



Perinton Historical Society HISTORIGRAM

18 Perrin Street
Fairport, NY 14450

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Inventors from Fairport: Dr. Albert J. Burns, Dentist and Inventor of Improvements in Pneumatic Tires for Bicycles

Albert J. Burns was born in Pittsburgh, PA in 1869. He attended dental school and was one of several dentists in the village of Fairport in the 1890s. In 1897 B.F. Schuyler, who was a very successful dentist in the city of Rochester, set up a branch office in Fairport in the Deal Block near the railroad tracks on north Main Street. Schuyler chose Dr. Albert Burns to head his dental parlors in Fairport. The office remained in the Deal Block only until November of that year before moving to a more central and desirable location above E.L. Dudley's store on South Main Street three doors down from the Erie Canal on the east side. Everyone in the village was familiar with this location as a dentist office because it was previously occupied by Dr. Willis Trescott, who practiced dentistry there for many years. Dr. Burns was open on Mondays and Tuesdays from 8 to 5:30 and Friday and Saturday evenings from 7 to 9.

The first two inventions patented by Dr. Burns had to do with pneumatic tires which were used on the newly invented safety bicycles.

In 1876 at the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition, a British manufacturing firm introduced the high wheeled "ordinary bike" sometimes called the "penny farthing." This new mode of transportation

Pneumatic Tire for Bicycles, Patent No. 511,999 granted in 1894

Pneumatic Tire, Patent No. 570,330 granted in 1894

Machine for Lacquering Cans, Patent No. 570,538 granted in 1896

Dental Hot Air Syringe, Patent No. 559,511 granted in 1896



inspired Col. A. Pope, an American, to create the Columbia Bike Company. Pope began manufacturing high wheel bicycles in the United States several years later. This was the beginning of the bike craze that swept the nation. The "ordinary" bike consisted of a large wheel, four to five feet high, attached to a smaller back wheel. The rider sat above the larger wheel. The bicycles had hard rubber tires and were often used by wild young men noted for their daring. The bicycles were dangerous because the center of gravity was above the front wheel sometimes causing nasty spills, the rider's legs did not touch the ground and when the bike tipped over, the rider was prone to injury because his legs were pinned underneath the handle bars.

By 1885 the first commercially successful safety bike was invented. This bike had two wheels of identical size and a chain drive for the rear wheels. It was called a safety bicycle because the center of gravity was between the two wheels for more stability and the smaller wheels meant that the rider was closer to the ground and could control the bike if it began to fall. These added safety features made the machine more appropriate for young women who began to take up riding. A poll taken by the Fairport Herald in 1896 showed that 207 residents

✦ Our Mission ✦

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

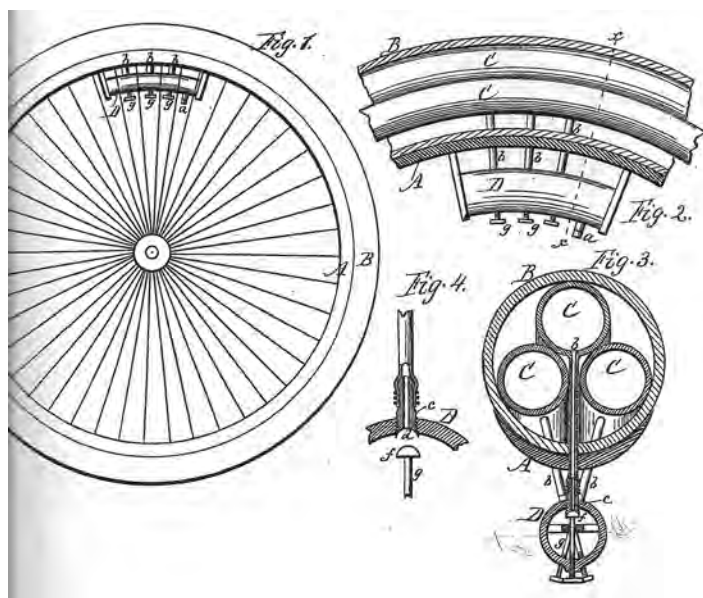
owned or rode bicycles in the village of Fairport. One other feature found on these new bikes was pneumatic tires. This made the ride much less jolting than hard rubber tires as the pneumatic tires absorbed some of the shock when riding over uneven and rocky roads. During these early years, dozens of inventions were submitted to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office each year for improvements in safety bicycles and accessories.

Patent #511,999 submitted by Dr. Burns in 1894 had to do with a design for a shield for pneumatic tires. The invention consisted of a series of round discs made of aluminum which were mounted on a circular flexible sheet. The discs, when mounted on the sheet, looked like scales on a fish. The sheet would be inserted between the rubber outer tire and the inner tube. When the tire was assembled, inflated and attached to the bicycle, the aluminum scales protected the inner tube from punctures from sharp stones or sticks that might penetrate the outer tire.

The second patent #521,330 was a radical design for a pneumatic tire. Dr. Burns envisioned not one but three small inner tubes that would be inserted in a standard bicycle tire. If one inner tube was punctured by a sharp object, the rider could still reach his or her destination on the other two tubes. The damaged inner tube could then be repaired at a later time. As part of the design, Dr. Burns created a complex set of valves which could fill a particular tube or all the tubes at once.

Two years after dabbling in bicycle tire patents, Albert invented a machine for lacquering cans, patent #570,538. That same year he collaborated with fellow dentist H.C. Reeves and invented the hot air syringe, patent #559,511. Dr. Reeves began his dental practice in Fairport in the spring of 1893 after graduating from Iowa State University. His dental office was across from Dr. Burn's parlors in the Bown Block. The two men invented a syringe that was heated by an open flame. The hot air it generated would be blown over a tooth by a small nozzle and rubber bulb to help dry the tooth before it was to be filled with gold or what was known as "specialty mud."

Albert Burns lived with his wife Clara and son Robert in a house on Perrin St. just across from



A.J. Burns Pneumatic tire. Notice 3 inner tube construction on bottom right and unique valve on upper right.

where the Fairport Museum is now. Around 1902 the family moved to Rochester. Albert set up a dental office in his house at 98 Monroe Ave. in the city. Later, Dr. Burns practiced in the old Central Building well into his 60s. He died in Genesee Hospital April 5, 1954, after a long illness.

If you would like to see Dr. Burn's original patent applications, go to the internet to Google patents and search for the patent numbers above.

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Final Farewell

As you know, this is my final issue of the Histori-gram. I am stepping down as Editor after 9 years. When I first started, all I needed was a typewriter and a Xerox copier. Today things are much more complex and many more people are involved in its publication.

I want to thank all of the people who have helped put this newsletter together over the years. First, I would like to thank Ruth Post who proofreads all my historical articles for grammar and spelling. Thanks go to all the other contributors of articles over the years. There are on average 4 articles contributed by other authors every year. Thanks also go out to Alan Keuke-laar who provides information and text about upcoming speakers. Joan Alliger and Jim Unckless review the first draft of the newsletter looking for obvious errors in upcoming events, membership issues and items that can be used for further publicity. Thanks goes to our printers, The UPS Store, for their timely and expert

printing.

Special thanks go to Jim Unckless and his volunteers who, on short notice, seal and deliver to the post office all the Historigrams so you, the reader, get the newsletter before the monthly Society meetings. Jim also distributes the electronic copy over the internet for members. Finally an extra special thanks go to Andy Gates. Andy has taken all the articles and pictures I give him every month and puts them in an attractive format for final print. He is a true master at what he does and adds an element of professionalism to the final product. I could not have done my job without him. This marks his final issue as well.

It has been fun and I hope the next crew that takes over the newsletter will continue to produce quality Historigrams in the future. This publication is truly one of the more unique and long running historical society newsletters in western New York.

Keck's Farm: Site of Motorcycle Hill Climbs

As long as there have been motorized machines, there has been a burning desire by some to test these machines against the elements and fellow enthusiasts. The contests manifest themselves in races to see who has the better machine and skill to tackle a course. In the world of motorcycles, these tests take the form of races over rough dirt courses or hill climbs. In Perinton there is a set of two hills on Keck's farm in Egypt that have been the scene of motorcycle hill climbs as far back as 1917.

Organized motorcycle events were first started by the New York Motorcycle Club in 1903. Exhibitions were sponsored by motorcycle dealers, manufacturers and motorcycle owners. Shortly thereafter the National Motorcycle and Allied Trade Association was running sanctioned races across the country. This organization started the first Gypsy Tours which consisted of a single weekend event throughout the country when motorcycle enthusiasts would gather for a picnic and then watch various competitive events. In 1925 there were 212 such gatherings around the country in June of that year. Since 1924 the American Motorcycle Association has been organizing and sanctioning events and races. Membership in this organization is nearly 300,000 today.

John Keck's farm is located just east of Thayer Road, and the farm's southern tip is on the boundary of the town of Perinton and Ontario County. The 100 acre farm has two hills both part of the larger Baker Hill, which lays on both sides of Thayer Road. One of the hills is called "West High Peak" (sometimes called National Hill). The grassy hill

is over 350 feet high with a 62 percent grade and is used for national competitions. The hill has an extra bump near the crown. If the rider does not hit the bump correctly, he could be thrown from the bike and fail to complete the climb. The second hill, which is less steep than the West High Peak, was used for sectional or local competitions.

In the 1920s and 1930s, Keck's farm was often used for these motorcycle climbs. They were sponsored by motorcycle dealers and clubs such as the Kodak City Motorcycle Club, Rochester Sports Riders Inc. and the Motorcycle Club of Rochester. Sometimes motorcycle dealers would give trophies or money for the fastest time up the slope. The admission to these events was \$1 for adults and children were admitted for free. These events could draw up to 5,000 people, and state troopers would often show up to direct traffic.

In August of 1932, the National Hill Climb Championship was held at Keck's farm. The field included a team from the Indian Motorcycle Co, and the Harley Davidson factory in Milwaukee. The Davidson team included 1931 national champ Joe Petrali and Herb Reiber. Local riders included George DeKoker, Joe and Pete Uebelacher. George DeKoker of Rochester was a former national titleholder.

The motorcycle competitions were suspended for World War II but started up again after the war. There were several more climbs at Keck's farm held in 1947 and there was a special use permit requested by the Rochester Easy Riders Inc. for a hill climb as late as 1976.

Inventors from Perinton: The Nicosia Brothers

Anthony M. Nicosia, patent #1,202,568 A Transplanting Dibble, 1916

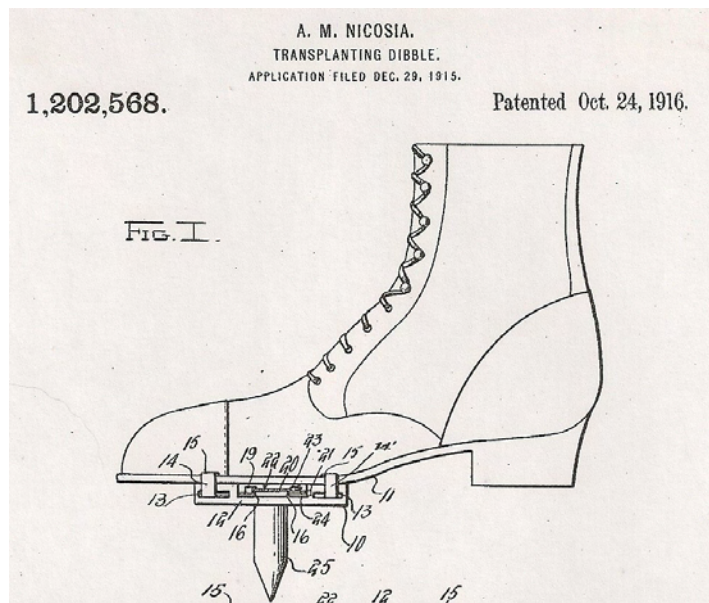
Paul Nicosia, patent #2,154,106 A Vegetable Washing Machine, 1939

One of the more successful farms in Perinton in the mid 20th century was the Primus Vegetable Farm owned by Paleno and Mary Nicosia. The Nicosia family ran the 140 acre farm on Budlong Road on the border of Perinton and Macedon. They raised lettuce, celery, corn, alfalfa and hay. Paleno and Mary had 7 children; 4 sons and 3 daughters who all helped with work on the farm. One of the jobs in Spring was to transplant small seedlings to the newly plowed fields. One son, Anthony, came up with a unique idea of making holes in the ground for these transplants by inventing a dibble attached to the bottom of a shoe. Anthony was 16 years old and may very well be the all-time youngest inventor with a registered United States patent in Perinton.

The dibble is one of the oldest agricultural tools known to man. It consists of a round shaft about a foot long and an inch and a half in diameter with a pointed end. After a field is plowed, the dibble is used by the farmer to make holes for live plants, root crops or bulbs. The dibble is used to make a uniform hole at the proper depth for these crops. Dibbles can still be found today in most garden stores.

Anthony invented a transplanting dibble by shortening the shaft of a standard dibble and mounting it on the bottom of a shoe. The wearer could walk along a newly tilled planting row in the field making holes for plants without bending over. Another worker would follow behind with flats of plants and transplant them into these uniform holes. In a large scale operation, like the Nicosia's farm, this saved time and stress on the back of the farmer.

Not to be outdone, Anthony's brother Paul in-



A.M. Nicosia's transplanting dibble.

vented the vegetable washing machine in 1936. The washing machine consisted of a large tumbling barrel with open slots along the cylinder to allow water to drain out. Brushes were mounted on the inside of the barrel along with sprayers to wash and clean the vegetables while the cylinder turned. The washing machine was designed to clean root vegetables such as potatoes, carrots, beets, turnips and parsnips. It could also be used for polishing onions for market. Paul's patent was granted by the U.S. Patent Office three years after his application was received.

The Primus Vegetable Farm was run by members of the Nicosia family from 1915 until around 1941.

Jokes from "The Triangle"

Published by the Students' Association of Fairport High School December 15, 1916

Miss Green had been reading to the class about the great forests of America.

"And now, dears," she announced, "which one of you can tell me the pine that has the longest and sharpest needles?"

Up went a hand in the front row.

"Well, Foster?"

"The porcupine."

Darling Jacobs: "Why do you smoke such a long pipe?"

Mr. Beech: "I am trying to keep away from tobacco."

Mr. Saunders (before the High school assembly): "I have known this High School for a long time and have been very much interested in the young people. I have seen the boys grow from short pants into long pants and the girls from short skirts to shorter skirts."

Annual Meeting and Picnic Scheduled for May 17

The annual Perinton Historical Society picnic and meeting will be held rain or shine in the shelter at Perinton Park on Fairport Road near the canal at **6:00 p.m.** on Tuesday May 17. Hot dogs, hamburgers, decaf coffee and lemonade will be provided by the Society. Members coming to the picnic are requested to bring a dish to pass, and their own plates and silverware. **Please make reservations** with the form below or by calling the museum at 223-3989 and leaving a message. Please indicate:

1. How many people will be coming.
2. Whether you would like a hot dog or hamburger.
3. What dish you would like to pass (salad, hot dish, cold dish, dessert.)

At the meeting there will be a few words from our president and then the members will vote on the nominations for officers for the Society. This is always a good time to renew friendships and partake in some excellent food. Please join us for a pleasant evening at the park.

Name: _____ Number of people coming _____

I would like (indicate number) _____ hot dogs _____ hamburgers

I will be bringing (circle one) Salad Hot dish Cold dish Dessert

This form can be delivered and dropped in the mail slot at the Fairport Museum no later than May 16 or mailed to the Perinton Historical Society, 18 Perrin Street, Fairport, New York 14450

More Jokes from “The Triangle”

A large map was spread upon the wall, and the teacher was instructing the class in geography.

“Horace,” she said to a small pupil, “when you stand in Europe facing north you have on your right hand the great continent of Asia. What have you on your left hand?”

“A wart,” replied Horace, “but I can't help it, teacher.”

Miss Van Dyck was explaining to the German class about the two cities of Frankfurt on different rivers in Germany.

Someone in the class asked: “Which one is where they make the sausages?”

Miss Van Dyke thoughtfully replied: “I don't know. The one on the Oder probably.”

Two students walking together on the campus. The first spoke to a co-ed.

Second: “Who was that?”

First: “Ida.”

Second: “Ida who?”

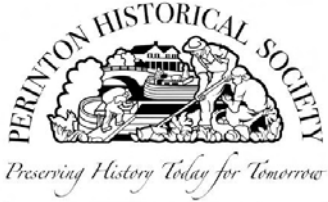
First: “Ida know.”

The new pastor: “Well, I'm glad to hear you come to church twice every Sunday.”

Tommy: “Yes, I'm not old enough to stay away yet.”

Timid Freshman: “Aren't the Senior boys musical?”

Sophy: “There must be a lot of music in them for none ever came out.”



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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.*