

*4th in the Series: Notable Boats Through Fairport*

## Tug Urger—Flagship of the Erie Canal

*By Keith Boas*

*The historic 119 year old boat, Tug Urger, sits in a drydock at Waterford at the eastern end of the Erie Canal. For more than 25 years, she traveled much of each boating season visiting communities along the canal, often including Fairport.*

**T**ug Urger, first named H.J. Dornbos, was built in 1901 by Johnson Brothers Shipyard and Boiler Works of Ferrysburg, Michigan. Purchased for \$20,000 by the New York State Barge Canal System in 1922 and renamed Tug Urger, she was in regular use on the canal until 1986. In 1991, she started her second career of being a floating classroom for fourth grade students, stopping at an average of 45 canal communities each season. By 2017, more than 100,000 students had boarded her for a unique educational experience.

But now the Urger, being old and more than a bit neglected, is in a sorry state of repair. Since 2017, there has been much debate as to the future of the tug and several other aging state-owned boats on the canal. Some Albany officials wanted to scuttle the Urger off the shore of Long Island to join other sunken vessels to form an ocean reef. Others had a different idea, with canal authorities producing plans to make the Urger a landlocked display at a Thruway rest stop. Then the Preservation League of New York entered the debate, launching a campaign to keep the Urger afloat. According to its spokeswoman, Colleen Ryan, “The league is also urging the state to throw open its planning process on the fates of the other canal vessels that it is planning to sink in the ocean.”

Adding to the dispute, the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor (ECNHC) raised concerns about the state making decisions behind closed doors and too quickly for anyone to object. “We do not have an issue with the reef, or with



Tug Urger greets Fairport fourth grade school children and their teachers on October 15th, 2015. Photo by Keith Boas



Tug Urger, a few years ago at Lock 28B, Newark

Photo by Galen Frysinger

the idea that some canal vessels can be used to form it,” said Jean Mackay, communications director for the ECNHC, which is funded by the National Park Service. “Our concerns are about the state’s historic canal fleet and having some input,” Mackay said. “Some of these vessels may be fine for scuttling, but there may be others that people really care about.”

*Continued on page 4*



## Comments from your President

**S**eptember 14, 2020: I am writing to you today from my office in our townhouse. Cindy and I are still being cautious on what we do and where we go. We have been doing some outdoor dining, which we feel is safe when the restaurants follow the recommended safety precau-

~ **Bob Hunt** ~

tions. We like to support our local businesses when we can during this difficult time for them.

As we packed for our recent move, I came across an old scrapbook from my dad's brother, my Uncle Lynn. Their father, my grandfather, was the station master for the Pennsylvania Railroad in Rock Stream, New York, where the family lived. Rock Stream is located just north of the Schuyler/Yates county line, on the west side of Seneca Lake. Uncle Lynn was born in 1899 and graduated from Watkins Glen High School in 1919 or 1920. Well, in this scrapbook were two large wool Ws, one royal blue and one cardinal red. I believe the school colors are the same today. Also included were the following items of historical interest:

- school play programs covering about five years
- school dance programs
- dance cards that young ladies would carry for young men to sign on for a dance
- menus from restaurants in the area
- invitations to holiday parties, such as birthdays, Easter and Halloween



So a couple of weeks ago, we headed south with the scrapbook in tow to the Schuyler County Historical Society. SCHS is located in a building called the Red Brick Tavern, at 108 North Catherine Street, Montour Falls, NY. (See photo above.) The director, Glenda Gephart, was delighted to

receive the scrapbook, with many of the names in the programs recognized as long time Schuyler County families. While there, we spent about an hour enjoying the museum, which covered two floors and had an outbuilding with an agriculture display and tools.

Now, back to Uncle Lynn. He was an excellent baseball player, usually pitching, so there were several clippings of games he played in. At some point, I believe in the early 1920s, he went to New York City, and played for the Dairymen's League. He must have gotten hurt, for there were no clippings from New York City. He did become involved with youth baseball as an umpire. He was also a loyal supporter of the New York Yankees, and knew many of the players and scouts. A young player caught his eye while umpiring and as a result, Uncle Lynn contacted one of the Yankee scouts. He told the scout he should get this young man signed to a contract as soon as possible. Whitey Ford was the young man, who played his entire 16-year career with the Yankees. Elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1974, Whitey Ford was a two time Cy Young award winner, ten times an All-Star selection, and played in six World Series championships.

Uncle Lynn was trained as a bookkeeper and, for many years, lived in the Bronx. He worked for a coal company in the city, and met and married an AT&T telephone operator named Natalie. He was a world class trap shooter and a world record holder in benchrest shooting.

Uncle Lynn had a summer home built near the old homestead in Rock Stream, where he would spend several weeks during the summer. It eventually became his home when he returned permanently in the early 1950s. He always loved hunting and shooting, and shot over 18,000 woodchucks in Schuyler and Yates counties. There are dozens of fascinating stories about Uncle Lynn and Aunt Natalie, and I should put them in writing at some point.

The full moon we experienced on August 3rd was called the Sturgeon Moon, named by Native Americans because the fish was easily caught this time of year in the Great Lakes and other major bodies of water. Today they are considered a threatened and vulnerable species. This moon is also called the Green Corn Moon. The September full moon fell on the 2nd and was called the Fruit Moon, the Corn Moon, or the Barley Moon. October 1st will bring us the Harvest Moon, which is the full moon closest to the autumn equinox. October will also have a Blue Moon, which is the name given to a second full moon in a month, happening about once every three years. Thus, giving us the saying, "Once in a Blue Moon."

Thanks for your support of PHS, it is appreciated, chat with you again next month.

Bob Hunt, President

585-415-7053 ~ rhunt356.rh@gmail.com

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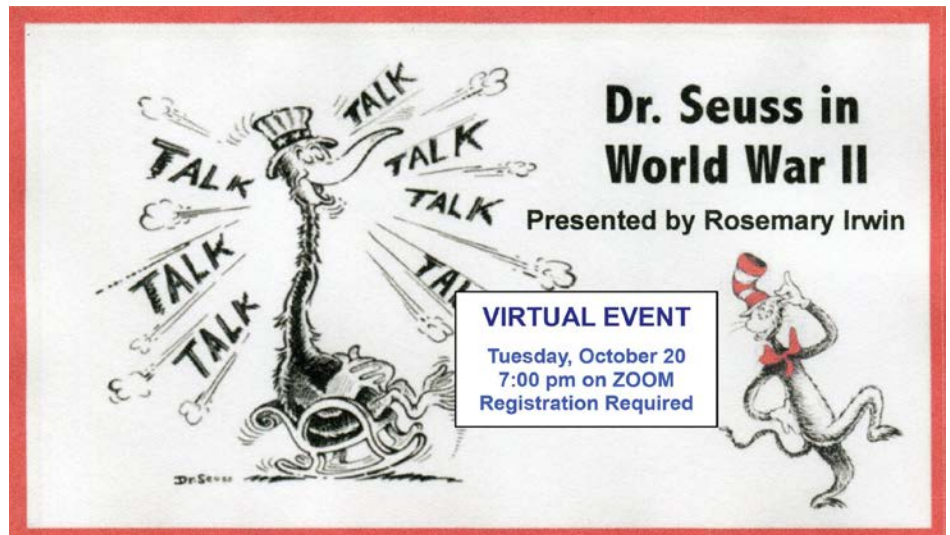
## Dr. Seuss in World War II

VIRTUAL EVENT  
REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED

*Presented by  
Rosemary Irwin*

Tuesday, October 20  
7:00 p.m.

**LIVE ON ZOOM**



Was Yertle the Turtle inspired by Hitler? Theodor Geisel, aka Dr. Seuss, created cartoons to convince the U.S. to join World War II and later to communicate important truths to the Allied troops. We know Dr. Seuss for the Grinch, but before his popular children's stories were adapted for television and movies, he created documentaries for the U.S. military for which he won two Academy Awards. What Geisel created before and during World War II changed hearts and minds then and were the forerunners to our most beloved children classics. Hear this hidden, important story of Dr. Seuss in World War II.

Rosemary Irwin lectures throughout our local area on topics as varied as health care, history, art, and technology.

She has also facilitated classes created by Harvard, Stanford, and Humanities New York, translating complex material into lively non-academic discussions. Since 2012, her mission has been "to give lifetime learners a reason to be in the room."

This event is free and open to the public. It is co-sponsored by the Perinton Historical Society and the Fairport Public Library. Registration is required through the Fairport Public Library and is limited. To register, visit: <https://fairportlibrary.libcal.com/event/6923113> or call the public library at 585-223-9091. Registration spaces are limited for the ZOOM presentations. We intend to record the presentations and make them available to PHS members. Additional information to come.

## *Yuletide Traditions* Canceled

The Perinton Historical Society has made the difficult decision to cancel our annual *Yuletide Traditions* fundraiser this year. We could not see a good way to safely proceed with the event during the pandemic. We look forward to a new and improved *Yuletide Traditions* event in 2021.

We greatly appreciate our PHS members who renew their memberships, purchase unique items in the gift shop and volunteer on committees or in the museum. Your monetary and time donations assist us with the operation of the Fairport Historical Museum and allow the society to continue its stewardship of local history.

## Upcoming Programs & Events

**Tuesday, October 20 at 7:00 p.m. on ZOOM**

Program: Dr. Seuss in World War II

Presenter: Rosemary Irwin

Registration required

**Tuesday, November 17 at 7:00pm on ZOOM**

Program: TBD

**Tuesday, December 8 at 7:00 p.m. on ZOOM**

Program: Decking the Halls to Shopping Malls: American Christmas Traditions and How They Grew

Presenter: Chris Bensch

Registration required

**Please note that there will be no in-person Tuesday presentations at the museum for the rest of 2020 due to the pandemic. We are partnering with the Fairport Public Library to offer ZOOM presentations instead. Please see each ZOOM presentation listing for information about registration, which is required.**



A smiling Urger deck hand welcomes fourth graders who were on a field trip to tour the tug in September of 2012. Photos by Keith Boas

*Below are portions of the New York State bill addressing the importance of Tug Urger*

The Urger...is one of the oldest operable tugboats in the country. The Urger moved dredges, barges, and scows primarily on the Champlain Canal and Eastern portion of the Erie Canal, from 1922 through 1986, when she retired from heavy work. She returned to active service in 1991 and for the next 25 years served as flagship and travelling ambassador for the New York State Canal System.

The Urger was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2001 for her long and historic association with the development of New York State's twentieth century canals and as a representative of evolving twentieth century marine technology. Urger's significance is derived from her lengthy career of canal operation as well as her service to communities across New York State as an educational (teaching tug) tool.

The State Canal System was designated a National Historic Landmark in 2016 due to its span, scope, and historic integrity. The historic vessels related to the NYS Canal System (including the Urger) are a significant component of the system's integrity. The National Historic Landmark designation recognizes the importance of the canal fleet and canal vessels to the New York State Canal System. For these reasons and the historical significance and contributions of the Urger over time, we should consider this designation as the State of New York's Official Tug.

Finally, in February of 2019, the State Senate, apparently having listened to those concerned, amended a law in relation to designating the Urger as the official tugboat—the flagship of the New York State Canal Corporation (see portion of the State bill in the box, left column).

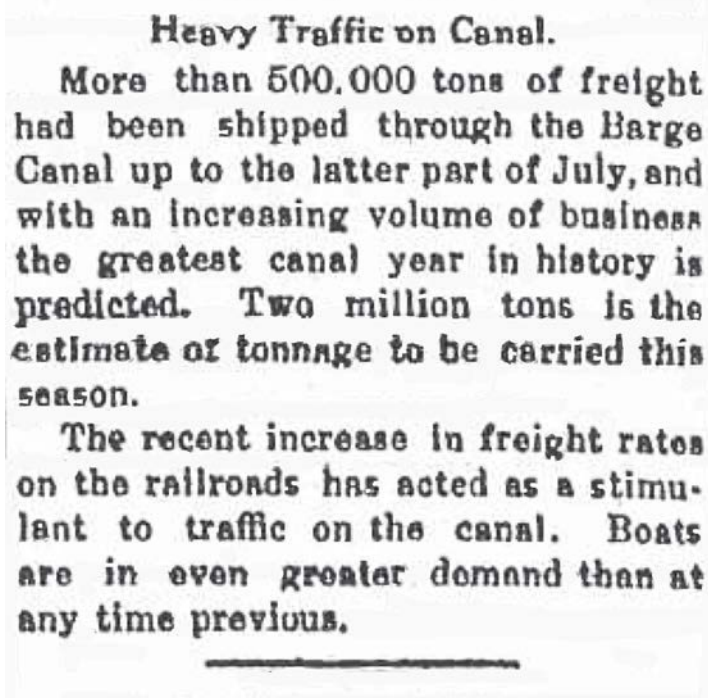
That's the good news. The bad news? The Urger currently sits in dry dock at Waterford, waiting for the New York State Canal Corp. to decide her fate. Engineering studies have indicated that repairs would be very costly. So what's the future of the Urger? Unknown at this point.

References: Albany Times Union, NYS Museum, NYS Senate Bill S3790, Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, and Wikipedia



## ~100 Years Ago~

*From the Fairport Herald, September 22, 1920*



But now, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we see few tugs on the canal, as commercial traffic has been almost completely replaced by pleasure boating.



Photo by Keith Boas in 2017

# Special Recognition Level Memberships

As of September 16, 2020

## Business (\$100)

**Lucien A. Morin II, Partner, McConville Considine Cooman and Morin, Attorneys and Counselors at Law**  
100 Packetts Landing, Fairport, NY 14450  
Phone: 585-223-2170, Web: [lmorin@mccmlaw.com](mailto:lmorin@mccmlaw.com)

**Barranco's Clothing and Shoes**  
32 North Main Street, Fairport, NY 14450  
Phone: 585-388-1270

**Fairport Village Inn, Wayne and Patty Beckwith**  
103 North Main Street, Fairport, NY 14550  
Phone: 585-388-0112, Web: <http://thefvi.com>

**Robert Ruhland (aka Mr. Perinton)**  
**Keller Williams Realty**  
2000 Winton Road S. Bldg. 1, Rochester, NY 14618  
Phone: 585-303-6607, Web: [bobruhland.yourkwagent.com](http://bobruhland.yourkwagent.com)

**The Inn on Church**  
11 West Church Street, Fairport, NY 14450  
Phone: 585-678-1106  
Web: [www.facebook.com/theinnonchurch](http://www.facebook.com/theinnonchurch)

## DeLand (\$100-\$249)

Heidi Gilmore  
In honor of my grandparents, Kenneth and Grace Phillips and parents, Sue (Phillips) and Alban Albert  
Fritz and Georgia May  
Padraic Neville  
Timothy J Slisz  
Chris & LuAnn Trapatsos

## Potter (\$250-\$499)

Robert and Cindy Hunt  
Anonymous (1)

## Perrin (\$500 and above)

None this month

## Memorial Donations

In Memory of Mae Masciangelo:  
Charles Barranco  
Bill and Irene Poray  
Glenn and Shirley Renner Roat  
Anonymous (1)

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Bob Hunt awarding the PHS Volunteer of the Year honor to Catherine Angevine in 2016.

Catherine, very simply, got things done: She led the initiative which resulted in the former Fairport Public Library being added to the National Register of Historic Places. She also successfully obtained a grant from the William C. Pomeroy Foundation for the commemorative historic marker on the front lawn of the museum.



Long-serving board member George Wolf: George held the office of president of PHS fifty years ago.

# Leadership Changes at PHS

The Board of Trustees would like to thank George T. Wolf and Catherine Angevine for their extensive service to the Perinton Historical Society.

George has retired from the board after many decades, having served in various capacities, including president, over the years.

Catherine is also past president and has served several years as Property and Technology Committee Chairperson before her retirement.

Both George and Catherine have long histories of serving the community. PHS is thankful to have had their guidance and support.

Looking ahead, we welcome John Laurence to the board as trustee. John is a long-time Fairport and Perinton resident and is Volunteer Coordinator at the Fairport Historical Museum.

## Perinton Historical Society

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

<i>President</i>	Bob Hunt
<i>Vice President</i>	Vicki Profitt
<i>Secretary</i>	Suzanne Lee
<i>Treasurer</i>	Linda Wiener
<i>Communications</i>	Jane DeMeis

### TRUSTEES

Keith Boas	John Laurence
Lucy McCormick	Bill Poray
Jim Unckless	Matt Wells
David Wild	

### MUSEUM

<i>Director</i>	Vicki Profitt
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# Is There a Doctor in the House?

*By Lucy McCormick*

*The 2020 PHS House Tour was canceled because of the pandemic, but members can look forward to the 2021 tour to feature South Main Street. This month's Historigram invites you to meet two former residents of South Main Street.*

## Dr. Sophia Howard 1844–1893

“So she lived, healing the sick, helping the poor, tiding over ‘close times’ in this or that charitable institution, helping young worthy girls to schooling that would fit them for usefulness, giving time, talents, money, to many a good cause.” This characterization of Dr. Sophia Howard was part of a memorial tribute written by Mrs. H. R. Edgett, a well-known Fairport resident and contributor of many articles to the press. It was published in the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle on March 4, 1893.

The daughter of John and Louisa Howard, Sophia grew up at 70 South Main Street. In the 1830s, her father had

moved to Fairport from Bridgewater, Massachusetts, locating here with his brothers and elderly father. Also relocated to Fairport was their wagon manufacturing business. The 1870 census listed Sophia Howard at age 26 as a teacher at the Howland School at Springport, Union Springs, Cayuga County, a school for Quaker girls. In May 1876, the Fairport Herald lauded the newly opened Canandaigua School for Young Ladies, also known as Granger Place, and listed Sophia Howard as a faculty member.

Sophia Howard developed an interest in medicine after teaching. In 1879, she graduated from Philadelphia Medical College, a renowned school for female students, and worked for a time in Boston hospitals, gaining medical experience. She was named a member of the American Society of Microscopists in 1881, the third female member of the Society. According to Mrs. Edgett, her professors and fellow students continually observed in her an “intensity of interest in the science of medicine, and a sympathy with every individual case of suffering within her reach.”

Howard returned to Fairport to help her brother care for his children after his wife passed, and began her lecturing career. She spoke before the Juvenile Temperance Union in Fairport about the effects of alcohol on the stomach “and its neighbors.” She held the distinction of seeking the elected office of trustee in the Fairport School elections of 1881. Women were allowed to vote and to run for office for the first time in this local election. Howard lost but was a pioneer in this arena, as women did not gain the right to vote nationally for another 39 years, with the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment. Traveling abroad with her brother, Howard



This 1882 photograph of members of the Howard family includes Doctor Sophia Howard, center-front, about 38 years old at the time. This is the only photograph of Doctor Howard in the collection of the Perinton Historical Society.



70 South Main Street in the 1880s and in 2020

70 South Main Street, presently the Fairport Federal Credit Union, served as a physician's office and residence for 84 consecutive years, from 1901 to 1985. Two of the physicians connected with this address are Dr. Sophia Howard and Dr. Frances Hulbert White.

studied diseases and methods of treatment in the hospitals of Norway, Germany, Italy, France, Denmark, and other countries, before again returning to Fairport. In 1883, Howard visited Philadelphia, where she had pursued her medical studies and was afterward associated with the faculty. After her visit, she returned to her patients in Fairport.

Sophia Howard left Fairport in 1884 to pursue her career in Auburn, NY, remaining there about seven years. She also held the position as physician of the Granger Place School at the Granger Homestead in Canandaigua. She practiced medicine in Auburn until 1891 and returned again to Fairport to practice her profession and help care for her mother after her father passed.

In November 1892, Dr. Howard became seriously ill, and her brother was sent for from California. She recovered but fell ill again early in 1893 and passed away on February 23<sup>rd</sup>. She was buried in Fairport's Greenvale Cemetery. To her family and friends, Sophia's death brought to mind words she spoke concerning the death of a friend but were now an appropriate tribute to her: "It is not true that the world goes on the same after we are gone. There is a vacancy, large or small, according to the space we occupied. Action has ceased, but its effect moves on in countless waves of motion, influencing for good or evil."

## Dr. Frances Hulbert White 1869–1943

### 70 and 126 South Main Street

Frances Hulbert was born in Shelborn, Vermont in 1869. She graduated from Michigan University in June of 1896, and came to Fairport in October of the same year, at age 27. The young physician first started practicing medicine in a home at the site of the former post office, later RC Shaheen Paints, at 121 South Main Street. She remained there for four years. In August of 1890, Frances married a university classmate, Dr. Charles E. White, from Waterville, NY, at a ceremony in Minneapolis, Minnesota. They celebrated their marriage at a reception a few days later at the home of a Fairport friend, Mrs. Butts. Afterward, Charles closed his practice in Waterville, NY, and the couple moved to Rome, NY, his birthplace, to open a joint practice. In November they moved to Fairport and rented a portion of the home of Dr. J. F. Tubbs at the corner of South Main and Pleasant streets. They practiced there for over a year before purchasing the home across the street, 70 South Main Street.

A "competent, trustworthy physician and a true and understanding friend" is how the Fairport Herald-Mail of November of 1939 described Dr. Frances Hulbert White. She practiced medicine for forty-seven years in Fairport. Her professional memberships included the Monroe County Medical Society and the New York State Medical Society. Doctor Howard was the only female physician in Fairport for several years. She was appointed in 1905 as one of the visiting physicians in the newly dedicated Baptist Home of Monroe County, later renamed the Fairport Baptist Home.



126 South Main Street, the final home and office of Doctor Frances Hulbert White.

The Perinton Historical Society has no photographs of Dr. Frances Howard White. This image on the left is reproduced from a 1939 news item in the *Fairport Herald-Mail*.



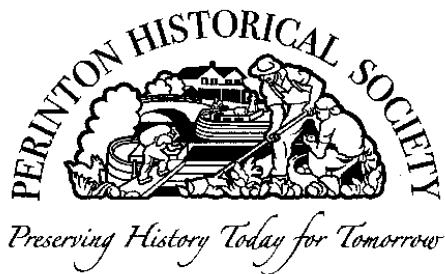
In the fall of 1914, she joined with all the doctors in Fairport in raising the rate for medical care in the village to \$.75 cents for office calls, \$1.50 for home visits in the village, and \$15 for maternity cases. In 1926, Doctor Howard and other village physicians strongly advocated for parents to immunize their children against the deadly disease of diphtheria. Frances also supported her community in other ways. She was a member of the Fairport Historical Club, serving as its librarian and participating in a debate on woman suffrage in 1914. She was active in the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, often hosting this group in her home. She was a member of the Congregational Church and the Order of the Eastern Star.

Frances and Charles hosted a grand home wedding for their daughter on January 21, 1926. Eighty-five guests witnessed the marriage of Frances Louise and Robert Clifford Hubbard of East Orange, NJ, the ceremony performed beneath an arbor of flowering vines in the living room. The house was decorated throughout with roses and candles. Dinner was catered, and the orchestra played through dinner and afterward.

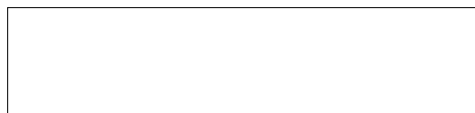
Their 70 South Main Street home was rather primitive by today's standards, lacking a furnace and indoor plumbing. They cooked on a coal stove. Most unusually, however, the home was bought with the stipulation that the resident living there, Mrs. Louise Howard (mother of Sophia Howard) was to remain in the home and be cared for by the new owners. Frances and her husband, Charles, practiced together at 70 South Main until he died in 1933. Subsequently, Frances sold the home to Dr. J. N. McEachren and moved her practice to 126 South Main Street.

Dr. Frances Hulbert White died in 1943 and was buried in Mount Pleasant Cemetery. Fairport was always dear to her heart, as evident in her words to a *Fairport Herald* reporter in November 1939: "I liked Fairport the minute I saw it and I made up my mind that here's where I wanted to practice, here's where I wanted to live, and here's where I wanted to die."





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



**R**ehabilitation of the Main Street lift bridge in Fairport continues, as seen in this photo from September 17th. Reopening of the bridge is anticipated for November of this year.

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

The museum is open to the public on Saturdays, from 9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m. and 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](http://www.PerintonHistoricalSociety.org)**