



Perinton Historical Society HISTORIGRAM

18 Perrin Street
Fairport, NY 14450

Vol. XLIII • No. 4

December 2010
585-223-3989

Rare Architectural Drawings in the Fairport Museum

It's every home owner's dream to find and possess an original set of blueprints and drawings of their house. The documents could explain such mysteries as the electrical and lighting plan, and the plumbing scheme. Where rooms and walls were originally built in the house can be compared to the current arrangement. Homeowners who wish to restore their home to its original charm would have a very specific map from which to work.

Unfortunately, less than 1% of all blueprints and drawings ever survive. Most of the plans were returned to the architect after the building was built and then were kept for a time before being destroyed or thrown out when the architectural firm went out of business. The size of the drawings themselves make them very difficult to store. Only if the architect had the foresight to donate their drawings to a museum or archive are these materials saved and made available to the public. Today the University of Rochester and the Rochester Historical Society are two institutions that have large collections of drawings from major architectural firms that operated in the city of Rochester.

The Fairport Museum has just three original drawings and blueprints on file for houses in Fairport. Two are from the Snow family and most likely were donated by Marjorie Snow Merriman. She was a member of the Perinton Historical Society and an occupant, as a child, of one the houses.

8 Woodlawn Avenue: There are three elevation drawings and a floor plan for this house all mounted on linen. They were designed by the architectural firm

of Putnam and Block for Joseph Snow in 1884.

The Putnam and Block architectural firm had their offices in the Powers Building in the city of Rochester. Otto Block and Josiah Putnam began their partnership in 1881 and worked together for 6 years. Beginning in 1887, Otto Block formed a partnership with William H. Barnes but after a few years withdrew. He then worked independently with a draftsman by the name of George Diemer until World War I.

The house was built by E.S. Marshall, a local carpenter, and his crew of three men. It took Marshall and his crew 5 months to build the house at a cost of \$825 excluding doors and windows.

Joseph Snow, who had the house built, moved to Fairport in 1875 and worked for W.W. Howard in his store. Joseph lived at 54 West Church Street for many years with his second wife Carrie Warren and their two children. (Lizzie Clark, Joseph's first wife, died in 1885 at the age of 22.) In 1882, Joseph's father and mother, Francis and Elizabeth Snow, moved to Fairport to be near their two sons Edward and Joseph. Francis and Elizabeth were in their 60s at the time. Francis Snow immediately bought out the furniture business of Jared Newman, and set up a furniture and art store with his son Joseph. Two years later in 1884, Joseph Snow contracted to have a house built for his parents at 8 Woodlawn Ave., two blocks down from his own house.

The house, a two story building with a small front porch, has been described by the Landmark Society of Western New York in their 1976 survey of Fairport houses, as a modified Queen Ann style house. It is decorated with large barge boards and several decorative corbels or house brackets. There is a large set of these corbels on the side of the house underneath a cantilevered bump-out where the stairs are located. The first floor has a parlor on the left, a small sitting room and dining room on the right, and a kitchen in

✧ Our Mission ✧

"The Mission of the Perinton Historical Society is to promote interest in preserving and sharing local history."



Front elevation drawing of the house at
8 Woodlawn Avenue.

the back. Across from the dining room is the master bedroom. Because the new owners, Francis and Elizabeth were elderly, it can be assumed that the bedroom was located downstairs so they could avoid climbing the stairs. The stairs in the front hall lead to the second floor called the "chamber floor". There is a 13' by 13' chamber room at the top of the stairs which overlooks the street. Two bedrooms are also on the second floor presumably for guests or grandchildren. There is no plumbing, bath or toilet in the house, so it is likely the owners took their baths in a portable tub in their bedroom and had an outhouse in the back yard.

Francis and Elizabeth Snow lived together in the house for 15 years. Elizabeth died 1-6-1900 and Francis died 11-17-1915 at the age of 93.

The house, which is still standing, hasn't changed that much since it was built. The wooden posts on the front have been replaced by concrete block pillars, and the porch has been extended across the entire front of the house. There is a small garage in the far corner of the lot probably added when the family bought their first automobile.

88 West Church Street: The second set of house plans are for a house that was built for Edward Crespo

Snow in 1898. The house is located just a block from Edward's parents' house at 8 Woodlawn Ave. and just down the street from his brother Joseph's house at 54 West Church Street.

Edward Snow moved to Fairport in 1877 following his brother Joseph who moved here the year before. Edward began working as a bookkeeper for Dr. Weir, who manufactured veterinary medicines in the old Hawkins Block next to the Erie Canal on South Main Street. In 1883 Edward Snow married Lelia Evelyn Marring. They had four daughters including Marjorie, who went on to become one of the founders of the Perinton Historical Society in 1935. Edward joined the family furniture business in 1886 that had been started by his father Francis and his brother Joseph. He worked there for the next 50 years.

The house was designed by J. Mills Platt, who had an office in the Chamber of Commerce building in the city of Rochester. Platt designed many buildings throughout the state and was well known for his schoolhouse and bank designs. He continued to design buildings until his death in 1929.

The house J. Mills Platt designed for Edward Snow is a two story house with a gambrel roof, a large dormer and a front porch that extends under part of the second floor in the front of the house. The first floor has a sitting room to the right of the front door with an inglenook separated by an arch and a set of columns. A sliding door at the far end of the room leads to the dining room. On the left are a parlor, music room and kitchen. Upstairs are five bedrooms and a new modern convenience: the bathroom complete with tub, wash basin and water closet.

So, if you happen to have an original plan of your house, hold onto it and pass it on to the next owner. He or she will be glad you did.

Happenings at the Society

- ~ **December 14** - Perinton Historical Society Christmas Party will be at 7:30 p.m. at the Fairport Museum. There will be live traditional Christmas music. Attendees are requested to bring 12 cookies with them to the meeting to share. Coffee and tea will be provided.
- ~ **January 18** - Perinton Historical Society meeting at the Fairport Public Library at 7:00 p.m. The speaker will be Jim Kennard and his presentation will be "Discovery of an Early 19th Century Lake Ontario Schooner".
- ~ There is no Historigram for January because of the holidays. The next newsletter will be February 2011.

The President's Letter

by Catherine Angevine

For those of you who attended October Fest in the village you might have seen some of the membership manning the beer tent as beer pullers. We shared the duties and profits with members of the Rotary Club and our efforts brought in \$531 for the Society. Some much needed extra cash.

During the Scarecrow Festival some 25 people visited the Museum and spent time visiting with our Curator, Bill Keeler and the Museum collections. Speaking of Bill, he guided the Board through a thorough tour of the Museum in September. We asked for a top to bottom inside outside review of the building along with an overview of the collections. And we got it. Bill has done a wonderful job of maintaining the Museum.

The following weekend members of the Historic Structures Committee toured six barns during the Pittsford Barn Tour. The group is getting pretty good at spotting post and beam construction, hand hewn beams, trunnels, granaries and hay tracks and they know a threshing floor when they see one.

Bob Kelly entertained us the following week with his lecture on Historic Markers in Victor. His theme was that history happens right in your own backyard, and sometimes we put up an historic marker as a reminder. He tied in land disputes between New York and Pennsylvania, Native American history, early exploration and settlers in the area to historic markers in Victor and told a great tale.

By the time you receive this you will have enjoyed the November Program with Chris Bench and his presentation of Christmas Traditions. Who knew? My parents would tell the story about their first Christmas as a married couple and how horrified my paternal grandparents were that they were going to bring a tree into the house! My German/Irish mother had grown up decorating fir trees in the house because it was a German tradition, and could not understand what all the fuss was about. But at the time, in the 1920s, it was not a universal tradition.

Be sure to join us on December 14th for a Christmas celebration featuring youngsters from Fairport High School playing carols and other holiday tunes. Cookies will be served too! And we look forward to seeing you January 18th for a program about Shipwrecks! Underwater explorer Jim Kennard will talk

about the challenges of searching for shipwrecks. His presentation will chronicle the discovery of the Milan, the oldest commercial vessel found in deep water off the southern shore of Lake Ontario.

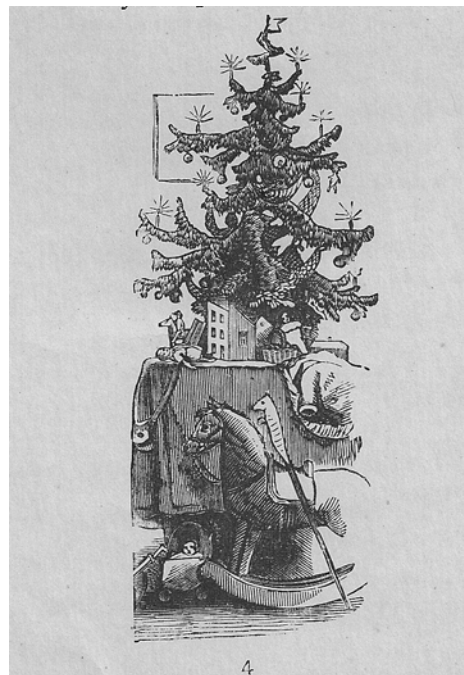
The application and instructions for the Peter McDonough Memorial Scholarship is posted on the PHS website. Encourage high school seniors you know to take advantage of this opportunity to study local history and perhaps earn some scholarship money as well. The scholarship is open to all high school seniors resident within the Fairport School District.

Renewed your Membership? If not, you still have an opportunity to do so. Membership forms are available at the Museum and on line. We would be so glad if you did.

I hope you will find time to attend one of the public presentations about the relocation of the Fairport Public Library and to vote your choice on December 16th.

catherine/phs/pres

Stay connected! Visit our website
www.perintonhistoricalsociety.org



A nineteenth century Christmas card, from the Museum's collection; one of two in this issue.

Transitioning the Perinton Historical Society into the 21st Century

by Joan Alliger

Seventy-five years ago, on November 1, 1935, the Perinton Historical Society was founded to record and preserve Perinton history. Five years ago, to acknowledge PHS's 70th anniversary, Bill Keeler, Museum Curator and then Board of Trustees President, wrote a four part history of PHS for the Historigram, starting in the November, 2005 issue. Part 1 was "The First Leaders of the Society", Part 2 – "The Research Committees", Part 3- "The Middle Years; Finding a Home" and Part 4 – "The Last Thirty Years" outlining the contributions of four influential PHS members: Bernadette McDonough, Matson Ewell, Ruth Ewell and William Matthews. (You can find these articles on our web site under History at www.perintonhistoricalsociety.org.) Bill concluded the series with praise for the new trustees and a prophetic..."Perhaps we'll look back in 2035 when we will be celebrating our 100th anniversary and praise some of these very people for their dedication and work for the PHS.", Well, it isn't 2035 yet, but there is a member to acknowledge as a major contributor and leader for a Part 5: "Transitioning the Perinton Historical Society into the 21st Century"– Bill Keeler.

Bill became involved in the Perinton Historical Society when he was given a free membership in 1989 after showing his house on the PHS House Tour. In 1990 he was a museum volunteer on the Thursday evening shift. His interest in local history and research caused him to go back to school to get a Masters Degree in Library Science and Technology in 2000. Since that time he has created a career as archivist, librarian and curator at both the Landmark Society and Rochester Historical Society.

Bill was head of the PHS Executive Committee from 1994-96 and, after the merger with the Board, was President from 1997 – 2005. In addition to the management position, Bill became Curator of the Museum in 2000, and became editor and chief writer for the Historigram beginning in September of 2002.

Under the influence of Matson Ewell, and Bill Matthews, Bill undertook the task to restore the museum to its original "glory". "New" period light fixtures were installed on the main floor, the ceilings painted, the landscaping was brought into conformance with the original blueprints and a sign placed in front of the

building. The slate roof was replaced on the village-owned building, with PHS contributing a significant share toward the cost. The addition of computers and software enabled all Fairport and Perinton items to be cataloged as well as support for an updated website and an electronic Historigram. Three books were published, edited by Bill – two authored by PHS members and one with photographs by Keith Boas, "Fairport Then and Now".

Bill, in monitoring eBay offers, has added many Fairport-Perinton items to the museum collection and has established a strict policy to accept only donations that have a Perinton connection, keeping the museum focused.

The hours put in by PHS volunteers in support of all the above activities, is the main ingredient that keeps the organization going. At our last meeting, there was a request to turn the heat down!! Bill had all 5 of the heaters fixed in our meeting room, providing us a warm and pleasant atmosphere for our upcoming winter season.

A pretty good start for only 10% into the 21st century!!



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January Program to Reveal the Discovery of an Early 19th Century Lake Ontario Schooner

On January 18th at 7:00 at the Fairport Public Library, underwater explorer Jim Kennard will talk about the challenges of searching for shipwrecks.

His presentation, "Discovery of an Early 19th Century Lake Ontario Schooner," chronicles the discovery of the *Milan*, the oldest commercial vessel found in deep water off the southern shore of Lake Ontario. *The Milan*, a schooner built in 1845, was carrying 1000 barrels of Onondaga salt from Oswego to Cleveland when it sank near Oak Orchard in 1849. A crew of nine and their Newfoundland dog were on board the ship.

Jim will also talk about the discovery of the HMS Ontario. He has an update for us on one of the most significant discoveries, of the 230 year old **HMS Ontario**, the oldest shipwreck to have been discovered in the Great Lakes and the only fully intact British warship from that period that is still in existence, including a short video of the shipwreck.

Jim Kennard has been diving and exploring the

lakes in the northeast since 1970. He found over 200 shipwrecks in the Great Lakes, Lake Champlain, NY Finger Lakes and in the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers over the past 35 years. Using his background as an electrical engineer, he built the side scan sonar system that located these shipwrecks. In 1983 he discovered a unique horse powered ferryboat in Lake Champlain. National Geographic featured the ferryboat in their October 1989 issue. In May 2008 he and Dan Scoville discovered the British warship *HMS Ontario*, the oldest shipwreck ever found in the Great Lakes and just recently a rare 200 year old dagger-board schooner both of which received worldwide attention in the news. Several other of his shipwreck discoveries have been reported in various publications including *Skin Diver*, *Wreck Diver*, *Inland Seas*, and *Sea Technology*.

Keep in mind this meeting is in the Fairport Public Library and is at an earlier time than normal at 7:00 P.M.

This should be a very interesting program. Be sure to mark this on your calendar and bring a friend.





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FAIRPORT HISTORICAL MUSEUM

18 PERRIN STREET, FAIRPORT, NY 14450

REGULAR HOURS

Sunday	2 p.m. - 4 p.m.
Tuesday	2 p.m. - 4 p.m.
Thursday	7 p.m. - 9 p.m.

Visit our website:
www.perintonhistoricalsociety.org

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