1962 Cherry Street Lecture Reformatted and Available at the Museum

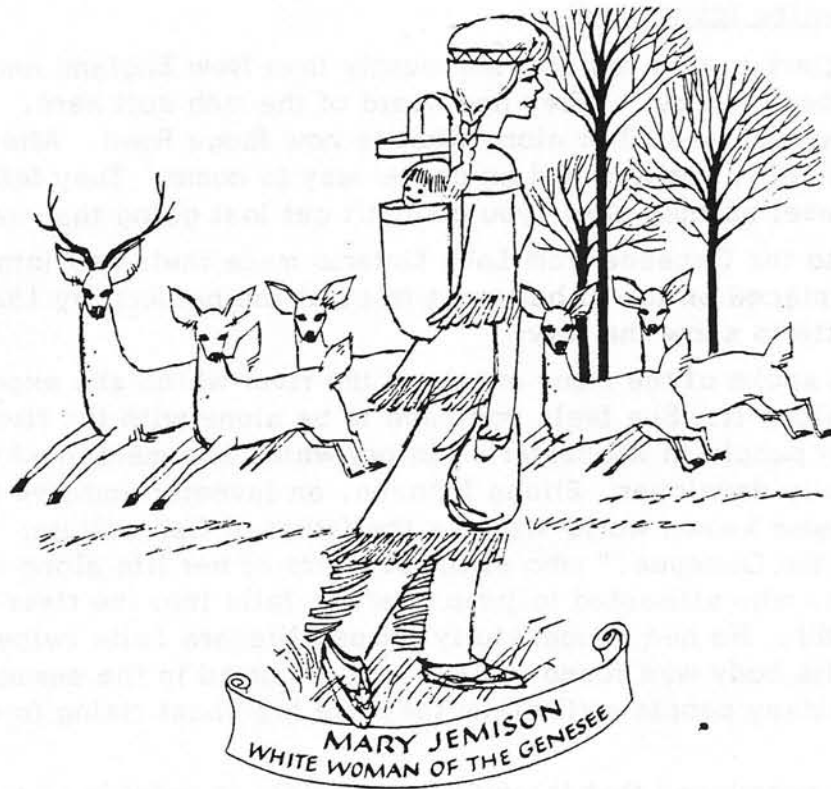
Our curator, Imogene Blum, has been a knowledgeable source of information for many years at the museum. Few people may remember her talk in 1962 on Cherry Street, Fairport. Imogene gave the talk at a Perinton Historical Society meeting. It covered the history of Cherry Street and included reminiscences about people and places along that street, which we know today as West Avenue. Imogene grew up on West Avenue at #78 and has done extensive research into the buildings and lives of the people who lived there.

Bill Keeler asked if he could type Imogene's notes from her small notebook into a computer and print it out for the society. Imogene agreed, and the work is now completed. The paper is 32 pages long, including an index with over 450 references to people and places in Fairport. As Imogene is fond of saying, "I didn't actually know all these people; I just knew about them."

This wonderfully detailed account of one of our more colorful streets may some day be illustrated. Imogene is currently in the process of finding photographs that will help visualize the street she knows and loves so well.

A copy of this manuscript will soon be on display in the museum and will be available at the library and the town historian's office in the future.

Bluebirds Now Available -- Many people have asked about buying the blue glass bluebirds which used to be carried in the museum gift shop. They are now back in stock -- \$4 for a small bluebird which would make a great Valentine's gift!



Perinton Historical Society
 18 Perrin Street
 Fairport, New York 14450

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