

Fairport Horseshoe Club: 1932–1937

By Nancy Antell Slaybaugh

Children growing up on the Hannan farm in the 1950s had many options for places to play, including a horseshoe court. The “court” consisted of two stakes pounded into the grass several yards apart and discarded horseshoes were used to throw at the stakes.

My uncles, Howard Whitman and Jesse Hannan, were decent pitchers who could make a ringer with the horseshoe hitting and circling the stake. Most of the kids’ play, however, was won by whoever threw the horseshoe which landed closest to the stake, reinforcing the expression “close only counts in horseshoes.”

This memory was prompted by a 1932 newspaper article thanking Fairport businessmen for their support of the new Fairport Horseshoe Club. I found that this was a members-only club made up of men from all walks of life, who enjoyed competitive horseshoe pitching. It was active during the Great Depression, from 1932 through 1937.

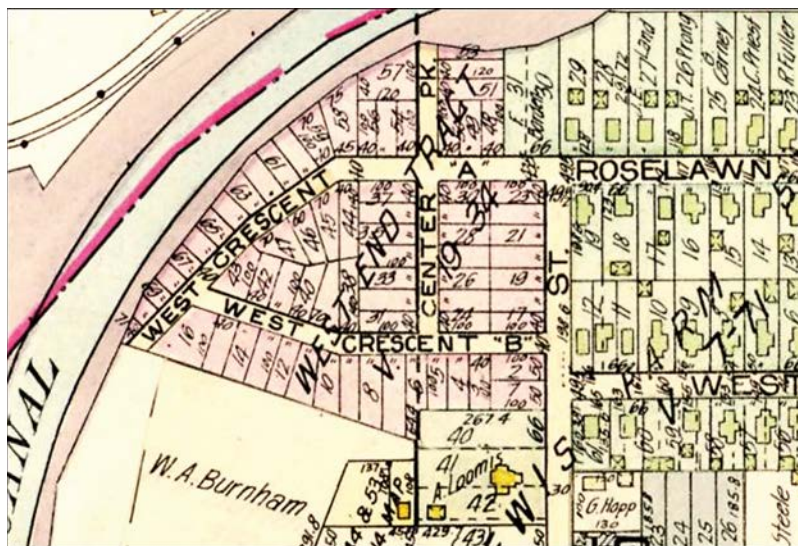
On Labor Day of 1932, a first-ever horseshoe pitching exhibition was held at the Fairport Road farm of horse breeder Carl Leigh. After Leigh and his co-organizer Chauncey Smith advertised the event, approximately 150 area residents arrived at 8:30 a.m. to watch 28 men compete in an elimination tournament. Leigh himself played very well but was eliminated before the final four. The competition was won by Levi Redfield of Manchester, a former state champion horseshoe pitcher who beat William Packard of Macedon.

The success of this event inspired Leigh and Smith, who was a foreman at American Can Company on Parce Avenue, to organize a local competitive men’s horseshoe pitching club. On the evening of October 14, 1932, a group of thirty men gathered at Smith’s East Street home. They chose

the name Fairport Horseshoe Club, set dues at \$1.50 per year, and elected the following officers: Chauncey Smith, president; Carl Leigh, vice president; can factory clerk Clifford P. Wood, secretary; and paperhanger John VanZandt, treasurer.

A newspaper article about the meeting encouraged, “any horseshoe pitcher in the Fairport vicinity wishing to join the club at this rate should have his name in before November 1st as the charter closes at that time.”

Finding a location to build the club’s courts was a challenge. Their first choice was Perinton Park, which was brand new in 1932, but because Fairport Horseshoe was a private club, it was not allowed to



This 1924 map shows the West End Tract, near Nelson Street and Roselawn Avenue. The Horseshoe Club’s courts were built approximately where the street West Crescent B is shown on the map.



Comments from your President

February 14, 2019:

One again I am writing this month's article from my office in the carriage barn, on a sunny winter day, with a projected high in the upper 30s. Let me wish you all a happy Valentine's Day.

~ **Bob Hunt** ~

From Britannica online:
"Valentine's Day, also called

Saint Valentine's Day, is a holiday when lovers express their affection with greetings and gifts. The holiday has origins in the Roman festival of Lupercalia, held in mid-February. The festival, which celebrated the coming of spring included fertility rites and the pairing off of women with men by lottery. At the end of the fifth century, Pope Gelasius I replaced Lupercalia with St. Valentine's Day. It came to be celebrated as a day of romance from about the 14th century."

My December *Historigram* article about Roadmaster and high wheel bicycles resulted in several emails to my inbox. One said the article caused him to remember his similar Roadmaster bike as a youth. The next email came from Patrick Pittinaro, who confirmed it was his father Frank with the high wheel pictured in the article. My recollections of riding my uncle's bike decorated with red, white and blue crepe paper, brought back memories for Patrick of his father, decorating his bike in the same manner. Patrick wrote:

"The high wheel my dad owned had pedals that went up and down, not around like most bikes. Before the war dad fell off the bike and bent one pedal. He put it in the rafters of my grandfather's garage until the mid-1950s when he decided to resurrect it. He had the pedal straightened and new wheels put on. The wheels were solid rubber with a steel band in the middle. Dad "bought" the bike by working on a farm weeding vegetables. The farmer owed him money and dad asked for the bike in lieu of money. I think he was 13, so that would be around 1929. Dad rode it for many years in parades around the Rochester area. The bike was one of his prized possessions. He willed it to his first-born grandson, who ended up being my son, Michael. Michael was the last person to ride the bike, July 4, 2000, in the Fairport Parade."

Next came an email from Michael Pittinaro:

"I recall that day I rode the bike vividly. 'Pa' (as I called my dad's father) had taught me how to ride the bike in a parking lot near his house in Fairport. He taught me getting on and off, and how to ride in circles so that I could keep riding while the parade was stopped, so I didn't have to keep getting on and off. About midway through the parade I was circling and made the turn a bit too tightly causing the bike to



Frank Pittinaro with his high wheel bicycle.
Photo from the Pittinaro collection, Town of Perinton

wobble, lost my balance, fell off and broke the pedal off when it hit the pavement. I remember feeling embarrassed, but more sad that I'd broken what was probably Pa's most cherished possession. I had to walk the bike for the rest of the parade showing the broken pedal, when watchers ask me to climb back on. At the end of the parade, Pa met me and to my surprise didn't seem upset at all. He asked me if I was OK, and I was, just a couple of scrapes. As far as I know, no one has ever ridden the bike since that day. After Pa died, I brought the bike to my home in Maryland and I've kept it inside. I would like to get it out and try riding it again. There is a big rally every year in Frederick, Maryland, that I've been wanting to go to, so maybe this will be the year."

As Paul Harvey used to say, "And now you know the rest of the story."

Don't forget that this is the time of year for buckwheat pancakes at the Cartwright's Maple Tree Inn down in Allegany County, February 12th–April 14th. They are closed on Mondays. I suggest you "Google" for directions.

Thanks for your continued support, it is appreciated, and let's chat again in the next issue.

Bob Hunt, President
585-415-7053
rhunt356.rh@gmail.com



Special Recognition Level Memberships

As of February 14, 2019

Business (\$100)

Barranco's Clothing and Shoes

32 North Main Street, Fairport, NY 14450
Phone: 585-388-1270

Bonnie Wetzel, Howard Hanna Real Estate Services

65 South Main Street, Fairport, NY 14450
Phone: 585-303-1678
Web: TopRochesterAgent.com

Canandaigua National Bank and Trust

72 South Main Street, Canandaigua, NY 14424
Phone: (585) 394-4260
Web: cnbank.com

Fairport Village Inn, Wayne and Patty Beckwith

103 North Main Street, Fairport, NY 14550
Phone: 585-388-0112
Web: thefvi.com

DeLand (\$100–\$249)

None this month

Potter (\$250–\$499)

None this month

Perrin (\$500 and above)

None this month

Perinton Historical Society

Mission

To promote interest in preserving and sharing local history through education and accessibility.

HISTORIGRAM

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Members of the L.J. DeLand Band in 1895 including Charlie Hull, center. *From the collection of the Perinton Historical Society*

The Respect of His Community

By Bill Poray

The respect of peers was a prerequisite to be among the twenty-five charter members of the Hook and Ladder Company of the Fairport Fire Department in 1881. Charlie Hull was a respected man.

He captained the fire company's baseball team, and was at the front of each parade, or in a place of honor on a fire truck. His musical talents were in demand, both as a singer and with the banjo, and his many friends in the Fairport Businessmen's Club were an appreciative audience. At their annual picnic he was always asked to sing, and never disappointed his friends. Unlike virtually all of his customers, friends, and neighbors, Charlie Hull was black. By all accounts he was a respected figure throughout the community, at a time when racial prejudice was driven by an ugly resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan.

Born in 1854 at the dusty crossroads of Berryville, Virginia, little is known of Hull's life prior to his arrival in Fairport in 1870. He first lived in the home of his mentor in the barbering profession, John Parker, another African-American who arrived in Fairport before him. Charlie soon opened a shop of his own, and in a career of over sixty years, operated in many locations, including the Deal Block on North Main Street, West Avenue, and in the Filkins Block on South Main Street.

A skilled boxer, he reluctantly obliged when persistently challenged to a fight. A Rochester newspaper referenced one such episode from the 1880s, when Hull was pressured into fighting a man much bigger than himself. The fight took place at the Fairport Herald newspaper building. Reports were that Hull's challenger was six foot, five inches and about 230 pounds. Said Charlie, "I was a little afraid of him, standing

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Houses are under construction on Roselawn Crescent Tract in this 1956 aerial photograph, in the area formerly known as the West End.

Photo from the Town of Perinton archives

build courts on public land. This appears to be when local businessmen were first asked for help. A month later, after securing permits from the village, the club's fifty members started building their courts on the east side of the canal, across from Perinton Park. This land is today's Roselawn Crescent, but was then the undeveloped West End Tract, with three designated streets, as shown on a 1924 map. The horseshoe courts were built on "West Crescent 'B'" which was described as having "two rows of poplar trees about 75 feet apart ... will be shaded nearly all day" on which the "club expects to erect ten courts with electric lights on five." Eight courts were actually built.

In addition to startup money, local businessmen donated materials such as lumber to build a clubhouse and stone to erect four fireplaces. Club members volunteered their time and equipment, including Carl Leigh, who did the grading, Oscar Williams, carpentry, and electrical work provided by William Holley. The club had sixty paid members by the end of 1932.

The spring of 1933 saw the members finishing the courts so that they could begin practice pitching on Tuesday and Friday evenings. The general public was invited to attend the July 1st formal opening day, when horseshoe pitchers from all over western New York competed and special guest, reigning state champion Robert Brown, gave a horseshoe pitching exhibition.

Before the grand opening, however, a Depression-related incident occurred, of which the club took advantage. Perinton was still very much an agricultural community, including many dairy farms. In 1932, Monroe County dairymen were being paid less than it cost them to produce their milk and in the spring of 1933, milk prices plunged to a low not seen since 1896. A crowd assembled at Doud's Corners (near today's Perinton Wegmans) on Saturday, April 8, 1933 to protest the low prices. Included were some out-of-town men who belonged to the Dairymen's League, a union which was calling for a milk producers' strike. After most local farmers left the site, state troopers showed up to quell this "riot," liberally using their billy clubs on the unarmed men. The incident became known as the "Milk War."

By the end of that first season in October 1933, the club had 81 members and pitchers had won 19 games while losing six. The 1934 season set dues at \$1.00 for returning members, and \$1.50 for new ones. The club played thirty games, losing only twice, to Rochester Lincoln Park and Honeoye Falls.

That year the club also added a separate boys' team with members Gordon Fake, George Gould, Clarence Holtz, William Sanford and "the two Larzelere boys." Their first game against East Rochester was a 16-to-16 tie.

Reports on the 1935 season indicate that by August the club had played nine games, winning seven while losing

to Lincoln Park and Canandaigua. In 1936 and 1937, newspapers carried only notices of the club's annual spring meetings and that dues remained at \$1.00. No reports of games played were found and the club is not mentioned after May 27, 1937.

During its existence, the Fairport Horseshoe Club regularly competed against teams from Phelps, East Rochester, Honeoye Falls, Canandaigua and Brockport as well as Rochester clubs sponsored by Bausch & Lomb and Lincoln Park.

Some of the good Fairport pitchers mentioned were Earl Marlett (playground director), Allan and Arthur Steffen (H.L. Steffen Co.), Russell Welkley (bookkeeper), Clifford Ellis (auto repair), and Rev. Kenneth Estey (Baptist minister).

FAIRPORT HERALD-MAIL

JUNE 15, 1933

Milk War Veterans Pitching Horseshoes

The horseshoe pitchers will clash this week Friday night, when the farm boys come to town to pitch against the town boys. The town boys expect some very stiff opposition from these hardened veterans of the recent milk war and the game should be very spirited. While Chief Main will be on hand to keep order, the veterans have agreed to leave all rubber hose, lead pipe and other implements of the milk war at home on this particular occasion.

The courts are in good shape and should be completed within a week. Men from out of town say Fairport Horseshoe club has the finest courts they have ever seen.

In next week's issue of this paper a complete list of all business men who have donated material or taken membership tickets and all other members of the Horseshoe club will be printed.

FAIRPORT HERALD-MAIL

July 27, 1933

Towners Take Game From Milk War Vets

The milk war veterans came into town last Friday for a big battle, and got it, when the town boys gave them a good trimming on the horseshoe courts, score 20 to 16.

The veterans didn't have the punch they had at Doud's Corners some time ago and after the game they went home limping.

Bill Jewett, captain of the veterans, was held breathless for 50 points by Mr. Shilling, who is nearly 70 years old, and was Bill's face red?

Carl Leigh disappeared soon after the game and hasn't been seen on the courts since.

As seen in the articles (above and left), the Fairport Horseshoe Club members had fun with the "milk war," by organizing games in June and July between club members divided into two teams. The teams were dubbed the "milk war veterans" and "town boys."

Exactly when the Fairport Horseshoe Club disbanded is unknown. It is estimated that today millions of American men and women still play competitive horseshoes. Apparently, it just hasn't been done in Fairport since the 1930s, a period when the game was also called "barnyard golf"—a more appropriate name for the game, as it was played by children on the farm in the 1950s.



For information on becoming a member of the Perinton Historical Society, visit our website at—
www.PerintonHistoricalSociety.org.

Upcoming Events

Saturday, March 2

from 10:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

The museum opens for the season

Saturday, March 2

from 10:30–11:30 a.m.

At the Fairport Historical Museum
Children's craft hosted by PHS
member Suzanne Lee

Tuesday, March 19 at 7:00 p.m.

At the Fairport Historical Museum
Program: Mary Jewett Telford,
Civil War Nurse
Presenter: Vicki Masters Profitt

Tuesday, April 16 at 7:00 p.m.

At the Fairport Historical Museum
Program: Buffalo Soldiers
Presenters: Bing Reaves,
Danny Wyatt and Charles Price

Tuesday, May 21 at 6:00 p.m.

At the Perinton Park Pavilion
Event: PHS Annual Meeting
and Picnic

Tuesday, June 11 at 7:00 p.m.

At the Fairport Historical Museum
Bushnell's Basin Cemetery Tour

"Charlie Hull" continued from page 3

there so tall, but I managed to knock him out with an uppercut."

Charlie Hull and his wife Carrie owned a small house at 11 Filkins Street, the relocated former chapel of the old First Baptist Church. Charlie and Carrie had twenty six years together, until his death in April of 1936.

In his sixty-six years in Fairport, Charlie Hull received the respect that he earned and deserved. And that is how it should be.



Mary Jewett Telford—Civil War Nurse

As the Civil War raged, Mary Jewett fought her own battle to become a nurse to the soldiers. Despite being turned away by Dorothea Dix and the U.S. Sanitary Commission, Mary persevered and was commissioned a nurse at Hospital No. 8 in Nashville, Tennessee. This determination to help others led to an extraordinary life of service. In 1883, Mary became a charter member of the Woman's Relief Corps, an organization dedicated to aiding Civil War soldiers and their families. By writing short stories, editing various publications and traveling the country speaking for temperance, Mary was able to support her husband Jacob Telford, a soldier who had been severely wounded at the battle of Stones River. Mary's service to others ended only with her death in 1906, but her legacy lives on in the veteran's relief organization she helped to found.

Vicki Masters Profitt discovered Mary Jewett Telford in 2009 while researching the Civil War veterans of Perinton. Vicki's Illuminated History blog, www.IlluminatedHistory.com, shines a light on the lives of these local heroes. Vicki is the director of the Fairport Historical Museum and also serves as vice-president of the Perinton Historical Society.

Treasurer's Report

By Linda Wiener

The following is a summary of the financial status of the Perinton Historical Society for the fiscal year, which ended August 31, 2018:

Income	
Membership Dues	\$ 14,015
Grants	4,269
Donations	8,108
Gift Shop	2,216
Special Events	3,416
Miscellaneous	1,440
Interest Income	60
Total Income	\$ 33,524
Expense	
Museum Operations	\$ 4,728
Building	9,135
Gift Shop	650
Museum Collections	5,638
Historigram	2,213
Office Expense	3,458
Website	89
Insurance	1,291
House Tour	996
Special Events	456
Membership Programs	698
	400
Total Expense	\$ 29,752
Net Income/(Loss)	\$ <u>3,772</u>
Net Assets:	
Cash & Equivalents	\$ 50,633
Gift Shop Inventory	7,182
Community Foundation Funds	88,744
Total Assets	\$ <u>146,559</u>
Sales Tax Payable	\$ 83
Deferred Revenue	8,976
Temporarily Restricted Funds	88,744
Unrestricted Net Assets	<u>48,756</u>
Net Assets	\$ <u>146,559</u>

Notes:

Cash & equivalents include funds in bank accounts and CDs that are available in one year or less. Of this \$40,381, as compared to \$39,234 on 8/31/17, was held in checking and money- market accounts. The remainder is in a CD. The Community Foundation Funds are available upon written approval from the PHS Board of Directors. These funds are considered long-term investments. The value of these funds was \$88,744 on 8/31/18 as compared to \$86,963 on 8/31/17. The interest and dividends earned are returned to PHS annually in the form of a grant which totaled \$4,269 for 2018 and \$4,081 for 2017. Deferred revenue is exclusively related to 2018-19 membership dues received prior to 9/1/18. These funds are recorded on the Balance Sheet at year-end. On 9/1/18 the balance is reported as Membership Dues income for 2018-19.

The Society's primary sources of income are from membership dues, grants and donations. Primary expenses include general operations of the museum, gift shop and membership programs (e.g. *Historigram*, annual meeting, house tour).

Income increases over 2017 included membership dues \$547, donations \$1,786 and miscellaneous income \$1,110 which was primarily related revenue from an auctioned item. Decreases in revenue included grants \$5,812 and gift shop sales \$421. Other variances from 2017 were not significant.

Expense variances included a decrease in gift shop cost of goods sold of \$2,357. Increases in expense included museum collections \$3,396 primarily related to acquisitions and building \$5,300 which included an engineering assessment and floor and gutter cleaning. Although office expense remained basically unchanged from 2017, a decrease in website expense \$1,431 was offset by legal fees of \$1,950 for the IRS required revision of our bylaws.

PHS files and pays New York State sales tax annually related to gift shop sales, files 1099s to report payments to certain vendors that exceed \$600 and files an Informational Return (990-N) with the IRS. PHS is registered with the New York States Charities Bureau but is exempt from filing an annual return.



All Bread
12¢
Per Loaf

Webb's West Avenue Market
Fairport, N. Y.

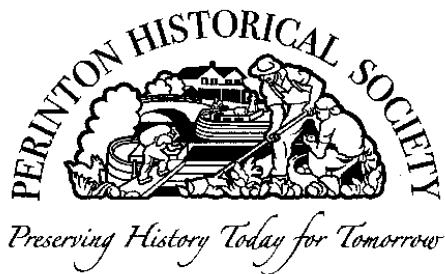
Golden Shield
Baking Powder
Corn Starch
and Soda

We are ready to fill orders
Bell Phone 240-R Home Phone 139-A
Monroe County Chemical Co.
Fairport, New York

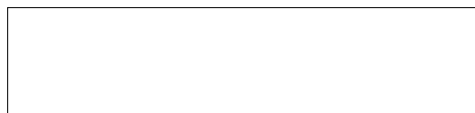
Bert Brownell
Cattle Dealer

—Located at—
15 Woodlawn Ave., Fairport
Bell Phone

Advertisements in Fairport newspapers from one hundred years ago this month



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



The ash tree behind the museum suffered the fate of many, the victim of the emerald ash borer, a destructive beetle. Unfortunately, the only real option was to have the tree removed, which was accomplished recently by our friends at the Village of Fairport.

We look forward to an increase in sun, sure to benefit our gardens and lawn.

Photo by Bill Poray

Fairport Historical Museum, 18 Perrin Street, Fairport, NY 14450

The museum opens to the public for the season on Saturday, March 2nd. This year, the museum offers additional hours on Saturdays, from 9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m. It will also be open Sundays and Tuesdays from 2:00–4:00 p.m. Free admission. Group tours, presentations and special projects are by appointment. Please call and leave a message at **585-223-3989**.

www.PerintonHistoricalSociety.org