



# Perinton Historical Society **Historigram**

18 Perrin Street  
Fairport, NY 14450

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## Dolomite Shipbuilding Corporation (pre-WWII years)

*By Jack Odenbach*

*Editor's Note: Many readers may recall that a facility known as the Odenbach Shipyards near Lake Ontario produced shallow draft oil tankers and landing barges during World War II. It may surprise you to learn that the company operated another shipyard in Pittsford prior to the war. The article below was kindly provided by Jack Odenbach.*

*It was first published in the Dolomite Group's in-house publication, **The Dolomite Press**, in April of 2016.*



Built in Pittsford, *Dolomite 4* is shown here in New York Harbor. The ship sank six miles north of Cuba after being hit by German torpedoes during WWII.

*Photo provided by the Dolomite Group*

In the early 1930s, over a decade after Dolomite was founded, the Great Depression gripped the nation and unemployment in America grew to 25%. To keep the quarry business going and expand his customer base, John H. Odenbach and the Dolomite employees started loading stone into barges and pushing them with several tug boats through the Erie Canal. This led to building their own barges that were better designed and suited to the task of hauling large bulk loads. They also realized they could design and build better to their purpose—and do it cheaper, founding the Dolomite Shipbuilding Corporation in the process.

The Pittsford shipyard, located south of French Road along the Erie Canal, began as a repair yard for the self-

*Continued on page 3*



~ Bob Hunt ~

## Comments from your President

November 14, 2016:

Greetings, on another beautiful day for the middle of November—so we decided to get in possibly the last bicycle ride for the year. It was off to Pittsford to have lunch at Simply Crepes, to use the free entre coupon they send to us (you must

register), which can be used during your birthday month. We thought that this might have been the latest we have biked, but in checking Cindy's diaries, kept since 1973, we were reminded that we biked a couple of years ago during Thanksgiving week.

Yesterday I put up the bird feeders over the back patio, which gives us great viewing from the family room at the back of our home. This room has ten windows and a sliding glass door and is our favorite room in the house. There is no TV, but there is a gas fireplace to enjoy. We eat most of our meals in this room and it is where we relax, read, receive warmth from the fireplace and get our daily dose of Vitamin N...Mother Nature. The first bird I observed to arrive at the feeders was a goldfinch, which have a preference for Niger seed, and you guessed it, I didn't have a Niger feeder up. And you guessed it again, for it was off to Country Max early this morning to procure a feeder and seed. Now I hope that they were not too upset by my thoughtlessness that they have turned our site off. The goldfinch is a beautiful bird to watch over the years as it changes from their bright yellow coloration in the spring and summer, and turns to the golden bronze color in the fall and through the winter.

This past Monday, the day before Election Day, we made our last trip for the season to the Merry Go Round Theater at the north end of Owasco Lake in Auburn. We went to see Smokey Joe's Café, a musical that opened on Broadway on March 2, 1995 and played 2,036 performances before closing in 2000. The play features about ten singers from Smokey Joe's Café, singing songs by Lieber and Stoller. More than 40 songs were sung and a few you might recall are Dance with Me, Kansas City, Fools Fall in Love, On Broadway, Yakety Yak, Hound Dog, Jailhouse Rock and Stand by Me. Fun show, the place was rocking. A few years back a friend of ours convinced us to spend a night at the Sherwood Inn located in Skaneateles at the north end of Skaneateles Lake. The Inn was built in 1807, has 25 guest rooms, great dining and a cozy relaxing pub to relieve the stress from a tough day at the theater. Before the time for adult beverages we took a stroll around the village, with its grand old homes (mansions I should say) along tree lined streets. Most are situated to

## Perinton Historical Society

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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<i>Vice President</i>	Vicki Profit
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Bill Poray	Jim Unckless
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### MUSEUM

<i>Director</i>	Vicki Profit
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provide a view of the lake. The downtown area has many quaint shops for browsing or just window shopping. During our stress-relaxing time in the pub, a gentleman sitting near us recalled that the homes were primarily build last century by wealthy individuals from the Syracuse area who were desiring a place near the lake. After a great dinner and peaceful night, we started Election Day with breakfast on the porch. In the park across the road at the north end of the lake about 100 3'x5' American flags were moving gently in the breeze, having been erected to represent the living veterans from the area in honor of Veteran's Day. The morning sun reflecting off the maple foliage of many colors and the gentle movement of the American flags certainly brought a lump to my throat and feeling of pride to my heart. What a great display by the community honoring their veterans.

As I mentioned the day was beautiful and sunny, so we decided to return home via old route 5 & 20 instead of the Thruway. Before the Thruway was built in the 1950s, 5 & 20 was the major east-west route across the state. The old route has rolling hills as it travels over the drumlins created by the glaciers centuries ago. Traveling west, we passed through Auburn again and then on to Seneca Falls. Their Historical Society was open on this Tuesday, but we will have to wait for another day, as there was not time for a visit. Waterloo was next, followed by Geneva, and then turning north to Fairport, passing through Seneca Castle. We were home in time to cast our votes before lunch and then to a book-packing party in our carriage barn for Rotary's "Books for the World" project. That's another story I'll share with you sometime.

Thanks for your continued support and we will chat again next month.

Bob Hunt, President  
585-415-7053, [rhunt1@rochester.rr.com](mailto:rhunt1@rochester.rr.com)



*"Dolomite Shipbuilding..." continued from page 1*

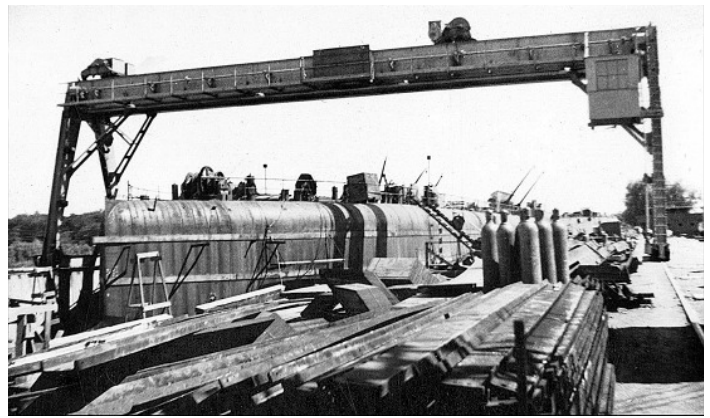
propelled barges and tugs. It also provided an opportunity to keep Dolomite's skilled workforce working through the winter when the quarries were shut down. The *Dolomite 1* was reconstructed in Pittsford from an old abandoned wreck and was an experiment to see if they could duplicate and improve the new invention of welded hull construction. It was also built with an elevating pilot house and superstructure that allowed her to clear the lift bridges and transit the canal. The second boat, *Dolomite 2*, was a similar 45-year-old wreck that was purchased by Dolomite Shipbuilding and rebuilt in the Pittsford Shipyard. In 1938, *Dolomite 3* and *4* were constructed from the keel up in the Pittsford yard and were state-of-the-art 2300 ton, 300-foot-long ships.

The ships' construction and design were innovative for the time. The first barges produced were self-unloading and had a conveyor belt system in the bottom to unload the stone. The ships were also the first electrically welded tank-cargo ships in the U.S. The quality and strength of welds increased greatly with the development of "shielded arc" welding, which uses a coating on the welding rod to keep out impurities that had made welds brittle and weak. The Dolomite employees perfected this method of welding and used it to construct ships in 1/15th the time taken by traditional methods. Lincoln Electric representatives even visited Rochester and said that if these ships are not successful, it will set back all welded ships for 50 years. Several patents were developed by John H. Odenbach and the Dolomite employees in the late 1930s and early 1940s that involved ship construction (US2279091 A & US2328028 A), fully welded hull construction (US2104053), and a machine that bent steel (US1970182 A).



The Pittsford shipyard operated in the 1930s. When ships were completed, they were launched in the canal.

*Photo provided by the Dolomite Group*



1930s shipbuilding in Pittsford. *Photo by Clara Moore of Fairport*



Pittsford-built tanker heading east through Fairport on Thanksgiving, 1937. The photo was taken by Clara Moore in the backyard of the Moore family home at 128 Roselawn Avenue.

The four Dolomite ships were operated for several years as oceangoing vessels, working throughout the East Coast, Caribbean, and Gulf Coast. The ships were some of the largest cargo vessels to have their holds lined with nickel, allowing them to carry many different kinds of products. They could also be cleaned quickly, allowing quicker turnaround time in port. Some of the common port areas were Norfolk, Havana, New York City, and Corpus Christi. They carried items like kerosene, molasses, wheat, water, and caustic soda.

All four Dolomite boats were sold in the early 1940s. The new owners operated the ships through the early parts of WWII but sadly, all were sunk by German U-boats.

*Dolomite 1*, renamed "Alkaliner" was lost in the Gulf in 1942.

*Dolomite 2*, renamed "Motorex," was shelled by U-172 north of Panama, and sunk in June 1942.

*Dolomite 3*, renamed "Arriaga," was torpedoed by U-68 in the Caribbean, 50 miles north of Columbia in June 1942.

*Dolomite 4*, renamed "Nickeliner," was torpedoed twice by U-176, six miles north of Cuba, before it sank.







# *Yuletide Traditions*

The PHS holiday fundraiser

## *With Appreciation*

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

Karen & William Allen  
Ambiance Design Gallery  
Carol Anne Boas  
Sue Broda, Anne Johnston  
& May Thomson  
Marlene Caroselli  
Casa Larga Vineyards & Winery  
Ann Castle  
Church of the Assumption  
Audrey Connelley  
The Corner Bookstore  
Craft Bits and Pieces  
Diane Prince Furniture  
and Gifts  
Fairport Rotary  
Cindy German  
Girl Scout Troop 60336  
Terry Holt  
Bob Hunt  
The Inn on Church  
Suzanne Lee

Joyce Lyle  
Mark's Pizzeria  
Karen Martin  
Eric Matson, Fotominen LLC  
Lucy McCormick  
Notar/Mulley Family  
Betsy Ogles  
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Red Bird Market  
Revelations Design Studio  
Rita Prince State Farm  
Jolene & Fred Smith  
Jane Stock & Carol Klinger  
Supergirl Fitness  
Sue Templeton  
Sylvia Vecellio  
Linda Wiener  
Barb Wild, Wagonjack Antiques  
Wegmans Perinton

## "A Date Which Will Live in Infamy"

*By Bill Poray*

Seventy-five years ago, President Franklin D. Roosevelt requested the support of Congress for a declaration of war, with the immortal words, "Yesterday, December 7, 1941—a date which will live in infamy—the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan." The attack began at 7:48 a.m., Hawaiian Time. Six Japanese aircraft carriers launched 353 planes in the invasion, resulting in the deaths of 2,403 Americans, and almost half as many wounded. Four U.S. Navy battleships were sunk, the remaining four sustained significant damage. Many other ships were sunk or damaged.

One of the four sunk battleships was the *USS Arizona*, resulting in the death of 1,177 crewmen and officers. Just 125 yards away was the *USS Solace*, and among the crew was Fairport's Edward Van Scott. The *Solace*, a hospital ship, was not damaged in the attack. The ship's lifeboats were immediately dispatched to rescue victims in the burning water of the harbor. Hundreds of wounded were brought to the *USS Solace* for treatment that day.

Less than 45 minutes after the invasion, Fairport's Paul Earl received word of the attack while on the deck of the *USS Chester*, a Northampton-class cruiser, which was on route from Wake Island back to Pearl Harbor at the time.

Edward Van Scott and Paul Earl survived the invasion of Pearl Harbor, but they had something else in common as well. Scott and Earl lived within sight of each other in Fairport. Van Scott kissed his wife goodbye and left behind his home at 38 Roselawn Avenue to serve his country. Across the street at 41 Roselawn Avenue, William and Ruth Earl bid farewell to their son Paul, shortly after his graduation from Fairport High School. Both Navy men survived the war, as did Paul Earl's father, who joined the Navy as well.

At least two other Perinton men were stationed at Pearl Harbor at the time of the attack. Robert C. Granger served on the *USS Maryland*, a Colorado-class battleship, which sustained damage and four deaths from two armor-piercing bombs during the attack. Most of the crew of over 1,080 were on board during the attack. Newspaper accounts at the time indicate John H. Freeman, Pharmacist, 2<sup>nd</sup> Class, served on an unidentified battleship as well, although as of publication, I have not been able to verify that he was on board during the attack.



## Special Recognition Level Memberships

*As of November 15, 2016*

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

#### **The Inn on Church**

11 West Church Street, Fairport, NY 14450

Phone: 585-678-1106

Website: <https://www.facebook.com/theinnonchurch>

#### **Ed Bradford, Liftbridge Financial Advisors**

6 North Main Street, Suite 400w, Fairport, NY 14450

Website: <http://liftbridgefinancial.com>

#### **Suzanne Lee Personal Histories**

33 Chesham Way, Fairport, NY 14450

Phone: 585-267-6189

Website: <http://SLeePersonalHistories.com>

#### **Fairport Village Inn, Wayne and Patty Beckwith**

103 North Main Street, Fairport, NY 14450

Phone: 585-388-0112

Website: <http://www.thefvi.com>

#### **Robert Ruhland, Keller Williams Realty**

2000 Winton Road S. Bldg. 1, Rochester, NY 14618

Phone: 585-303-6607

Website: <http://bobruhland.yourkwagent.com>

#### **Forever Financial Advisors, LLC**

**Annie McQuilkin, MS, CFP®**

140 West Church Street, Fairport, NY 14450

Phone: 585-598-1377

Website: <http://www.foreverfinancial.com>

#### **Pixos Print**

75 Goodway Drive, Rochester, NY 14623-3000

Phone: 585-500-4600

Website: [ReadytoRun@pixosprint.com](mailto:ReadytoRun@pixosprint.com)

#### **Joel Cuminale, Turning Point Signs & Design**

3 Railroad Street, Fairport, NY 14450

Website: <http://www.tpsigns.com>

### **New Listings for Special Recognition**

#### **DeLand (\$100–\$249)**

**Padraic Neville**

#### **Potter (\$250–\$499)**

**Fairport Rotary**

#### **Perrin (\$500 and above)**

**Frank and Catherine Angevine**



# Upcoming Events

**Saturday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>**

**from 10:30–11:30 a.m. at the museum**

Children's craft with Suzanne Lee and a visit from  
Santa Claus at 10:30

**Sunday December 4<sup>th</sup>**

**from 2:30–3:30 p.m. at the museum**

Children's author Sally Valentine signs her books:

*The Ghost of the Charlotte Lighthouse*

*Theft at George Eastman House*

*What Stinks? An Adventure in Highland Park*

*Lost at Seabreeze*

*Stormed*

*There Are No Buffalo in Buffalo* (a book of poems)



**Sunday, December 11<sup>th</sup>**

**from 2:30–3:30 p.m. at the museum**

Jeff Miner, author of books for young adults, signs his new book:

*The Sailweaver's Son*

**Tuesday, December 13<sup>th</sup>**

**from 6:00–7:00 p.m. at the museum**

***PHS Yuletide Traditions***

Final bids accepted for silent auction items. Winners will be announced at the conclusion of the evening's program.

**Tuesday, December 13<sup>th</sup>**

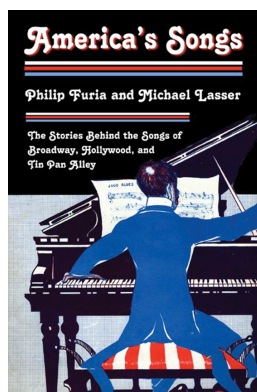
**at 7:00 p.m. at the museum**

**Annual Holiday Party & Program:  
*May Your Days Be Merry and Bright***

Presenter: Michael Lasser

Author Michael Lasser will sign copies of his books from 6:00–7:00 p.m. and following the presentation.

Please bring a dessert to pass.



**Saturday, December 17<sup>th</sup>**

Last day the museum is open for the 2016 season.

**Tuesday, January 17<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 p.m. at the Fairport Public Library**

Program: *A Steamer Trip on Lake Ontario:  
Rochester, NY to Cobourg, ON*

Presenter: Tom Brewer

This program is sponsored by the Fairport Public Library, and RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED. Registration begins December 20<sup>th</sup>. Please call 223-9091 or visit the website: [www.FairportLibrary.org](http://www.FairportLibrary.org) for reservation details.

**Tuesday, February 21<sup>st</sup>, 7:00 p.m. at the museum**

Program: *Rochester Mobilizes for the Great War*

Presenter: Dan Cody

**Saturday, March 4<sup>th</sup>**

**Opening day of museum for the 2017 season**



## ***Yuletide Traditions 2016***

**Silent Auctions Now Through  
December 13**

Visitors to the Fairport Historical Museum have the opportunity to bid on beautiful gift baskets, wreaths and tabletop Christmas trees that have been decorated and donated for silent auctions by members of our community, organizations and businesses.

All proceeds from the silent auctions benefit the Perinton Historical Society (PHS) and support its educational programs and operation of the museum.

Bids are accepted during regular museum hours, with final bids from 6:00–7:00 p.m. on December 13<sup>th</sup>. Winners will be announced following the presentation that evening.

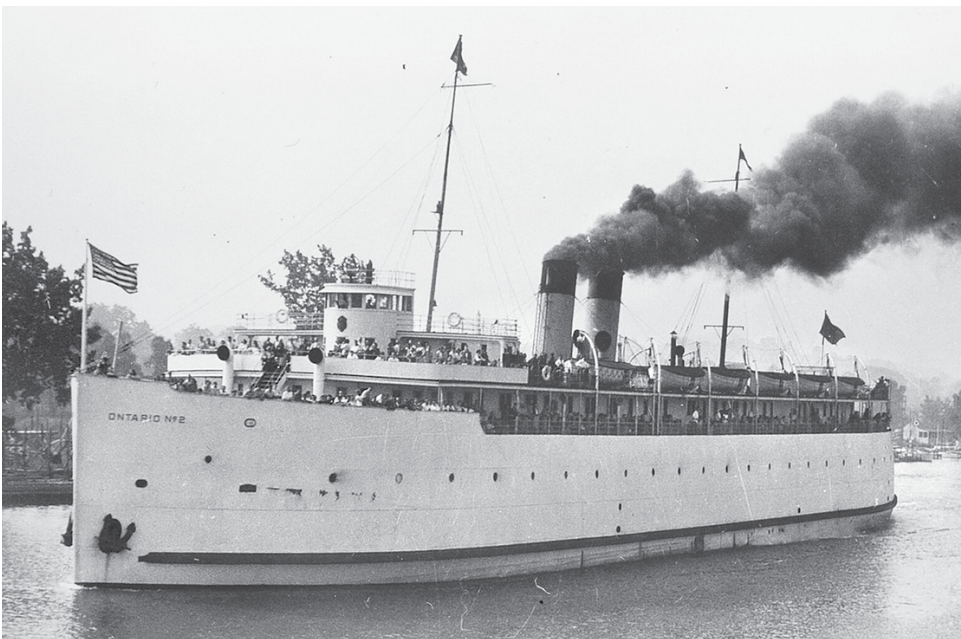




## Santa Claus Has Come to Town!

PHS member Margaret E. “Peg” McGee has generously loaned the museum 70 pieces from her extensive Santa Claus collection, which are on exhibit at the Fairport Historical Museum now through December 17<sup>th</sup>.

Peg’s collection numbers in the hundreds, and items range from decorative Santas to books and toys featuring the jolly old elf. A mechanical Santa on a motorcycle, Peg purchased for her father in the early 1960s, spurred her love for Santa collecting. Although her purchasing pace has slowed due to a lack of space at her home, Peg still enjoys displaying her collection and adding an occasional piece. Peg McGee lives in the house in East Rochester that was originally purchased by her grandparents in about 1920. She attended schools in Rochester and East Rochester and had a long career in the banking industry before retiring. Today, Peg spends her time volunteering for various organizations.



**Tom Brewer to Present—  
A Steamer Trip on Lake Ontario:  
Rochester, NY to Cobourg, ON**

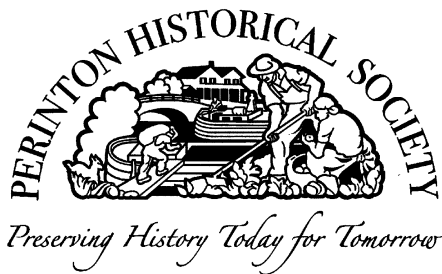
**Tuesday, January 17<sup>th</sup>,  
7:00 p.m. at the Fairport  
Public Library**

Tom Brewer will present a talk with slides on the history of the Ontario Car Ferry Co., Ltd. which operated two ships to carry railroad cars and passengers to and from Canada from 1907 until 1950. It was known locally as the “Cobourg Boat.”

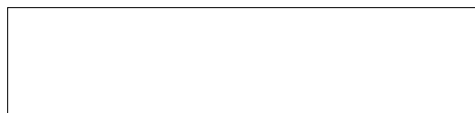
Tom grew up and still lives in Charlotte and is a member of the Charlotte/Genesee Lighthouse Historical Society, Toronto Marine Historical Society and the New York Museum of Transportation.

This program is sponsored by the Fairport Public Library, and reservations are required. Registration begins December 20<sup>th</sup>. Please call 223-9091 or visit [www.FairportLibrary.org](http://www.FairportLibrary.org) for reservation details.

The event is free and is open to the public.



Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
Permit No. 149  
Fairport, NY 14450



An advertisement from  
December of 1941 for the  
florist business of John  
D. Bunyan, located on  
the southwest corner of  
Fairport Road and  
Jefferson Avenue

### *Season's Greetings from the Perinton Historical Society*

The Fairport Historical Museum—18 Perrin Street, Fairport—will be closed from December 18<sup>th</sup> through March 1<sup>st</sup>. It will reopen on Thursday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>. During this period, you may call Vicki Masters Profitt 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)