

Perinton Historical Society **Historigram**

18 Perrin Street
Fairport, NY 14450

Vol LIV
No. 4

December 2021
585-223-3989

The Oxbow— **The Early Years**

By Bill Poray

The published account of an early traveler indicates that the Erie Canal was first opened to navigation in Perinton in the spring of 1822. In its earliest years, the canal was much narrower than today, and only about four feet deep. Constructed with hand tools and horse power, the channel had countless bends and turns, as surveyors mapped out a route that best accounted for the elevation of the land, rock formations, and areas with stable soil.

When the canal was enlarged in the 1830s, and again some years later, most of the twists and bends were removed, often by building embankments to carry the canal over lower terrain. Such an embankment, forty feet in height, was constructed when the canal was relocated and straightened, creating Perinton's oxbow. Water was allowed to fill the area from the old canal's path to the earthen embankment, creating a small lake. Area residents took an immediate liking to the pleasant surroundings on the east shore of the oxbow and the new lake, and found it a pleasant place to picnic, camp, fish, and swim.

The canal suffered frequent breaks in the early years, often at the location of the man-made embankments, including the one adjacent to Perinton's oxbow. One especially devastating embankment break, said to be caused by a burrowing muskrat, occurred in November of 1864. News of the break spread far and wide. In fact, the Glasgow Herald, one of Scotland's leading newspapers, reprinted a story from the Rochester Union, including this description: "*A very serious breach occurred in the Erie Canal yesterday afternoon, at what is known as Oxbow Bend, in the town of Perinton, twelve miles east of this city, and a mile or more west of Fairport. At this point there is a heavy embankment on which the towpath is laid. On the berm side there was a space of water extending to the old canal.*"

Another break adjacent to the oxbow, even larger than

the first, occurred in April of 1871, again reportedly caused by a tunneling muskrat. Two hundred feet of the embankment was washed away, to a depth of 20 to 30 feet below the bottom of the canal. All the water in the canal from Macedon to west of Pittsford rushed through the breach. A nearby packet boat was flushed through the break, and sent on a wild ride west through farm fields and fences, and eventually came to rest upon an elm tree. The captain, his wife, child and steersman survived. According to newspaper reports, the dam at Hayward's mill on Irondequoit Creek and the bridge over the creek at the Rochester (Fairport) Road were washed away.



Like many others in the early 20th century, the Hopp family enjoyed a cottage at the Oxbow. In this photo from the early 1920s, George Hopp stands knee-deep, holding his daughter, Edith.

Continued on page 4



From your President

Thank you for all the emails, cards and in-person greetings I've received wishing me well as I succeed Bob Hunt as president of the Perinton Historical Society.

Your support has warmed my heart and reminds me how fortunate I am to be involved

~Vicki Profitt~

in an organization filled with so many wonderful, caring people.

Bob Hunt is a hard act to follow. For the past 11 years, I have served beside him on the PHS board as vice-president. I have watched him navigate all types of situations and personalities with grace and humor. Bob's calm, welcoming demeanor is the heart of our board and has set the tone for years to come. I'm so appreciative of the work Bob has done for the Society over the years and that he will continue to guide us as a trustee over the next twelve months while the transition is made.

You can reach me any time at Director@PerintonHistoricalSociety.org. I'd love to hear your ideas for making the PHS even more vibrant as we move into the future.



Celebrating a Centenarian

Congratulations to PHS member Floris A. Lent, who recently celebrated her 100th birthday! Friends celebrated with Floris at an open house in her honor, complete with gourmet cupcakes, beautiful flowers and balloons.



THE FAIRPORT HERALD

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 16, 1921

SOUTH PERINTON.

Mrs. Harry Lent has a daughter
born Nov. 4, name, Floris Alice.

Special thanks

—to the Perinton Settlers Club
for their recent donation to the
Perinton Historical Society.



HISTORIGRAM

*Published nine months per year by the
Perinton Historical Society*

Editor: Bill Poray

Art Director: Keith Boas

Production & Distribution: Jim Unckless

Proofreading: Irene Poray
Nancy Slaybaugh

Perinton Historical Society

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President

Vicki Profitt

Secretary

Suzanne Lee

Treasurer

Linda Wiener

Communications

Jane DeMeis

TRUSTEES

Keith Boas

Bill Poray

Bob Hunt

Jim Unckless

John Laurence

Matt Wells

Lucy McCormick

MUSEUM

Director

Vicki Profitt

Perinton Historical Society

Mission

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



Yuletide Traditions

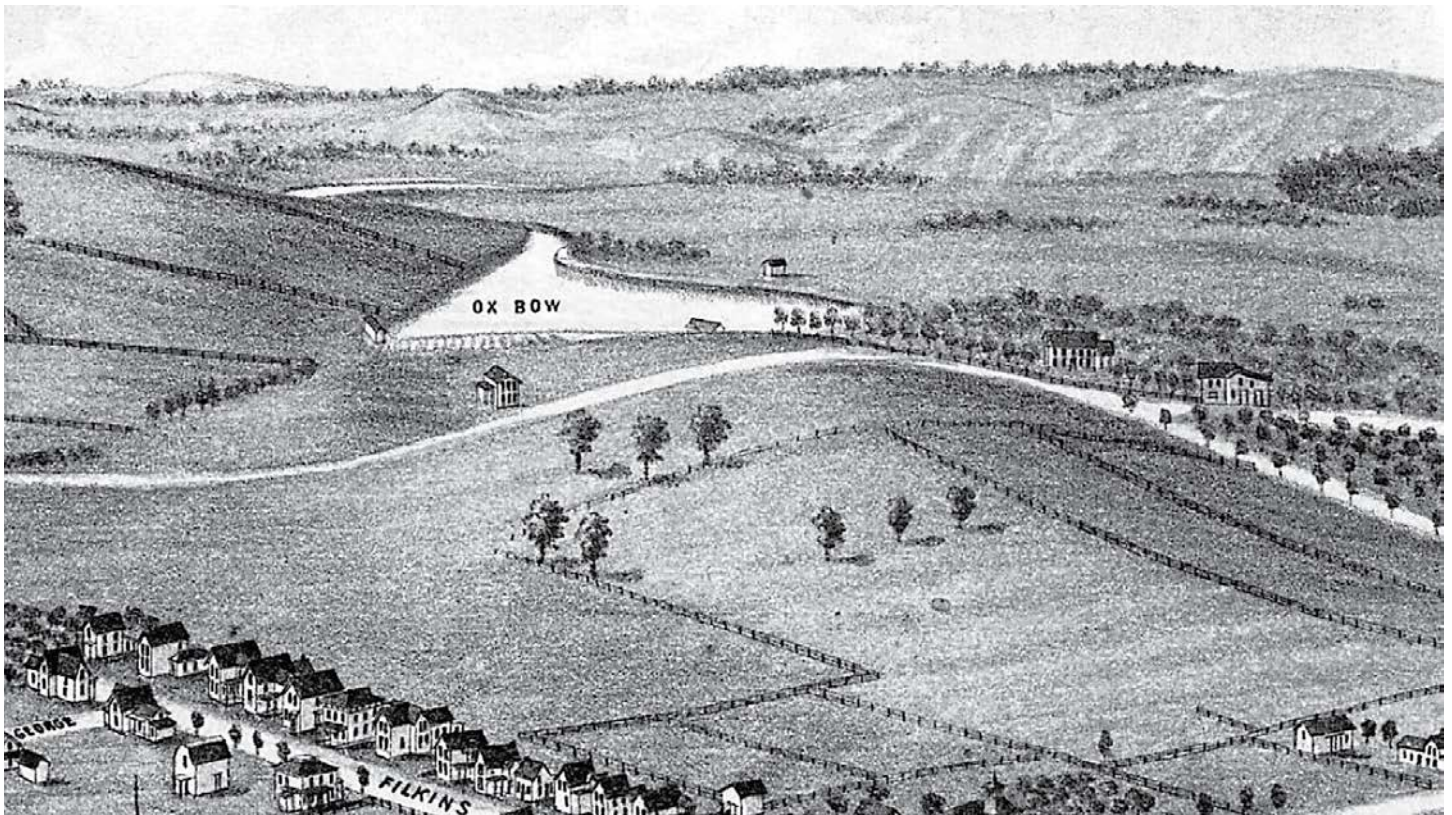
The PHS holiday fundraiser

With Appreciation

To the individuals, organizations and businesses
who have donated to Yuletide Traditions this year:

Ambiance Design Gallery
Carol Christensen
Compagnie Trattoria
Cooks' World
The Corner Bookstore
J. N. Courtney
Durf's Family Restaurant
Faircraft Brauhaus
Fairport Rotary Club
Nadine Fiero & Kay Joslyn
Jan Dwyer Hess
Nanette Hoffer & Judy Mason
Terry Holt
Iron Smoke Distillery
Carol Johnston, Blanche
Shearer & Mary Stevens

Carol Klinger
Suzanne Lee
Joyce Lyle
Mark's Pizzeria
Erin McCormick
Lucy McCormick
Peg McGee
Marilyn Moran
Perinton Quilt Guild
Vicki Masters Profitt
Rita Prince State Farm
Laura A. Schmidt
Triphammer Bierwerks
Jean Whitney
Linda & Dave Wiener
Anonymous



Detail from the 1885 *Bird's Eye View of Fairport* by L.R. Burleigh. The view is to the southwest, showing the oxbow and surrounding area.



An aerial photo from 1969 reveals islands, the result of canal dredging, which eventually consumed most of the oxbow. At the lower left are greenhouses along Hulburt Road, removed in 1970 for the construction of condominiums. Johanna Perrin and Minerva DeLand Schools are visible on the north and south sides of Hulburt Road, respectively.

Continued on page 5



In this photo from April of 1918, the west embankment of the oxbow is to the left, and a few early cottages and boathouses are visible to the upper right.

Temporary rail tracks were used for the delivery of material in fortifying the banks of the canal.

Repairs to the embankment were quickly begun, but trouble soon followed. Approximately 800 workers were hired to repair the break, some local, but many others from out of town. Some grew increasingly agitated, fueled by poor weather, difficult working conditions, and more than a little drinking. When the rowdies demanded more money for their labor and violence appeared imminent, the New York State Militia arrived to subdue the rioters. The soldiers camped on the hill above the oxbow, marched in formation and practiced target shooting. A few of the most enthusiastic rioters were hauled off to jail in Fairport. The remaining workers picked up their shovels and got back to work, and by May 9th the embankment was rebuilt, and the canal was back in business.

After the great canal break and riot of 1871, things at the oxbow settled down. With the newly reinforced embankment in place, people began to see the oxbow as a place for enjoyment and recreation. Word spread that there were big fish to be caught at the oxbow, such as was recorded in *The Fairport Herald* in 1885, when a sixteen-pound pickerel was reported. Perhaps someone's thumb was on the scale, as state records indicate that this fish would have been twice the size of the biggest pickerel ever caught in New York.

Ice-skating was a popular and sometimes dangerous pastime on the canal. It was especially perilous at the oxbow, where water depth varied a great deal across the wide waters, which affected the thickness of the ice. In 1897, teenager Frank Myers of Summit Street drowned while attempting to skate across the oxbow. The local newspaper reported that some parts of the oxbow were from 30 to 40 feet deep, and in these areas the canal didn't freeze over. Perhaps the deep water was the result of the canal break years earlier that took so much of the canal's bottom with it. Young Frank Myers broke through the thin ice and disappeared, while his friends helplessly watched.

While some skated on the ice at the oxbow, others harvested it. Large squares of ice as much as a foot thick and three hundred pounds in weight were removed and hauled to area icehouses for use in the warmer months. George Filkins, shopkeeper, builder, and house mover, for a time kept a busy icehouse at the oxbow, employing many men during the winter months. They traded their labor for goods at the Filkins meat market on South Main Street.

In 1914, with construction underway to deepen and widen the canal, the survival of the oxbow was of great concern to citizens. Residents became aware of a plan to fill in the wide waters during excavation of the enlarged canal, and feared this would be the end of their recreational playground. The Fairport Rod and Gun Club led a petition to spare the oxbow, with support from the Chamber of Commerce and other leaders in the community. The effort was successful, and with renewed confidence, people began to flock to the oxbow as never before.

By the spring of 1915, a rush was on to build boathouses and cottages at the oxbow. The land of local farmers bordered the state land on which the cottages were being built. The only path to the oxbow was privately owned by Thomas Hulburt, a local attorney and farmer. He warned those visiting the "resort" as it was sometimes called, against trespassing on his grounds, claiming that damage had been done to his crops. He stated, "Patience has at last ceased to be a virtue and the owners have now decided to post their farms against such trespassing and will arrest and prosecute to the full extent of the law." And so began the tenuous relationship between the residents of the oxbow and many of their neighbors.

The Oxbow... More in our next issue



Upcoming Programs & Events

We are delighted to return to in-person programming. All program attendees are required to wear masks regardless of vaccination status.

Tuesday, November 30th

All day online

ROC the Day for PHS

Saturday, December 4th, 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

At the museum

Ugly Sweater Party

1:00 p.m. Old Money–Fairport's Potter Family

Speaker: Bill Poray

REGISTRATION REQUIRED AT THE MUSEUM

Sunday, December 5th

At the museum

2:30 p.m. Book discussion and book signing

Speaker: J. N. Courtney

Tuesday, December 7th, 6:00–7:00 p.m.

At the museum

Final bidding on Yuletide Traditions silent auction items. Silent auction winners will be announced following the evening's program.

7:00 p.m. event:

PHS Annual Holiday Party with pump organ music
by Bev Crawford

Sunday, December 12th, 2:00–4:00 p.m.

The museum's last day open before closing for the season

Friday, December 31st

Last day to view the PHS Virtual House Tour

Wednesday, January 12th

10:00 a.m. Museum volunteers virtual get together
on ZOOM

Tuesday, January 18th

At the Fairport Public Library

7:00 p.m. Kodakids

Speaker: Mary Jo Lanphear

REGISTRATION REQUIRED
THROUGH THE FAIRPORT PUBLIC LIBRARY



ROC the Day for PHS on November 30th

ROC the Day is a 24-hour, online event that provides community members an opportunity to support Not-for-Profit organizations doing great work in the nine-county Greater Rochester area. Just go to ROCtheDay.org/PerintonHistoricalSociety, a secure online giving platform, to contribute to the PHS. Please tell your friends, family, co-workers and social networks about the causes you've chosen to support and encourage others to ROC the Day!



Ugly Sweater Party

It's the most wonderful time of the year! Time to decorate the Christmas trees, revel in the snowy outdoors and to drink hot chocolate. It's also time to pull those ugly holiday sweaters out of mothball storage. Stop by the museum on Saturday, December 4th, anytime between 10 a.m.–12 p.m. for ugly-sweater fun. Come dressed in your "finest" sweater and enjoy treats, games and prizes.

Stop by the museum before the party to take your own photo in our ugly-sweater corner. Can't make it to the party? Post your photo on the PHS Facebook page and tag us @perintonhistoricalsociety or email it to Director@PerintonHistoricalSociety.org. Submitted photos will be on display at the museum and on our website and social media accounts.



Cindy and Jordyn Bagley examine the exciting donated items available for the PHS fundraiser, Yuletide Traditions. The last chance to bid will be Tuesday, December 7th, from 6:00 to 7:00 pm.



Author G. Rollie Adams led an interesting discussion related to his latest book, *Found In Pieces*, at our museum on Saturday morning, November 20th. The book is available at the museum gift shop.



How you can support the Perinton Historical Society

- Become a PHS member / give a gift membership.
- Volunteer your time as a museum volunteer or on a committee.
- Donate artifacts to the museum that pertain to Fairport and Perinton.
- Purchase unique gifts from the Fairport Historical Museum gift shop.
- Donate gift cards and gift baskets for Yuletide Traditions silent auctions.
- Donate to the PHS through estate bequests, planned giving, IRA charitable giving, memorial gifts, employer matching contributions, AmazonSmile, ROC the Day.

2021–2022 Special Recognition Level Memberships

As of November 15, 2021

Business (\$100)

Barranco's Clothing and Shoes

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

Email: BarrancosClothing@gmail.com

Canandaigua National Bank & Trust

72 South Main Street, Canandaigua, NY 14424

Phone: 585-394-4260. Website: cnbank.com

Fairport Village Inn

Wayne and Patty Beckwith

103 North Main Street, Fairport, NY 14550

Phone: 585-388-0112, Website: thefvi.com

Frank N. Pittinaro, C.P.A.

William Webb & Associates, LLC

404 East Atlantic Boulevard, Pompano Beach, Florida 33060

Phone 954-943-1650, E-mail: Frank@webbcpa.com

Lift Bridge Yarns

24 High St, Suite 1, Fairport, NY 14450

Dawn Verdugo & Jessie McNaughton

585-364-0521, Email: Dawn@LiftBridgeYarns.com

Lucien A. Morin II, Partner

McConville Considine Cooman and Morin, P.C.

300 Meridian Centre Blvd, Suite 110., Rochester, NY 14618

585-546-2500, lmorin@mcclmlaw.com

Salle d' Escrime of Prescott, AZ, A Fencing Club

Patricia Dodge Waples, Owner

DeLand (\$100-\$249)

Rev. Garth Brokaw

William Hutchinson

Laura A. Schmidt

Steve Tice

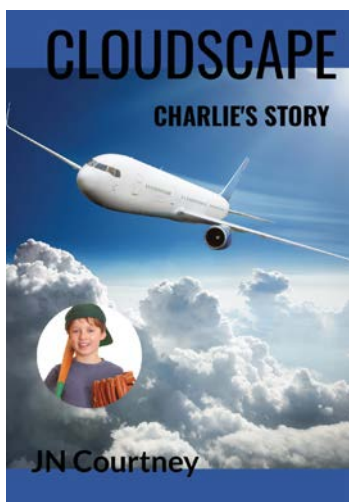
Potter (\$250-\$499)

None this month

Perrin (\$500 and above)

None this month

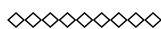
Meet Children's Author J. N. Courtney on December 5th



PHS is pleased to welcome children's author J. N. Courtney to the museum on Sunday, December 5th at 2:30 p.m. J.N. Courtney will share her first two books in the CLOUDSCAPE series: *Cloudscape Charlie's Story* and *Cloudscape Matilda's Story*. Join us for a presentation by the author followed by a book signing. The softcover books sell for \$9.00 each, cash and checks accepted.

Follow Charlie and Matilda as they meet people from all over the world, attend school, play and work in an environment of unimaginable beauty and unexpected danger. Facing fear, finding their own strength and building relationships is an integral part of their adventure. Charlie is just an ordinary kid, worrying about making pitcher on the baseball team until...his aunt's prediction leads him to a hidden world. Matilda unexpectedly arrives on Cloudscape and discovers an international world of adventure, danger, new friends and school! But will she ever return to Earth to be with her family, friends and her beloved horse Merry?

Attendees will receive cotton candy from Sugary Delights while supplies last, courtesy of the author. Masks are required for all program attendees regardless of vaccination status.



Museum Gift Shop is Open Through December 12th

Are you looking for unique gift ideas for the holidays? The museum gift shop has a selection of autographed books, one-of-a-kind artwork, Fairport puzzles and playing cards and more available for purchase by cash or check. Stop by during regular museum hours of Sundays and Tuesdays 2-4 p.m. and Saturdays 9 a.m.-1 p.m. But hurry! The museum closes for the season on Sunday, December 12th at 4:00 p.m.

While you're in the museum, you can also take the opportunity to bid on the Yuletide Traditions silent auction baskets through December 7th.



Brighton Town Historian to Discuss the Kodakids

PHS is pleased to welcome Mary Jo Lanphear as she discusses *Little Ambassadors: The Kodakids of World War II*. This program is co-sponsored by the Fairport Public Library and will take place at the library on Tuesday, January 18th at 7:00 p.m.

Imagine leaving home as a child and spending the next five years with strangers in another country. Over 1,300 children between the ages of five and fifteen did just that during World War II and 156 of them stayed in the Rochester area. Dubbed the "Kodakids," they were the children of employees at Kodak's Harrow, England plant.

The "Duchess of Athol" arrived on August 24, 1940, at Montreal. Transferred to railroad cars, the children rode from Montreal to Brighton to their American adventure. "Little Ambassadors: the Kodakids of World War II" details their sojourn with Rochester-area families until war's end in 1945.

Mary Jo Lanphear has been the town of Brighton Historian since 1986. Her position includes researching topics of Brighton history, presenting public talks, working with school children, and assisting town staff with projects. She serves as staff adviser to the town's Historic Preservation Commission and has participated in the decision to designate over seventy landmarks in Brighton. Currently she is volunteering as a transcriber of historic correspondence in the collection of the U. of R. Rare Books Dept.

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/8141809> or call the library at 585-223-9091.

Treasurer's Report

By Linda Wiener

The following is a summary of the financial status of the Perinton Historical Society for the fiscal year ended 8/31/21:

Income

Membership Dues	\$ 16,724
Grants	5,300
Donations	5,204
Gift Shop	1,616
Investment Income	<u>154</u>

Total Income \$ 28,998

Expense

Museum Operations	\$ 5,285
Building	3,992
<i>Historigram</i>	2,193
Museum Collections	1,680
Office Expense	1,487
Insurance	1,292
House Tour	1,100
Membership	686
Programs	492
Gift Shop	<u>63</u>
Total Expense	\$ 18,270

Net Income/(Loss) \$ 10,728

Net Assets

Cash & Equivalents	\$ 60,843
Gift Shop Inventory	8,202
Community Foundation Funds	<u>99,225</u>
Total Assets	\$168,269

Sales Tax Payable	\$ 46
Deferred Revenue	9,039
Temporarily Restricted Funds	99,324
Unrestricted Net Assets	<u>59,860</u>
Net Assets	\$168,269

Notes: Cash & equivalents include funds in bank accounts and CDs that are available in one year or less. Of this \$60,843 as compared to \$41,625 on 8/31/20 was held in checking and money market accounts. The FSB CD was closed and the balance is currently held in a savings account. 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 \$99,225 on 8/31/21 as compared to \$79,850 on 8/31/20. The interest and dividends earned are returned to PHS annually in the form of a grant, which totaled \$4,801 for 2021 and \$3,695 for 2020. Deferred revenue is exclusively related to 2021–22 membership dues received prior to 9/1/21. These funds are recorded on the Balance Sheet at year-end. On 9/1/21 the balance is reported as Membership Dues income for 2021–22.

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 remained consistent with the prior year, which was more than expected due to Covid-related cancellation of events. Donations, grants and gift shop sales were similar to 2020. Membership dues increased \$2,379, which was offset by decreases in event and interest income.

Expenses overall were down \$4,500 over the prior year. Areas with significant decreases included: gift shop cost of goods sold (\$1,039), building (\$1,808), office (\$957) and special events (\$200).

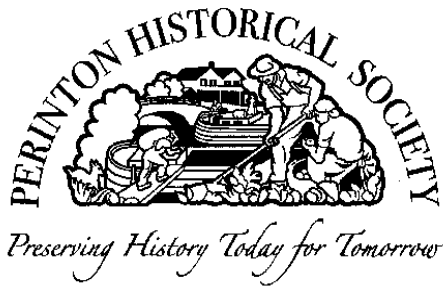
PHS files and pays New York State sales tax quarterly for income related to gift shop sales, files 1099s with the IRS to report payments to certain vendors that exceed \$600, and files an Informational Return (990-N) with the IRS. These filings are current as of 8/31/21. PHS is registered with the New York States Charities Bureau but is exempt from filing an annual return.

◇◇◇◇◇◇◇◇



During World War II, New York's Barge Canal allowed shipyards in the Great Lakes to build and deliver naval vessels for the war effort. In 1942 alone, 414 military vessels passed through the canal on their way to the Atlantic Ocean into service.

Source: Erie Canalways National Heritage Corridor
Image courtesy of Spindle City Historical Society, Cohoes, NY



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



Charlotte Clapp (1884–1964) was appointed municipal historian for the town of Perinton one hundred years ago. She served both as historian and town clerk for well over three decades, and was active in both the Perinton Historical Society and the Fairport Historical Club. The Clapp family home, where she lived virtually her entire life, was across the street from the public library on Perrin Street, home of the PHS's Fairport Historical Museum since 1979.

Upon her death in 1964, the Fairport Herald-Mail published the following statement:

"This week the community mourns the passing of a great lady and dedicated public servant. Charlotte Clapp was probably Perinton's best known woman, one who had given her life to service and in the process, won the admiration and respect of all that knew her...Charlotte Clapp will always be remembered, and those remembered in mind and heart, never die."

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

Through December 12th, museum hours are 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. After December 12th, the museum will be closed to the public for the season. It will reopen in early March of 2022. During this period, you may call Vicki Masters Profit at **585-233-1204** or email at director@perintonhistoricalsociety.org to book a group tour or do research.

www.PerintonHistoricalSociety.org