



PERINTON HISTORIGRAM

PUBLISHED BY THE PERINTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY
IS PERRIN STREET FAIRPORT, NEW YORK 14450
May 2002

VOL. XXXIV

NO .. 8

EDITOR

Ruth Ewell

Calendar of Coming Events

Tuesday , May 14 -- Annual Picnic and Meeting , 6: 00 p.m. (details below)
Saturday and Sunday, June 1 and 2 -- Canal Days (details below).

Annual Meeting and Picnic , May 14 , Perinton Park , 6 p.m.

The Perinton Park building by the canal will once again be the site for our picnic. Appetizers will be served starting at 6:00 p.m., followed by the usual picnic fare.

The society will provide hamburgers, hot dogs, coffee, tea, and lemonade. Members are asked to bring a dish to pass (salad or dessert). They should also bring their own plates, cutlery and cups. There will be a charge of \$1.00 per person , or \$ 3 per family. Reservations are necessary, and can be made by calling Helen Matthews (377-8456) or Bernadette McDonough (223-7991). They will need to know (1) name, (2) how many in family are coming , (3) choice -of hot dogs or hamburgers , (4) what dish you will bring to pass. Deadline for reservations is Thursday , May 9.

After we have finished eating, the annual meeting and elections will take place.

Canal Days

The society will not have a booth this year at Canal Days. Everyone is urged to visit the museum gift shop to purchase maps, books, and the favorite old-time candy. Special --, we have a new supply of the little blue birds which the kids love to buy as a gift hey can afford for their mothers. The museum will be open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, June 1, and the usual 2 to 4 p.m. hours on Sunday.

Turning over the Reins

This will be the last historigram which Ruth Ewell will edit. After nearly 20 years, it is time! Bill Keeler, John Jongen and Jim Unckless will now be in charge of production. They will use new techniques and technology to create a new sort of newsletter.

Ruth has also retired as membership secretary. Jim Unckless will take over this task and will issue the annual dues bills this August.

Ruth is thrilled to have such capable people to whom she can pass o n her duties. She thanks all of you who have had nice words to say to her about the historigram in the past years. That has made it all worthwhile!

New Member

We welcome Roger Nelson of Fairport. Roger is writing a history of the Fairport Library and using many of the museum's files and resources. We look forward to reading it when he is .finished.

Report of April Meeting

Interest in the Erie Canal runs high in Fairport and Perinton. We had a packed meeting room for the talk by John Groves in April. Mr. Groves said the room was like a packet boat, where it was said passengers were stacked in "like books on a shelf."

Mr. Groves had some wonderful slides to show us -- many photographs, some drawings, some illustrations from books. He talked about the amazing creation of the canal, an important engineering event with paid workers, not slaves, digging by hand through virgin forests. It was the canal that made New York City an important port. If it were not for the canal, immigrants would probably have come to the United States through New Orleans and then gone up the Mississippi to get to the interior of the country.

Important people in the history of the canal were: George Washington, who as a surveyor in the 1700 s realized how important such a canal would be; DeWitt Clinton, who won the governorship of New York State because of his endorsement of the canal; Jesse Hawley, a flour merchant from Geneva, who spent some time in debtors' prison in Canandaigua and wrote there about the possibility of a canal, even forecasting quite accurately that it would cost about 7 million dollars; Benjamin Wright and James Geddes, lawyers turned engineers and surveyors, who did the original surveys; Nathan S. Roberts, a self-made engineer, who was in charge of designing the five locks at Lockport; Arnold Barber, the first president of the Erie Canal Society.

Mr. Groves introduced us to some terms which might be new to many of us: "prism," which is how the canal is measured in cross-section, "weigh lock building," where boats were weighed to determine the toll to be charged; "hurry-up boat," which was used to take care of immediate maintenance problems on the canal; "line boat," another name for the freighters which carried raw materials such as lumber, coal , fruit up and down the canal after 1840.

The building of the canal was begun in Rome, New York, on July 4, 1817. As it progressed, tools had to be invented to do the work. A prime example was the stump puller which could pull out 40-60 stumps a day. When it was finished, the canal was called the "eighth wonder of the world." In 1825 an assemblage of notables gathered in Buffalo, where they scooped up water from Lake Erie and then took it by canal boat to be dumped into the Hudson, the "Wedding of the Waters," as it was called.

Today there are partnerships with private individuals to promote the canal. Peter Wiles, of the "Emita" tour boat, was one of the first. We should all be aware of the importance of restoring the infrastructure which is beginning to deteriorate in many areas. This summer in July or August an exciting event will occur in Palmyra, when a cast iron bridge from 1858 will be raised on abutments there. Mr. Groves urged us all to watch the papers for the announcement and plan to attend this historic event.

It was an informative and exciting evening, capped off with delicious refreshments served by Helen Matthews.

House for Sale

We usually don't use the historigram to advertise real estate. However, there is now an important house on the market of which all should be aware. It is "Toad Hill, " located at 4692 Carter Road, an 1875 brick residence on about 7.9 acres. It has been designated a Perinton Landmark house by the Perinton Architecture Commission. Perinton society members have several times enjoyed end-of-year picnics at this property. It has twice been on the society's annual house tour.

If you are interested, contact Jeff Scofield of Realty USA, Rick Leasure Division, at 381-4400 ,extension 248.

Some Thank-you's to Behind-The-Scenes Workers

The obvious workers at the museum are those who staff the place during open hours. But there are others who are not seen by the public who do a great deal.

Flora Hosenfeld patiently adds up the TOPS tapes that have been turned in. She recently submitted cash register receipts for \$34,192 .29 for which the society received a check for \$56.99. Thanks to all of you for collecting the tapes and dropping them off at the museum. It all adds up!

This historigram wouldn't get mailed if it weren't for those who label, fold, and sort. Martha Schafer, Anna Steuerwald and Marge Gearhart have been active in this endeavor.

Helen Matthews is grateful to those who have brought in goodies for us all to enjoy after meetings: Mary Jean Phillips, Susan Broda, Ann Castle, Barb McKee, Ann May, Jean Wilson, Bernadette McDonough and Mary Ellsworth.

John Jongen maintains a Web site which he uses to send news of the museum and the society all over the country.

Carol Rolph spends endless hours maintaining our costume collection -- cleaning, mending, washing and ironing -- and then dressing the mannekins so beautifully.

Art Wilson has volunteered to paint and refurbish the garden signs.

As always we are grateful to the Greenbrier Garden Club for the lovely gardens in the rear of the museum.

There are surely many others and we wish we could name them all. All efforts are greatly appreciated. (The next article has some more specific thank-you's.)

A Message from Bill Matthews, Society President

This being the last issue of the historigram for the 2001-2002 season, it is not only my "presidential" duty but a privilege to mention three women who have contributed so much to the success of our society this past year .. As you think back over the various speakers since September, we have enjoyed a wide range of topics and many "full houses," but all of this didn't just happen. Our Program Chairperson, Bernadette McDonough, is the one who is responsible for them, and I thank her on behalf of all of you.

As Corresponding Secretary, Helen Matthews (definitely a close friend) is retiring from the Board and will be replaced by Heather Bauer, no stranger to the society. Helen's more visible role has been as "Refreshment and Food Coordinator," a position we all hope she will retain.

Elsewhere in this issue you will read of the retirement of our long-time editor, Ruth Ewell. Probably there are very few of you who remember any other by-line in our venerable newsletter. After twenty years of writing reports, gathering up announcements, articles, and down-to-the wire contributions, Ruth is turning over the reins to Bill Keeler, who claims "fear and trepidation," but who will do an excellent job. This present day "PoohBah" is also turning over the Membership Secretary job to Jim Unckless, who is already getting us all down in his computer files. I'm hoping that many of you will join me in expressing your own thanks to Ruth for her long years of service to us all. "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

"What I Left Out" by Bill Keeler

Many people have been enjoying this series by Bill of further information to go with chapters in the book "Perinton, Fairport, and the Erie Canal." It helps to have a copy of the book beside you as you read to tie in the pictures he mentions (with specific page numbers).

On page 100 is Lee Hazen, with his high wheeler. Lee is in his 20's when this picture was taken and he would have been 3 years old when this style of bicycle first made its' appearance at the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia in 1876.

Englishman John Starley invented the high wheeler using advanced metallurgy, which allowed for the manufacture of the strong metal parts needed for the construction of his "bicycle". This machine was the first one to be called a bicycle (two wheel) and this style was popular among young men in the 1880's. They were expensive and cost an average worker 6 months pay.

The most distinguishing feature of this bicycle is its' large front wheel. The front wheel became larger and larger as manufacturers realized that the larger the wheel, the farther you could go with one rotation of the pedals. You could purchase a wheel as large as your leg length. The pedals were attached directly to the front wheels, which were equipped with solid rubber tires. Notice the pedals in the picture. They are mounted so that the rider had to push down with both feet at the same time to propel the bike forward instead of one foot at a time, which is used today in modern bicycles.

One other peculiar feature about this bike is that the rider sat very high above the ground and the bicycle's center of gravity. If the front wheel struck a stone or rut in the road, the rider, whose legs were trapped under the handle bars, would pitch forward and be dropped unceremoniously on his head. The term "taking a header" was coined from this frequent observation.

The first utility patent issued to a resident of Fairport is the Hoisting Crane, patent #24,912 issued 7-26-1859 to Joseph Yale Parce. This devise is pictured on page 61 unloading limestone from a canal barge,

J.Y. Parce was born 12-29-1832 in North Pitcher New York 30 miles southeast of Syracuse New York. He carne to Fairport and helped Henry DeLand with some engineering problems at his plant in the late 1850's. The crane was built specifically for the DeLand Chemical Works. It had a swiveling arm that swung out over a canal barge to pick up barrels and then swung back again over the loading dock. The secret to this invention was a truss system which distributed the weight of the load over the entire crane thus preventing any twisting of the steel members.

What I Left Out (continued)

Joseph was especially proud of his invention. In a letter to his family (12-13-1858), who were still in Norwich, he wrote "Today we have finished setting up and made the first successful trial of my first great invention." In 1872 J. Y. Parce and a partner bought the 64 acre Dunbar farm and established the Parce & Solly Nurseries. The nursery office and grounds were located opposite the New York Central Railroad station (page 122) in the area bounded today by North Main Street, Parce Ave., Park Street and Whitney Road. J.Y. Parce's house was on the grounds of the nursery and is pictured on page 45. Under the temperance cause and the Union ticket, J.Y. Parce was elected President of the Village of Fairport in 1873. In 1877 Parce sold the nursery and moved to DeLand, Florida. He ran the Parce Land Hotel, imported tubs of butter and apples from Fairport and shipped back oranges to be sold by his son Walter Parce, pictured on pages 36 and 48. In 1896, J.Y. sold the hotel and moved back to Fairport where he entered into the clothing business. He continued to assist the DeLand family with their business operations. Joseph Yale Parce died on November 30, 1901 in Fairport and is buried in Norwich NY.

William F. Cody, also known as Buffalo Bill, lived in Rochester in the 1870's. While he was in Rochester, he may very well have acquainted himself with George C. Taylor's Oil of Life for Man or Beast.

Buffalo Bill Cody first went on the road in 1883 with Dr. William Carver's Wild West Show. In 1884, Buffalo Bill joined Nate Salisbury and created the Buffalo Bill Cody Wild West Show. By 1885, the show had hired both Sitting Bull and Annie Oakley and sold over \$100,000 in tickets that year. Mark Twain encouraged the show to travel to Europe to give Europeans a taste of the American West. In 1887, the Buffalo Bill Cody Wild West Show traveled to England for Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee. The letter by W.F. Cody on page 55 reads "For some time past I have used 'Taylor's' Oil of Life' in our stable's with marked success and during our recent ocean trip from New York City to London it was almost 'indispensable.'" On the trip to England, the company had to take care of 18 buffaloes, 181 horses, 10 elk, 4 donkeys, 5 longhorn Texan steers and 2 deer. The tour attracted from 30 to 40 thousand people daily. The letter goes on to request 18 bottles of the Oil of Life to be sent to Manchester, England for the return trip home to Staten Island, where the Wild West show was scheduled to begin their 1888 season.

In 1859 and 1906 the Wild West Show returned to Europe, both times touring the mainland. Buffalo Bill sold all his stock interest in the Wild West Show to Pawnee Bill in 1908. A farewell tour was performed in 1910 and 6 years later William F. Cody died:

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