



## Memories of the Bushnell's Basin School

*By Lois "Otis" Nell Gilbert*

*Most of my memories of the two room school house in Bushnell's Basin  
are pleasant ones—but not all.*

As there wasn't a kindergarten, I jumped into first grade at age five. My brother Dick was in the third grade and we were in the "little room" for grades one through four, while my older brother Jim was in the "big room" for grades five through eight. In the entire two room schoolhouse I'd say there was a total of maybe 30 kids.

We started each day in the big room with the Pledge of Allegiance followed by Mrs. Baetzel playing the piano and us singing "God Bless America" followed by my favorite song, "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." Then it was back to our "little room." My brother and I would giggle over our separate rows and when we laughed too loud, our teacher Mrs. Smith would scold us.

I was set to work on my numbers and alphabet, but when I became bored I would listen and watch what the others were learning in the same room and soon I was able to pick up reading and arithmetic. We used flash cards and I would hold them up for the second and third graders and soon I knew them too. With this method I was able to skip second grade and go into third the following January.

WW II broke out in 1941 and the following four years were the "war" years. We gathered milkweed pods used as kapok filling the life-vests for ships, lots of flattened tin cans, and newspapers that were brought to the big room and piled in the front—all for the war effort. Those who had money bought stamps that went toward the purchase of war bonds; however, we weren't able to do this as mum was a widow and worked

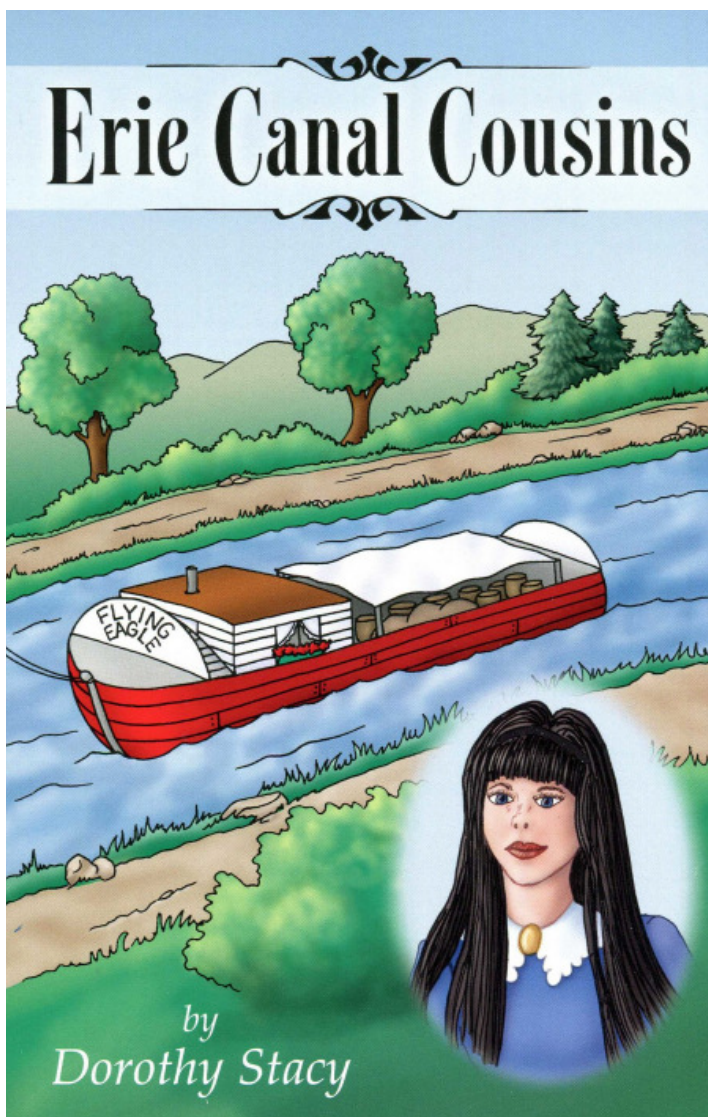


District School No. 10 on Route 96, across from Garnsey Road.  
*Photo from the early 1950s*

in the war plant at night as well as took in laundry by day—every cent was needed to keep us going. In the fall we were let out of school and walked by our two teachers to nearby farms for picking potatoes as well as milkweed pods in fields and lanes. We were paid for each bushel of potatoes—I don't remember the amount—but every cent went home to our mother.

I remember listening to President Franklin D. Roosevelt's fireside chats during the war years that we discussed in school the next day. I was excited when an uncle in the Marine Air Corp visited the school, arriving by landing his fighter plane at the Rochester Airport on Scottsville Road. He wore a big, furry flight suit and boots and allowed everyone to feel it, explaining it was very cold in the plane and he needed it to keep warm. Sometimes he would have Nestle candy bars or





## Dorothy Stacy Author Appearance Here on December 6th

The Perinton Historical Society is pleased to welcome children's author Dorothy Stacy to the Fairport Historical Museum for an appearance on Saturday, December 6th. Ms Stacy is the author of the *Erie Canal Cousins* series for middle-school readers. A description of each of the five books in the series appears on page five of the October 2014 issue of the *Historigram*.

Each paperback copy sells for \$10, or \$40 for the entire set. Signed copies will be available for sale in the museum gift shop. Please be prepared to pay by cash or check.

**A Great Christmas Gift Idea  
for the Young Readers in Your Life!**

## Upcoming Events

**Note: All programs now begin at 7:00 p.m.**

**Saturday, December 6, 10:00–11:30 a.m.**

*At the Fairport Historical Museum*

**Book signing** by children's author Dorothy Stacy  
She will be signing copies of her *Erie Canal Cousins* series

**Tuesday, December 9, 6:00–7:00 p.m.**

*At the Fairport Historical Museum*

**PHS Yuletide Traditions**—Final bids accepted for silent auction holiday items. Silent auction winners will be announced at the conclusion of the evening's program.

**Tuesday, December 9, 7:00 p.m.**

*At the Fairport Historical Museum*

**Annual Holiday Party & Program**  
**Christmas Traditions: Their Meaning and How They Started**

Presenter: Christine Mott.

Please bring a dessert to pass.

**Tuesday, January 20, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.**

*At the Fairport Historical Museum*

**Mural Mania**

Presenter: Gene Bavis

Walworth Town Historian Gene Bavis will present a program about Mural Mania and the many murals in Wayne County, along the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, and some iconic murals in other parts of the US and Canada. Gene is a former social studies teacher at Wayne Central and has been actively involved in local history since the late '60s. A couple of years ago, while traveling in Georgia, Gene and his wife Liz discovered Colquitt where there is a large mural around five peanut silos (100' tall). Several other murals also decorate the walls of Colquitt. After seeing those and learning of the Mural Mania program back home, he was "hooked." The mission of Mural Mania is "the preservation of history through community art." How can we lose? We get some great art with a history lesson! In the fall of 2013, Gene & Liz attended a Mural Symposium in Toronto, and last winter, while traveling in the south, they visited Lakeland, Georgia and Lake Placid, Florida to see two more great mural cities.

Working alongside Mark DeCracker of Lyons, Gene is preparing for Mural Mania to host the 2016 Global Mural Conference in the Finger Lakes/Erie Canalway Region of New York. Gene, Mark and other *Mural Maniacs* are willing to assist any community in getting mural art to enhance their environment.

This program is sponsored by the Fairport Public Library, and requires registration. Please register beginning January 2, 2015 by visiting [www.FairportLibrary.org](http://www.FairportLibrary.org), or calling the library at 585-223-9091.



*"Bushnell's Basin" continued from page 1*

Wrigley's chewing gum for all of us. This was a huge treat as civilians weren't able to get these during the war years. When he left he would fly over our little school and dip his wings. My brothers and I were very proud of him.

We had some exciting times during our recess when we always went outdoors and played on the swings and slides. Baseball games were popular, and because I had two brothers I was always picked for their team. This was done with a toss of the bat from captain to captain, then hand-over-hand until the last one was reached, who got first choice of the best players. Without bragging, I was as athletic as the boys and remained so all my life. I particularly loved the fall in the school yard because there were four large sugar maples by the fence along Route 96 and we heaped their leaves in piles and then jumped into them—a joy not to be missed.

Halloween could be scary when at recess the older boys would sometimes go into the nearby graveyard behind the school. They returned with bones and chased us until Mrs. Baetzel put a stop to it and made them return the bones to their resting place. Woodchucks could be seen in the graveyard guarding human bones by their holes. Another prank done by the Dexter boys was bringing a huge black snake from the nearby Barge Canal and tying it to the front door of the school. More than once we had a day off because the teachers were also afraid and wouldn't unlock the door.

When severe snowstorms occurred my brother and I were at times designated to walk small children home—two at a



Lois Gilbert (third from left) with classmates at the District 10 School

time—escorting them home and then returning back to school to get two more. The school was on a main highway (Route 96) and during a blizzard this was a very dangerous thing for little kids to do. Although it was at least a mile's walk each way, we loved the experience, and pretended we were army soldiers on a ski patrol rescuing bombed out children.

Another frightening event was the arrival of the dental hygienist, Mrs. Cross. When she arrived the bigger kids brought in her dental chair and located it in the back of our little room. Then we listened over at least the next two days as classmate's teeth were examined and cleaned.

I would sometimes ride my horse "Jeep" to school, allowing him to be petted but never permitting anyone but me to ride him. My brother and I were not allowed to ride bikes to school as we didn't have any—only mother had a bike. When she was not home we would steal her bike and my brother would peddle with me on the back fender. She never found out about this little adventure in our lives but one day another child was hit by a tractor trailer and injured quite seriously, putting an end to our thievery!

As I write this memoir I can still smell the coat room at the school containing kid's lunches as well as the one privy, and the big coal furnace down the scary cellar stairs. The older boys attended to the ashes and added coal each day.

When I finally reached sixth grade my brother had moved on to the Pittsford High School in the next town. It just wasn't the same anymore without him and I missed him so much. I got lucky though, and that same year all the small schools in our district were centralized, sending everyone to the Pittsford schools, reuniting my brother and me again as partners riding the same school bus together!



Lois and her brothers at the school's ball field





Swings, still popular on school playgrounds today!



Lois Gilbert (bow in hair) with friends. The cemetery was directly behind the school. The cemetery remains, but the school was razed many years ago.



## New Items in the Gift Shop

The Fairport Historical Museum Gift Shop is stocked with many new items which have arrived just in time for the holiday season. In addition to the wide selection of autographed books, artwork and memorabilia, the PHS is pleased to offer a specially commissioned limited edition Christmas ornament commemorating the 100th anniversary of Fairport's Lift Bridge. The ornaments are available for \$9 each. They consist of die-struck silver plate with enamel colors and are based on a photograph of the lift bridge by Fairport photographer and PHS board member Keith Boas.

Another gift idea is the print entitled, *100 Years of Lift Bridge Inspiration*. The print comes in two sizes—8x10" (\$18) and 11x14" (\$30). Each print is hand-signed by Fairport artist Susan Prener and is available only at the Fairport Historical Museum Gift Shop.

## Downsizing Your Holiday Decorations? Let Us Help!

If your holiday decorations include one too many reindeer, wreaths, or garlands, the Perinton Historical Society can lighten your load! We need all kinds of decorations to cozy up the museum for the holiday season. Also needed are white tablecloths and large white doilies for displaying our Yuletide Traditions donations for our holiday fundraiser, and small undecorated trees for next year's event.

If you've already culled your holiday stash and have items to relocate, please bring them to the museum during regular hours, or bring them with you to the museum programs in December. In January and February the museum will be closed during regular hours, but decorations will be gladly accepted at the monthly programs.



### ***With Appreciation***

to the individuals, organizations and businesses that donated to Yuletide Traditions:

Sue Broda, Anne Johnston & May Thomson

Marlene Caroselli

The Corner Bookstore

Craft Bits and Pieces

Diane Prince Furniture & Gifts

Roberta DiLella, Greenbrier Garden Club

Fairport Perinton Merchants Association

Fairport Rotary

Terry Holt

Bob Hunt

Michael Keene

Kathy Keogh

Suzanne Lee, Linda Wiener & Vicki Profitt

Joyce Lyle, Greenbrier Garden Club

Deborah Wilcox Mabry & Kaitlyn Pospiech

Mark's Pizzeria

Lucy McCormick

Dee Molinari

Perinton Quilt Guild

Red Bird Market

Sherie Reese

Rita Prince State Farm

Jane Stock & Carol Klinger

Wagonjack Antiques

Linda Wiener





*Photo by Lucy McCormick*

## PHS Yuletide Traditions

We are deeply appreciative of the many individuals, organizations and businesses that have donated items for our first Yuletide Traditions fundraising event. The items donated will be on display until December 9th. Stop by the museum during regular open hours to view and bid on these magnificent holiday items, the proceeds of which will be used to fund PHS educational programs and operation of the museum.

A special thanks also goes out from Vicki Masters Profit to our team of dedicated volunteers who gave of their time and skills to organize and execute this event—Ann Castle, Bob Hunt, Cindy Hunt, Suzanne Lee, Joyce Lyle, Deb Wilcox Mabry, Pat May, Sue Scheirer, Linda Wiener and YT Coordinator Lucy McCormick. What a wonderful experience this has been working together in support of the PHS and the Fairport Historical Museum!

## Holiday Party and Program *December 9th*

Join us from 6:00-7:00 p.m. for the last opportunity to view and bid on the Yuletide Traditions trees, wreaths and gift baskets that have been donated for this special PHS fundraiser.

Our annual holiday party kicks off at 7:00 p.m. with a Christmas-themed presentation from Fairport resident Christine Mott, who will discuss Christmas traditions and how they got their start. Christine is a member of the 7th District Federated Garden Clubs, a master gardener, National Flower Show judge and landscape design consultant. Please bring a dessert to pass. Winners of the PHS Yuletide Traditions silent auctions will be announced immediately following the program.

## Special Recognition Level Memberships

*As of November 14, 2014*

### **Business (\$100)**

**Ed Bradford, Liftbridge Financial Advisors**  
6 North Main Street, Suite 400w, Fairport  
Website: <http://liftbridgefinancial.com>

**Suzanne Lee Personal Histories**  
33 Chesham Way, Fairport  
Phone: 585-267-6189  
Website: <http://SLeePersonalHistories.com>

**Joel Cuminala, Turning Point Signs & Design**  
3 Railroad Street, Fairport  
Website: <http://www.tpsigns.com>

**Fairport Village Inn**  
Wayne, Patty & Ken Beckwith  
103 North Main Street, Fairport  
Phone: 585-388-0112  
Website: <http://www.thefvi.com>

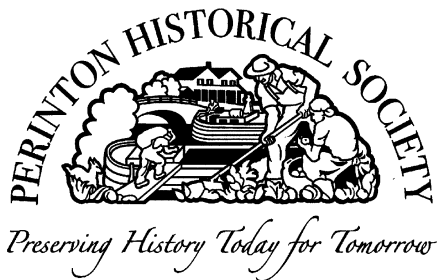
## Museum Hours

The museum will be open additional hours on the weekends for your gift-giving needs. Stop by Saturday, November 29 and December 6 from 9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. and Sunday, November 30 and December 7 from 2:00–5:00 p.m. to visit the gift shop and view the Yuletide Traditions offerings. This is in addition to our regular Tuesday hours of 2:00–4:00 p.m. and Thursday evenings from 7:00–9:00 p.m.

The last day the museum is open for the season is Saturday, December 20, from 9:00–11:00 a.m. January and February programs will take place at the museum, but the museum itself will be closed until March 1, 2015.

*On behalf of the Board of Trustees of the  
Perinton Historical Society, we wish you a very  
Merry Christmas and bright things  
to come for the new year!*





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Photo by Keith Boas

*Season's Greetings from the Perinton Historical Society*

The Fairport Historical Museum will be closed from December 22 through February 28.  
We will reopen on Sunday, March 1. During this period, you may call Vicki Masters Profit at 585-233-1204  
or email at [director@perintonhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:director@perintonhistoricalsociety.org) to book a group tour or do research.

**[www.PerintonHistoricalSociety.org](http://www.PerintonHistoricalSociety.org)**