

Optimism and Perseverance

In the depths of the Great Depression, a Fairport dentist addressed the monthly meeting of Fairport Rotary, with a message of determined positivity:

“My eyes are as good as they ever were, the landscape and sunset are as glorious as ever, the sense of hearing is still unimpaired. Better to have plain food and an appetite than to sit down to a banquet and no appetite. The Depression has not lowered the value of a single friend. Neighbors still greet us in the same old cordial way. Business associates still believe in us, and our sons hold us in high esteem. The wife’s welcome at the close of the day has not depreciated in the least and our daughters continue to lavish their affections upon us with the same old extravagance.

This Depression has cost us some of the things we created but it has robbed us of none of our power to create. We may lose some beautiful things, but we have not lost our love of the beautiful.”

Dr. James W. Welch, April 18, 1932



(For more on Dr. Welch, see page 4.)



Greetings from your President

~ **Bob Hunt** ~

January 14, 2021: Well, I'm not in the carriage barn or at 44 Georgetown Lane, but instead in Cocoa, Florida, overlooking the Indian River. We have rented a home for three months, and will be back in Fairport in mid-April. We purchased over \$300 worth of food on Monday so that we don't have to go to the store

often and can continue to hunker down, as we were doing in Fairport. Our bicycles are with us, so we can ride and canvas the area. The beaches here are quite firm so riding on the beach is possible. We are just south of the Kennedy Space Center, and hope to see a liftoff or two while here.

It's a new year and I certainly hope we can get vaccinated and return to a more normal lifestyle. We can get the vaccine in Florida but the wait time in lines is horrendous, so we will get our shots when we return to New York in April. We have registered online and with the projected 14 week wait time, we should be back at about the right time.

Who knows what a Quadrillion is? It is 1 followed by 15 zeros. 1,000,000,000,000,000. December's issue of National Geographic magazine has a very interesting article on the Great Lakes. They contain 21% of the world's fresh water or six quadrillion gallons. If you could spread that much water over the lower 48 states, the water would be 9.5 feet deep. The article put forth a warning about the stress the lakes are undergoing, due to the activities of people. The stresses come from farming, invasive species, manufacturing, wastewater and storm water discharge, climate change and navigation.

There is intensive mono-cropping surrounding the lakes, which is growing the same crop, mainly corn and soybeans, on the same fields year after year. To obtain the desired yield with this method requires tremendous applications of fertilizer, some of which gets into the lakes from runoff during spring thaws and rainstorms. The phosphorus causes massive algal bloom in the lakes. Many of the farms are located where they are because of the lakes, as 400 million gallons of water are pumped from them daily for irrigation. The region supports 25% of Canada's agriculture production and 7 % in the United States.

Our Lake Ontario is stressed by urban development, storm water and sewage pollution and the process of electricity generation. Power plants use the lake water for cooling, which kills many larval fish. Invasive species have upended the food web to the detriment of native species. Many of these arrive in the ballast water of freighters. Lake Ontario has 104 non-native species.

The surface of Lake Superior is 601 feet above sea level. It takes decades for a drop of rain from Duluth, Minnesota to travel the 2,340-mile route to the Atlantic Ocean.

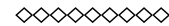
What gets shipped on the seaway? Canada relies heavily on the St. Lawrence Seaway for domestic and international trade, principally agricultural products. The U.S. uses the seaway mainly to export mineral products, such as iron ore and coal.

There is a lot more information about the Great Lakes in the December issue of National Geographic magazine. You can borrow a copy from the Fairport Library.

Reservations have been made for use of the pavilion building at Perinton Park for our annual meeting and picnic, scheduled for Tuesday, June 15th. Dinner will be served at 6: p.m., but come a bit early for some fellowship. Normally scheduled in May, I moved it to June in the hope that we will be vaccinated and thus safer to get together. Please put our annual meeting on your calendar.

Happy New Year, please stay safe and healthy. We will chat again next month.

Bob Hunt, President
Rhunt356.rh@gmail.com
585-415-7053



Special Recognition Level Memberships—As of January 16, 2021

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

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 14450
Phone: 585-388-0112, Web: 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

DeLand (\$100-\$249)

Carol Ann Britt
Barry Childs and Kathleen Cloonan
Lucy & John McCormick

Potter (\$250-\$499)

Fairport Historical Club
Bill and Pat May

Perrin (\$500 and above)

Anonymous (1)

Upcoming Programs & Events

Monday, February 1 at 11:00 a.m.
VIRTUAL PRESENTATION

Program: Abandoned: The Untold Story of the Orphan Trains

Presenter: Michael T. Keene

Note: This is a pre-recorded presentation.

Registration required: michaeltkeene.com/registration

Thursday, February 4 at 10:00 a.m.
VIRTUAL MEETING

Event: Museum Volunteer Gathering

Presenter: Peter Fadden will discuss the York State Fruit Company

Museum volunteers will receive a link to the gathering from John Laurence.

Tuesday, February 16 at 7:00 p.m.
VIRTUAL PRESENTATION

Program: Celebrating Frederick Douglass

Presenter: Olivia Kim

Registration required through the Fairport Public Library: fairportlibrary.org

Thursday, February 18 at 10:00 a.m.
VIRTUAL MEETING

Event: Museum Volunteer Gathering

Presenter: Wendy Murray will discuss the Underground Railroad

Museum volunteers will receive a link to the gathering from John Laurence.

Saturday, February 27 from 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.
VIRTUAL MEETING

Event: Volunteer Orientation

Due to COVID constraints, the orientation will take place virtually. Registration required: email jlaurance977@gmail.com

Saturday, March 6 from 9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.
The museum reopens for the season.

Please note that there will be no in-person Tuesday presentations at the museum for the 2020–2021 program season due to the pandemic. We are partnering with the Fairport Public Library and author Michael T. Keene to offer virtual presentations instead. Please see each event listing for information about registration, which is required for all virtual events.

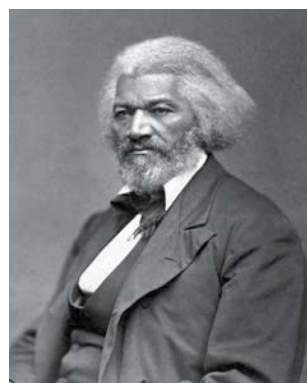


Celebrating Frederick Douglass

Presented by Olivia Kim
Tuesday, February 16
at 7:00 p.m.

VIRTUAL PRESENTATION

Registration required



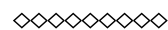
Two hundred years after the birth of Frederick Douglass, artist Olivia Kim and more than 200 volunteers created a series of life-size monuments of the celebrated African American statesman as part of a public art project entitled Re-Engaging the Legacy of Frederick Douglass. The statues were placed at locations historically significant to Mr. Douglass' life in Rochester and were inspired by the eight-foot bronze statue created by Stanley W. Edwards currently located at Highland Park.

Olivia Kim will discuss the creation of the Douglass monuments and the challenges presented by creating a number of sculptures in a short period of time while overseeing a large number of volunteers. In one departure from the original Edwards monument, the Kim sculpture incorporates castings of the hands of Kenneth B. Morris, Jr, the great-great-great grandson of Frederick Douglass – uniting the past with the present and pointing the way to the future. Morris is co-founder and president of the Frederick Douglass Family Initiatives and is also the great-great-grandson of Booker T. Washington.

Kim is a graduate of School of the Arts in Rochester, received a BFA cum laude with Honorable Mention in Ceramic Sculpture at the School of Art and Design at the New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred University and received the Prize for Best Sculpture upon graduation at The Florence Academy of Art in Florence, Italy. She studied and made her living with art in Italy for almost a decade before moving back to Rochester in 2010. Her work was included in the Douglass-inspired show at Rochester Contemporary Art Center, “No Soil Better.” The fiberglass monuments are individually molded from an original Kim sculpture.

For more information about the artist, visit OliviaKimStudio.com. To learn about the Frederick Douglass statues and see a map of their locations, go to DouglassTour.com.

This event is free and is open to the public. It is co-sponsored by the Perinton Historical Society and Fairport Public Library. Registration is required through the Fairport Public Library and is limited. To register, visit <https://fairportlibrary.libcal.com/event/7454057> or call the library at 585-223-9091.



Doctor James W. Welch— A Life of Service in Fairport

By *Bill Poray*

Those who have spent some time with documents and photographs in the archives of the Perinton Historical Society have probably come across occasional handwritten notes, signed J.W. Welch, or J.W.W. They are often found in a conspicuous location across the front of century-old photographs or documents. This was all I knew of Doctor Welch, until, after nine months in COVID survival mode, I stumbled upon the words of optimism, published on page one of this issue. Curiosity about the man caused me to do some research, and learn what I could about this life-long Fairport resident.

Born in 1890, James Welch spent his youth at 14 East Avenue, in the first house west of the old Assumption Church in Fairport's immigrant-rich north side. He and his brothers and sisters were the pride of Patrick and Mary Burns Welch. His father was born in Ireland in 1850, but took his first steps in the United States, while his mother was raised in Ovid, Seneca County. She died in 1907, when James was but 17 years old. His father worked at the DeLand factory for many years, and also served as chief of both the fire and police departments at different times.



Early 1900s photo of the Welch family: bottom row: James, Corrine, Lawrence. Middle row: Elizabeth, Mary Burns Welch, Patrick A. Welch, Jennie. Top row: Charles, Anna, John, Mabel, and Louise.

Young James Welch excelled in sports at Fairport High School, especially baseball, and as a young man, played for semi-professional teams for several years. In 1910, he began college courses, and graduated with a degree from the Buffalo Dental University in 1913, where he also played on the basketball team.

After graduation, Fairport's newest dentist hung a shingle on West Avenue, and opened his practice, which served the community for the next fifty years.



A view looking east at the old commercial district of Fairport's West Avenue, in the winter of 1913-1914. Visible in the upper-left corner is a sign, which states "Dr. Welch—Dentist."

PHOTOGRAPH	Welch, James W. Maj., D.C., 21st Regt.
NAME (LAST FIRST, MIDDLE, INITIAL) RANK, BRANCH AND ORGANIZATION	
ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONES	
BUSINESS	1 West Avenue, Fairport (79)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
RESIDENCE	38 Dewey Av., Fairport (40)
<input type="checkbox"/>	
DATE OF INFORMATION	9 Feb 45

WWII document related to Dr. James W. Welch, Major, 21st Regiment of the New York National Guard.



Dr. James Welch, with his wife Mabel Hennessy Welch, outside their Dewey Avenue home

He married a local girl, Mabel Hennessy, at the Assumption Church on Christmas day, 1916. After a wedding dinner at the Odenbach Restaurant in Rochester, the newlyweds spent their honeymoon in Detroit. They returned to Fairport, and for the first few years of their marriage, lived at 7 De-Land Park A. In 1921, the young couple purchased the home of Will Wagner at 38 Dewey Avenue. Here they raised their two children, Joan and James Jr.

When not filling cavities or pulling teeth, Dr. Welch was fully engaged in the community. In 1920, at just thirty years of age, he was elected President of Fairport, one of the youngest in history. Later in the decade the position of president was replaced with the title of mayor.

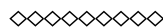
The Fairport Rotary was organized in 1926, and Doctor Welch was one of 19 charter members. He delivered his message of optimism, a portion of which is reproduced on page one, at a meeting of the organization 89 years ago.

In 1945, at the age of 55, Dr. Welch served in the 21st Regiment of the New York National Guard. Stationed at the armory in Rochester, Welch held the rank of major, and served as the regimental dental officer.

Consistent with his love of baseball, Dr. Welch was among a handful of men who established Little League baseball in Fairport for the inaugural 1951 season. As the league's first commissioner, he led a team which built David Marsh Field at Perinton Park. Four teams were established for the first season, sponsored by Fairport Fire Department, Fairport Rotary Club, the Masons, and the Lions Club.

Dr. Welch served for many years as a historian and curator of the Perinton Historical Society archives. He is most closely associated with the years in which the society's museum was housed at the Crosman Center in the 1960s to 1970s.

His wife, Mabel Hennessy Welch, passed away in 1967. Doctor Welch died fourteen years later at the age of 90, in 1981. He served the community he loved with distinction, and left a lasting legacy with the Perinton Historical Society.



Your Support is Appreciated

Thanks to all who have renewed your memberships. In this challenging year, each membership, donation and gift shop sale helps to alleviate the financial hardships from canceling both the 2020 house tour and the Yuletide Traditions silent auctions fundraiser.

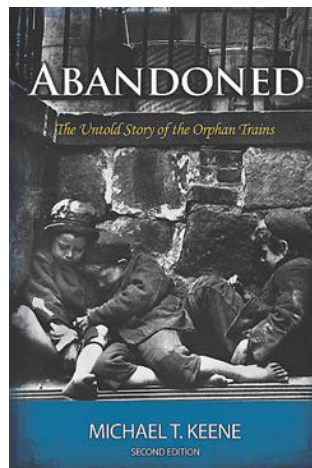
There are many ways to support the Society:

- PHS memberships make great gifts for loved ones
- Puzzles, autographed books, playing cards and games can be purchased from the museum gift shop for entertainment during long winter months. The gift shop is open during regular museum hours of Sundays & Tuesdays 2:00–4:00 p.m.

and Saturdays 9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m. beginning March 6, 2021. Cash and checks are accepted.

- Do you purchase items from Amazon.com? AmazonSmile is a simple way for you to support the PHS every time you shop, at no cost to you. AmazonSmile is available at smile.amazon.com on your web browser and can be activated in the Amazon Shopping app for iOS and Android phones. When you shop AmazonSmile, you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added benefit that AmazonSmile will donate 0.5% of your eligible purchases to the Perinton Historical Society.

- Planned Giving—Speak to your accountant or financial advisor about ways you can contribute to PHS or email PHS with questions at info@PerintonHistoricalSociety.org.



-ABANDONED- *The Untold Story of the Orphan Trains*

Presented by
Michael T. Keene
Monday, February 1
at 11:00 a.m.

VIRTUAL PRESENTATION
Registration required

To register, visit michaeltkeene.com/registration

PHS is pleased to offer this pre-recorded 30-minute presentation from author Michael T. Keene.

By the end of the Civil War, an estimated 30,000 homeless and orphaned children roamed the streets of New York City. In response to this crisis, the age of orphan asylums began, culminating in one of the most improbable and audacious episodes in American history. Called the Orphan Train Movement, it endeavored to save these children lost to the streets by heroes who fought for their liberation.

Michael Keene, local author and frequent speaker at the Perinton Historical Society, has created a unique online program based on his book, "Abandoned: The Untold Story of the Orphan Trains." Michael's program is told through the use of archival photographs, original music, and narration.

To register, visit michaeltkeene.com/registration. Once registered, you will receive a link to the presentation. You can watch the recording during its premiere on Monday, February 1 at 11:00 a.m. and re-watch any time after that. The museum gift shop carries a variety of books by the presenter.



The Tour Boat Mary Jemison

In Use from 1931 to 2014

By Keith Boas

The Mary Jemison was a dependable, hardworking water vessel for eighty-three years, until rot and obsolescence forced her demise. Her “life” began back in 1931, as an oyster-hauling boat on the Chesapeake Bay. Her original name was Virginia Estelle, but was renamed several times over the years. In 1987, Mid-Lakes Navigation Company purchased the boat and gave her the name City of Syracuse. Shortly after, work was done to extend the top deck and enclose the lower deck. Soon sight-seeing cruises on the Erie Canal were offered out of nearby Baldwinsville, New York.

Then came another name change: The boat was christened Mary Jemison in 2005 when she was purchased by Corn Hill Navigation Company (CHN) and brought to Rochester from Syracuse via the canal. In Rochester for about the next eight years, she regularly journeyed from Corn Hill Landing, up the Genesee River, and into the canal at Genesee Valley Park. On rare occasions, the boat passed through Fairport (see photo on the right). In 2014, the aging 65-foot, wooden hull craft was retired and put up for sale at \$99,000 by its owner, CHN.

Commenting on the status of the boat back in 2014, CHN’s president, Vicki Schmitt, said that “She’s eighty-three years old, an old wooden boat, and it would take an awful lot of work to keep her in the water. Our mission is not to care for old artifacts; it’s to get people out on the canal.” (The CHN also owns and operates the packet boat Sam Patch, currently offering seasonal cruises out of Pittsford.)

According to Thomas X. Grasso, President Emeritus, Canal Society of New York State, “She was a classic, stately, and elegant lady. Perfect for the canal, but she was also high maintenance. Sadly, (Corn Hill Navigation) could not keep pace with the cost of maintenance.”

In 2018, her then owner, Roger Mills of the Beacon Bay Marina on Cayuga Lake, had listed the selling price of the boat at only one dollar, due to its disintegrating, unable-to-fix condition (see photo at below right).

Recently, in October of 2020, the Mary Jemison was visited at the Beacon Bay Marina by Tammee Poinan Grimes, who is owner/captain of the Colonial Belle. According to Tammee, “A few years ago, the Mary Jemison had been sold to someone who was going to restore her, but that never happened. She’s in incredibly bad condition and could never sail again. The boat is scheduled to be taken apart and destroyed this winter, so her days are numbered. So sad.”

The Mary Jemison was named after a girl who was captured by the Seneca Indians in 1755, during the French and Indian War. Twelve-year-old Mary Jemison was adopted by a Seneca family and lived with the tribe for many years. In



The Mary Jemison, passing through Fairport in July of 2011
Photo by Keith Boas



“We saw the decaying Mary Jemison tour boat today, rotting away onshore and waiting to be cut apart and thrown away.”

October 12, 2020

Photo and quote by
Tammee Poinan Grimes
owner/captain of the
Colonial Belle

1824, she told her life story to James E. Seaver, a minister who wrote it for her. Later that year, the text was published as *A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison*. When Mary died in 1833, she was buried on the Buffalo Creek Reservation.* Later, in 1874, her remains were reinterred at William Pryor Letchworth’s Glen Iris Estate, which is now Letchworth State Park. A bronze statue of Mary, created in 1910 by Henry Kirke Bush-Brown, adorns her gravesite.

*The Buffalo Creek Reservation is a tract of land surrounding Buffalo Creek in the central portion of Erie County. After the Revolutionary War, nearly 50,000 acres there was set aside for the Seneca Nation following negotiations with the United States. The modern reservation consists of just part of the original track, only a nine-acre plot of land.

Sources: Wikipedia; NewYorkBoater.com,
and democratandchronicle.com



Capturing Tomorrow's History Today

By John Laurence

The year 2020 is one we'd all like to forget. But it's not the only time in the last century when lives were turned topsy-turvy. Think about the world wars, the Depression years, and the Spanish Flu Epidemic of 1918–1919. Have you ever been curious about how these events impacted the local population? Academics will give the “big picture overview,” but where do you find out the impact on you and me?

Well, a group of volunteers at the museum has taken on the challenge of gathering information about our life during this pandemic time so that it can be available for visitors in far off 2070. They have initiated a project which they are naming Capturing Tomorrow's History Today. The volunteers have been asking individuals, village and town officials, businesses, schools, churches and civic organizations to share the major impacts to them and to provide pictures and materials that reflect life, and how it has changed because of the pandemic. These responses will be saved in a notebook—or notebooks if we get enough input—as well as in digital files available at the museum. In addition, there is a plan to have a display of the photos and other submitted materials as a special exhibit later this year.

Besides the pandemic, there are a couple of other significant happenings currently in our area: The rebuilding of the canal lift bridge and development of several multi-family residences in the village. The group also will be collecting information and photos about these.

If you would like to share your own personal experiences and photos regarding these topics, please send them to our special email address that we have set up for this project: History@PerintonHistoricalSociety.org.



An Invitation to the PHS Volunteer Recognition & Training Seminar

On February 27th, from 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m., current and prospective museum volunteers are invited to attend a virtual Volunteer Recognition & Training Seminar on Zoom. The orientation is an opportunity for volunteers to get a refresher course on everything from greeting visitors to writing gift shop sales. Volunteers will also have the opportunity to view the new exhibits before the museum re-opens to the public on March 6th and to meet John Laurence, our Volunteer Coordinator. Please RSVP by February 20th to John at jlaurence977@gmail.com.

We ask that all museum volunteers contact John by February 15 to let us know whether you intend to volunteer this spring.

Museum volunteers work one two-hour shift per month greeting and assisting visitors. New volunteers are paired with veteran volunteers for each shift, and training is provided. The PHS is always looking for new volunteers to staff the museum. If you can give of your time just a few hours a month, contact PHS Volunteer Coordinator John Laurence at jlaurence977@gmail.com.

Perinton Historical Society

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

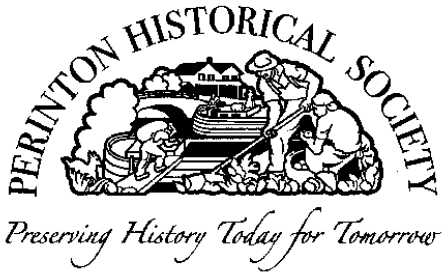
<i>President</i>	Bob Hunt
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John Laurence	Bill Poray
Jim Unckless	David Wild

MUSEUM

<i>Director</i>	Vicki Profitt
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This Month 100 Years Ago

The school on the left was built in 1886 on Fairport's East Avenue, primarily to accommodate the growing Irish immigrant population on the village's north side. It included four classrooms, two on the first floor and two on the second floor. One hundred years ago the school was enlarged, once again to accommodate the growing immigrant population, this time primarily from Italy. The entire west (right) wing was added, doubling the classrooms. A gymnasium was also built. After centralization of Fairport Schools, the building was purchased by Crosman Arms and donated to the village for use as a community center. Since 2003 the renovated building has provided apartments for the senior community.

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

The museum is currently closed. It will re-open to the public on March 6th. Hours will be 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