

Perinton Historical Society Historiogram

18 Perrin Street
Fairport, NY 14450

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Perinton's Thomas Creek Inspired an Artist Fred K. Van Almelo (1890—1968)

By Betsy Garner Carpenter

Long ago Miss Marjorie Tuffy, my beloved sixth grade teacher, emphasized the importance of being a keen observer. She told her students that casual glances were not enough.



Painting titled "Thomas Creek"
by Fairport artist Fred K. Van Almelo (1890—1968)

Bill Poray's article in the February 2013 issue of the HISTORIGRAM begins, "*Thomas Creek winds through Perinton, its waters flowing westward, eventually joining forces with Irondequoit Creek.*" His lead sentence reminded me that for years I've overlooked Miss Tuffy's "keen observer rule." How often I've only glanced at Fred K. Van Almelo's 16x24-inch oil on canvas painting titled "Thomas Creek" that hangs on one of my living room walls. Purchased in 1961 by my mother, Emma Garner, it depicts a winter scene along Thomas Creek. A portion of the provenance on the back of the painting reads, "The woods presented a lacy pattern against the pinkish autumn sky and wind-driven snow clung to the bushes and undergrowth."

Who was Fred? How did he learn to paint so well? On a recent cold February evening my detective work began. I've

discovered that Alexander Frederik Kunst Van Almelo was born in January of 1890 and grew up in the picturesque town of Almelo in the eastern Netherlands. While in high school, he took drawing and sketching classes at the Rijksmuseum, the prestigious Dutch National Museum in Amsterdam that is home to a vast collection of art treasures including paintings by Vermeer, Rembrandt, and Van Gogh. He received his engineering degree in 1913 from Delft Polytechnic University, one of the largest and oldest Dutch public technical universities. Two weeks after graduation, at age 23, he "impulsively" immigrated to the United States. This was a fortunate move for the following year all of Europe, including the Netherlands, was engulfed in World War I.

Thanks to detailed information found on websites including www.Ancestry.com, with its state and federal census lists, www.findagrave.com, and the *Fairport Herald-Mail* archive, Mr. Van Almelo's amazing life story can be traced. His immigrant journey to the United States probably began in Rotterdam when he sailed to Liverpool, England. In August 1913, the List or Manifest of Alien Passengers for the United States shows a 23-year-old Dutch citizen, Frederick Kunst, sailing on the R.M.S. Laconia to Boston, Massachusetts. Eight months later, Miss Alida Anna Clasina Leplaa, a young woman from the Netherlands who was four years Fred's junior, arrived in Boston aboard the R.M.S. Carmania. Alida became Fred's first wife.

The 1925 New York State Census shows Fred and Alida living in Nassau, Rensselaer County, New York with their three children aged 9, 7, and one. Mr. Van Almelo's salary as a mechanical engineer with the Consolidated Car Heating

Continued on page 3



~ Bob Hunt ~

Comments from your President

What a beautiful spring day, as I sit at my computer to write this month's article for the HISTORIGRAM. The nice day causes me to reflect on how fortunate Cindy and I are to live in Fairport and to enjoy the friendliness of the community and also to be able to enjoy the four different seasons of the area. We also did a bit

of cross-country skiing at Mendon Ponds Park. But now the ski equipment is stored away until next December and the bicycles are out and tuned up for another season of riding the trails and backroads of the area. We have logged almost 100 miles of riding already, and it is amazing how much history one can uncover on a bicycle.

The grounds at the museum are showing signs of spring as well, with early flowers popping their heads up and several already in bloom. I talked with Patty Beckwith recently and the Greenbriar Garden Club is set to start their season of maintaining the museum grounds on April 25th. How fortunate we are to have such a dedicated group watching over our gardens. I will have to start saving some dollars as I have promised the club members a treat at Moonlight Creamery. When you are at the museum, take a few minutes to enjoy the gardens in the back, and maybe even rest a bit on the park bench. The Village is going to do a bit of tree trimming as well this season when their tree crew is in the area.

The Spring Fling is coming up on Saturday May 4th, which is the planned opening day of the canal. Merchants will be holding sidewalk sales, and it is the first day of the Farmer's Market in the parking lot across from the museum. We will be open that day from 10:00 am. to 2:00 pm, so stop by for a visit. We are also planning to be open on several Saturdays during the summer, to encourage attendees of the Farmer's Market to stop by the museum.

The Membership Committee met recently to discuss our types of membership and their related costs. The funds we use to operate and maintain the museum, put on programs, publish and mail the HISTORIGRAM and pay for the utilities comes primarily from our dues. We review the dues structure on an annual basis prior to establishing our budget each year and we are very careful how your money is spent. Our desire is to keep the cost of membership as affordable as possible.

For our coming fiscal year, which starts in September, we have determined that there is need to increase the dues structure by a few dollars. We have also established four new levels of contribution for those desiring to contribute beyond the dues level. The new dues structure for the 2013-14 fiscal year will be as follows:

<u>Classification</u>	<u>Present</u>	<u>Adopted</u>
Individual	\$15	\$15
Family	20	25
Senior Single	8	10
Senior Couple	12	15
Patron	50	50
Business*	None	100
Deland	None	101-249
Potter	None	250-499
Perrin	None	500 and above

*Business membership will include listing in the HISTORIGRAM, on PHS website and at the Museum

Canal Days (May 31, June 1, June 2) is just around the corner. Your Perinton Historical Society will have a tent space again this year and will be offering items from our gift shop. The tent will be open on Saturday 10-6 and Sunday 10-5. We are looking for help during those hours, so please give me a call if you can give an hour or two of your time.

Thanks for your continued support of PHS, and we will chat again in our next issue.

Bob Hunt, President
585-415-7053 / rhunt1@rochester.rr.com

HISTORIGRAM

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Perinton Historical Society

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"Artist Fred K. Van Almelo" continued from page 1

Company allowed them to employ a live-in maid, Rose Kiss. Five years later the family had moved from Fairview Avenue to Greenman Terrace in Nassau. Sadly in 1938 Alida died. The 1940 Federal Census lists 47-year-old Fred Van Almelo, a naturalized citizen and mechanical engineer, as a widower with his two youngest children living at the family home in Nassau—Wilhelmina, a 1940 graduate of Rochester Athenaeum and Mechanical Institute (today's Rochester Institute of Technology) and high school-aged Frederik. About three months later, on July 20, 1940, Frederik Kunst Van Almelo and Viola Mae Holmes, also a Nassau resident, and former school teacher turned state office clerk, were wed. The newlyweds had the joy of seeing Fred's daughter, Wilhelmina, engaged and married to Ernest W. Rossell in 1941. Then, in 1944, Mr. Van Almelo joined Stromberg-Carlson in Rochester. He served as supervising design engineer in the apparatus engineering section of the telephone division until his retirement on February 1, 1955.

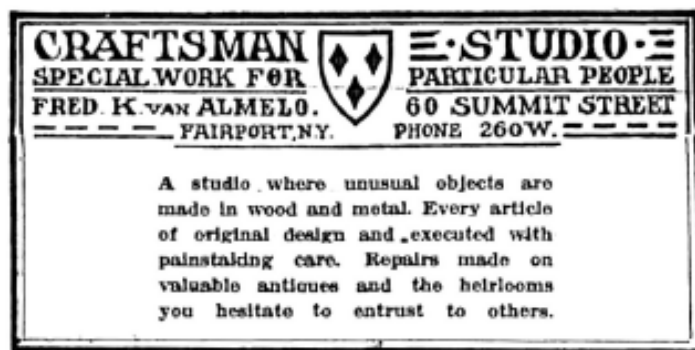
The Van Almelos resettled in 1945 and made 60 Summit Street in Fairport their permanent home. As local residents, Fred and Viola's contributions to village life reflected their educational concerns, passion for the arts, and commitment to their church community. In November of 1952, just two weeks before a crucial Fairport Central School District vote on the "site question," Fred wrote a thoughtful letter to Glenn W. Gazley, then editor of the *Fairport Herald Mail*. Reflecting engineering efficiency and abundant tact, he concluded, "... we have a situation where we need expanded school facilities very badly and want them without needless delay." Within his letter, he complimented members of the Citizens' Committee, chaired by Franklin Hutchings, for their diligence in identifying a suitable site for a new school building. He closed with a plea for "community spirit and progress."

Although I was only 12 years old in 1952, and I didn't know much about Fred, I knew he was right each day my sixth grade classmates and I boarded a bus behind the West Church Street Elementary School (now the site of the Fairport Board of Education Building) for the ride to Turk Hill School. Previously decommissioned, this country schoolhouse was brought back on-line to accommodate Fairport's burgeoning school population. Our teachers, Audrey Langlitz and Marjorie Tuffy, made the best of this temporary facility. Even a mouse discovered in a student's snow boot became an adventure and learning experience. But Mr. Van Almelo knew our community had to do better, for the post World War II baby boom had caught up with Fairport.

Fred and Viola embraced their inevitable retirement years. Now with grown children and financial security, they had time to pursue their avocations. Fred's ads in the Fairport Herald-Mail dating back to the late 1940s featured his logo, "Craftsman Studio-Special Work for Particular People" and often incorporated his family coat of arms, his adaptation of



Fred Van Almelo's family coat of arms, adapted from Almelo, the Netherlands coat of arms.



1940s ad for Fred Almelo's studio in Fairport

Almelo, the Netherlands coat of arms. The brief message in each of Fred's ads was different; however, the theme of his January 11, 1951 page two ad was typical:

A studio where unusual objects are made in wood and metal. Every article of original design and executed with painstaking care. Repairs made on valuable antiques and the heirlooms you hesitate to entrust to others.

An advertisement from January of 1951 celebrating the New Year revealed Fred's poetic talent:

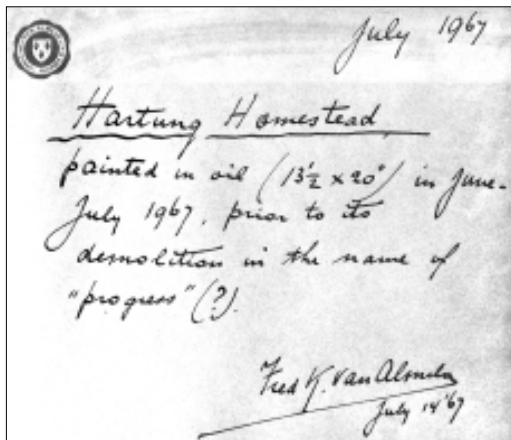
"Thanks! Old Year!" For Friend and Neighbor, For Life and Health, For Fun and Labor. "Welcome!" New Year Of unknown ways, What will you bring In coming days? May future hold Such things in store As we need have— Not less—nor more.

Exhibitions of Fred's paintings were included in the 1964 Fairport Art Festival, the Rochester Art Club at Sibley's Up-State Center, and the Rochester Memorial Art Gallery. On the back of each painting, written on stationery featuring the family coat of arms, was a provenance that included the date created as well as the painting's description. The invaluable provenance on the back of a painting of Hartung Homestead that Bill Poray found at a garage sale two years ago, typifies Fred's attention to detail. It reads, "Hartung Homestead, painted in oil (13½ x 20") in June-July 1967, prior to its demolition in the name of "progress" (?) Fred K. Van Almelo July 14'67". Thanks to Fred, this homestead once situated on Old Penfield Road, a piece of local history, was preserved on canvas.

Continued on page 4



Oil painting of Hartung Homestead
by Fred K. Van Almelo



While Fred painted, Viola pursued her love of ceramic art and studied with the noted sculptor William Ernst Ehrich at Rochester's Memorial Art Gallery. In 1955 she was a guest speaker at the Fairport Rotary Club. The local paper reported that her subject was "Ceramics as a Hobby," and "she demonstrated her talk with pottery making techniques and modeled several objects during the talk."

The couple's commitment to Fairport's First Methodist Church often was noted in the "Our Churches" section of the local newspaper, such as this example from November of 1957: "On December 2 at 8:00 p.m. the Commission on Membership and Evangelism will meet at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Van Almelo 60 Summit Street."

After 78 years of an incredibly productive life, Fred died in March 1968. Fairport was fortunate to be able to count him as a resident for 23 of those years.

He is buried in the Nassau and Schodack Cemetery in Nassau, New York. Alida's (1894-1938) grave is situated on Fred's left side, while Viola's (1897-1994) grave is on his right side. Each stone contains the Van Almelo family crest as designed by Fred.



Special Thanks

Special thanks to Anne Johnston and Bill Keeler in their efforts to gather and calculate the information needed to file our annual sales tax return for the gift shop.

Also thanks to all the volunteers who help us track our sales. Our gift shop sales tax return is filed in March every year for the period March 1 through February 28. We are required to pay New York State the sales tax we collected from sales of gift shop items for that period.

The documentation of gift shop sales is important to assure that we have accurate information not only for our internal financial tracking but also for accurately reporting to New York State and the IRS. Thanks for your efforts in collecting and maintaining this information.

Linda Wiener, Treasurer



New!

The Fairport Historical Museum
will be open on Saturdays from

9:00-11:00 a.m.

Visiting the Farmer's Market?
Come visit us, steps away at
18 Perrin Street.



WE WANT YOU!

The Fairport Historical Museum is looking for volunteer docents for Tuesday afternoons from 2:00-4:00 pm and our new shifts on Saturday mornings from 9:00-11:00 a.m. If you have just two hours a month to of your time to donate, we want you!

Please contact Vicki Profitt at vprofitt@rochester.rr.com or 585-233-1204.

The Railroad Bridge at Peddie Springs

By Bill Poray

Since the 1880s, trains have crossed over Irondequoit Creek just south of Route 31F (Fairport Road). In the earliest years, an iron bridge of more than 300 feet in length carried the railroad high above the valley, as depicted on the label (right) for Crystal Rock Mineral Spring Water, located at Peddie Springs. The West Shore Railroad purchased land from Crystal Rock to build the bridge.

By 1907, the iron bridge was sagging badly and was replaced by a concrete arch 195 feet long. The old bridge was buried in earth fill, creating much of the tall ridge, which still exists today.

Irondequoit Creek passes through the tunnel formed by the arch (bottom photo), which appears to be in good condition 106 years after its construction.



Crystal Rock label with enlarged detail showing the iron railroad bridge at Peddie Springs.

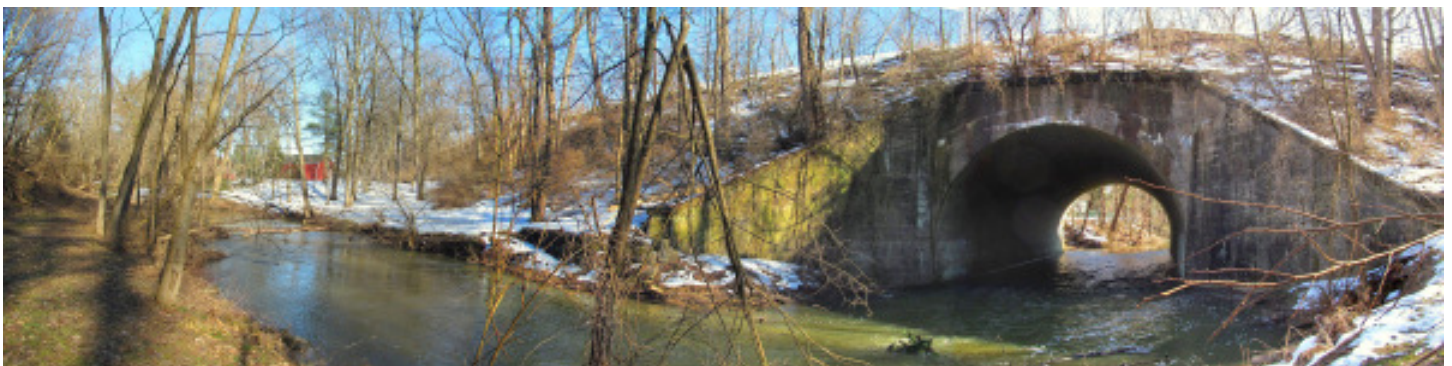
From the collection of the Perinton Historical Society



Steam locomotive crosses the iron bridge at Peddie Springs.

From the collection of the Perinton Historical Society

2013 Photo by Bill Poray



Barbershop Detectives

By Bill Poray

Jean Whitney gave me an old, film negative several weeks ago. Holding the large-format negative up to the light, I could see a barber standing at attention in his shop.

My curiosity awakened, I turned to my friend and HISTORIGRAM collaborator, Keith Boas, for help in scanning the big negative. Keith had the proper equipment for the job, and was able to provide me with a crystal-clear digital image. We started looking for clues as to where the barbershop was, when the photo was taken, and the identity of the barber.

The “when” part was easy, as a calendar was clearly visible in the photo, and indicated the month of April, in the year 1932. Next we set out to discover the location of the barbershop. Another calendar visible in the photo was from Bramer’s Pharmacy, at the corner of West Avenue and South Main Street. We reasoned that the barbershop in the photo was likely to be within a short distance of the pharmacy. After the image was sent in an email to a variety of friends in the community, several gentlemen responded, all of whom have had quite a few haircuts in Fairport over the years. There was a consensus—the shop appeared to be that of Charlie Emler on West Avenue. But the feedback also confirmed that the man in the photo was not Charlie.

Continuing to look for clues to confirm the building, we noticed the mirror over the sink in the photo. The reflection in the mirror showed a distinctive pattern of leaded panes in the window of the storefront. Looking at old photos of storefronts near Bramer’s Pharmacy quickly led us to 29 West Avenue. The window design looked consistent with the reflection in the mirror. A search of old newspaper advertisements confirmed that the storefront served as a barbershop for many decades and was indeed the shop of Charlie Emler in the 1950s through the 1960s. But we still didn’t know the identity of the barber in Jean’s 1932 photograph.

We began a search of Fairport newspapers from the early 1930s. We learned that in late November of 1931, John McLaughlin was announced as the “new barber in the Sanitary Barbershop on West Avenue, in place of James O’Neil, who has removed to Victor.” And by the spring of 1932, Mr. McLaughlin announced that he was in “full charge of the Sanitary Barbershop in the Jacobson Building, West Avenue.” A check of the 1930 census report indicated that McLaughlin was about 51 years old when the barbershop photo was taken. Is this the photo of John McLaughlin? We don’t really know. It seems likely, as it was his shop at the time, and the man in the photo seems to be of about the right age. We have no other images of him to compare to our barbershop photo.

John McLaughlin died in 1934, just two years after the photograph was taken.



1932 photo of the barbershop at 29 West Avenue. The barber is believed to be John McLaughlin.



Barbershop at 29 West Avenue, known as the Jacobson Block.

*From the collection
of the Perinton Historical Society*



Annual Meeting and Picnic Scheduled for May 21

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 pm on Tuesday, May 21. Hot dogs, hamburgers and veggie burgers, 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:

- ◆ How many people will be coming
- ◆ Whether you would like a hot dog, hamburger, or veggie burger
- ◆ Dish you would like to pass (salad, hot or 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, meet new people, and partake in some excellent food. Please join us for a pleasant evening in the park.

Annual Meeting and Picnic, May 21

Name _____

Number of people attending _____

I would like (indicate number)

Hot dogs _____

Hamburgers _____

Veggie burgers _____

I will bring (circle one)

Salad Hot dish Cold dish Dessert

Deliver this form to the mail slot at the Fairport Museum no later than May 19, or mail it to the Perinton Historical Society, 18 Perrin Street, Fairport, NY 14450.



The back of Lady Grantham's gown featuring a lover's knot.

Photo courtesy of Vicki Masters Profitt

Fashions

Inspired by *Downton Abbey*

The Fairport Museum has an amazing collection of costumes which have been donated to the Perinton Historical Society through the years. Taking cues from the main characters of the hit television series, our new exhibit, *Fashions Inspired by Downton Abbey*, highlights just a few of these beautiful outfits.

Lady Mary is represented by a long, black gown with a complementary jacket created of seed pearls and netting. Sybil's sweet style is in direct contrast to her sister Edith's classically tailored look. Dashing Matthew Crawley makes his appearance in a tailcoat, top hat in hand, while everyone's favorite Dowager Countess is represented by a vintage black silk gown. Lady Rose MacClare and Mrs. Hughes are also represented. The showstopper is an elegant, ivory-hobble skirt that would be perfectly at home on the stylish Lady Grantham.

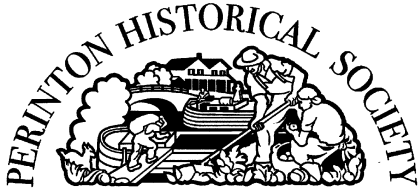
Our *Fashions Inspired by Downton Abbey* exhibit runs through September 15th. Stop by the Fairport Historical Museum during our regularly scheduled hours to view these exquisite costumes. Your membership dues and donations allow us to continue to bring you monthly programs and special exhibits such as this. Thank you for your support.

Thank You, RC Shaheen

The Board of Trustees of the Perinton Historical Society expresses its appreciation to Christopher Mason, store manager of RC Shaheen Paint & Decorating Centers, for generously offering to supply Chris Grace with paint and materials as he works to attain his Eagle Scout rank. Chris will be painting the Merriman-Clark Room in the lower level of the museum in June as his Eagle Scout project.

RC Shaheen is conveniently located at 121 South Main Street in Fairport. We truly appreciate RC Shaheen's eagerness to give back to our community.





Preserving History Today for Tomorrow

18 PERRIN STREET, FAIRPORT, NEW YORK 14450

FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
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Fairport, NY 14450



Fairport Historical Museum

18 Perrin Street
Fairport, NY 14450

The Fairport Historical Museum
is open to the public Saturdays,
Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays,
at the hours listed below.

Hours

Saturday	9:00-11:00 am
Sunday	2:00-4:00 pm
Tuesday	2:00-4:00 pm
Thursday	7:00-9:00 pm

Group tours, presentations and special
projects are by appointment. Please call
and leave a message at 223-3989.

www.PerintonHistoricalSociety.org



Postcard view of North Main Street, looking south,
photographed during the Old Home Week Celebration in August, 1908.
The prominent building on the left was the manufacturing building
of the Monroe County Chemical Company. The building is still in
use today and is the home of the Main Street Mercantile gift shop.
The building on the extreme right was the Osburn House,
a popular hotel built in 1870 and razed in 1938.