

Perinton Historical Society Historiogram

18 Perrin Street
Fairport, NY 14450

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Baseball in Fairport

By Bill Poray

With so many opportunities for entertainment and diversion today, poor old baseball, slow, deliberate, methodical baseball, doesn't capture our attention the way it once did, when it truly was the "national pastime." But there was a time, long ago, when folks in our community just couldn't get enough baseball. Consider this, written in the Fairport Herald in September, 1886:

"The other day a number of Fairport lovers of the game of baseball became suddenly possessed of the idea that their happiness-if not their longevity demanded that they should go to Rochester to see a match league game. So they made up their mind to "jump a freight" and thus get to Rochester, where it is only a few rods from the grounds. They went down to the Central and climbed on the cars just as the train started. There was such a crowd of them that they did not for one moment doubt their ability to run the whole train."

Despite their best efforts to "run the whole train", the gang was thrown off by the conductor, long before reaching the ballpark. It was a hot, dusty day, and Fairport's loyal baseball fans were soaked in sweat and exhausted, and worse, they knew the game was about to begin. They eventually convinced a farmer to drive the whole bunch to Rochester, for the sum of two dollars, paid in advance. Imagine the scene, a large number of Fairport's esteemed citizens huddled together in a horse-drawn wagon, going to the big game in Rochester.

The farmer, having collected his two dollars, fulfilled his part of the deal. He delivered his cargo to the baseball field as promised, in time to witness the second half of the game. Still unknown is how Fairport's baseball fans returned home after the game. Perhaps an eastbound packet boat?

It really wasn't necessary to travel to Rochester to see a baseball game in those days. There were plenty of games being played right in our own town. Games were played in Egypt, and at Deland Park, which eventually gave its name to the streets we know as Deland Park A and Deland Park B. Other

ballgames were played at the "A. B. Potter grounds", simply called Potter Park today.

It may be hard to imagine, but another baseball diamond was located on about the spot where High Street and Turk Hill Road intersect today, perhaps at the point where High Street Extension begins. It was described in the July 27, 1877 edition of the Fairport Herald:

"The grounds at the head of High Street (have been) graded, and in several days they will be fitted up in the most satisfactory manner. Ample seats are being erected and no pains will be spared to give those who favor this national game a chance to witness the highest science to be displayed, on the diamond and in the field."

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Fairport Stars baseball team - date unknown
Photo courtesy of Jean Kepplinger,
Perinton Town Historian

"Baseball" continued from page 1

Spectators of the games often knew most of the competitors, as the teams were frequently made up of our local citizens. Teams challenged each other to a "match", and occasionally money changed hands, such as in this example, published in the Fairport Herald of 1886:

"We the undersigned base ball club hereby challenge any nine living in the town of Perinton to play a match game of baseball within two weeks, for \$10, \$20, or \$25. (signed) FAIRPORT STARS"

In the later portion of the 19th century, the Fairport Stars, along with the village's YMCA team, were two of our town's long established baseball organizations. Other Fairport teams were put together for special "matches", such as a game that was held on September the fourth, 1875, when the boarders at the Osborne House played their counterparts at Pritchard's Hotel. Giving a preview of the game, the Fairport Herald reported that *"It takes some training for a heavy game... ..judicious exercise and rubbing down are necessary to the full development of the contestant's powers of endurance."*

Newspaper reporters of the day certainly had a way with words. Describing the action on the field between the two hotel teams, the Fairport Herald printed the following review:

"Quite a good many were present, and they had the greatest sport seeing the old fashioned game played by those who will never be able to acquire great fame as players. Such lofty tumbling, such tremendous yet ineffective running, such wild batting, and such effeminate throwing never was before seen. Flies were thick, and lame ducks were plenty, but there were no goose eggs."



From the FAIRPORT HERALD Friday, August 27, 1875

Another game of base ball is in prospect, the parties being the boarders of the Osborn House and Prichard's Hotel. The Osborn House gentleman, under Capt. Dan Childs, are the challenging party, and the challenge has been accepted by a picked nine from Prichard's tables, under Capt. Bill Carroll.

The match was to have been played yesterday, but the "nines" were unprepared – not being well up in muscle. It takes some training for a heavy game. "Low diet," as the doctors call it, and judicious exercise and rubbing down, are necessary to the full development of the contestant's "powers of endurance."

We have interviewed the Premiers of the "Eating Bureaus," and are confidentially assured the affair will take place next Thursday afternoon on DeLand park. No postponement on account of weather. Wait; "we shall see what we shall see."

Baseball Artifacts on Display at the Fairport Museum

Our collection includes a championship baseball signed by the Fairport High School team of 1909 and a photo of the team members, which were Monroe County champions that year. Also on display is a 1907 championship trophy for a Fairport team which was in the Democrat and Chronicle league, and a wonderful example of a Fairport High School baseball uniform (photos below) worn by Thomas Claire Hance in 1914.



This uniform (shirt, cap and Spalding trademarked pants) was donated to the Fairport Historical Museum by descendants of Thomas Claire Hance, a baseball player for Fairport High School. Mr. Hance was born on December 16, 1894.

Herb Howard's Memories of Baseball Games Played at Deland Park

By Bill Poray

The following are excerpts from a letter to the editor, written by Herbert A. Howard. Herbert was the son of Ansel and Melissa Howard, who with his brothers and father came to Perinton in the 1830s to 1840s. Herbert was born in January of 1860, and often wrote to the FAIRPORT HERALD of his memories of childhood and teen years in his hometown, providing us with a rare first hand view of Fairport and Perinton as it was a very long time ago.

In this letter, Mr. Howard remembers a baseball game played at Deland Park, where today can be found the streets of Deland Park A and Deland Park B in the village of Fairport.

My Dear Mr. Editor,
September 2, 1915

I have intended writing you for a long time, but I have been so full of business, I haven't had time. When I think of you it seems almost as though I could see good old Andrew Jackson Deal sitting there as usual, but he is setting type upstairs now, and I do hope the subscribers are more prompt.

I see you have been having some improvements lately. Gosh-all-fish-hooks! A real iron bridge that goes up and down with no one to push it, and a brand new brick road way up to DeLand's corners. I suppose you have got one of those gasoline contraptions. I hear a lot of the other boys have them. No! I haven't got one yet – I can't af-Ford it. By gum, isn't that a good one; I heard it over to the Grange the other night.

There is another thing that Fairport was famous for years ago. Say, you wouldn't believe it perhaps but she had a "nine" that could beat anything from Lovett's Corners to Bushnell Basin.

How well I remember a game that took place years and years ago – it seems like almost 75, but I guess 40 would cover it. Our boys were going to play the Penfield nine, and there was some tall guessing as to how the game would come out. Of course our boys had Mike to pitch for them – couldn't get along without him; it would be like a coat sleeve without a girl. The day set for the game arrived and it was a day made to order, and the diamond in DeLand park was in apple pie condition. Mike was at his best, as was also "Jack".

As I have before said, the day arrived and everything was ready for the game. Gene Rockafellar was at the bat; Mike was on his mound, and he let the ball go. Now they used to pitch in those days; none of your gol durned throwing. You just ask

"Win"; he can tell you all about it. And how Mike could pitch with that left hand. Great Scott, it was like the going of an Erie train – got there before it started. Gene was a tall old boy and had an arm like a pump handle and his grip wouldn't let go of that ball club until something had happened. Mike pitched the ball and Gene gave it a whack and it went right over in the direction of "Pell" Hodskin's woods; anyhow it would have struck "Rowe" Marlett's barn if someone hadn't stood out in center field waiting for it. "Dan" Childs just stuck up his paw and fetched that ball in just as naturally as a duck takes to water; and "George" our member, wiped his chin, changed his Peerless to the other side, and remarked to a stranger standing by, "That's one of our boys."

Yes, sir, Mr. Editor, we had some first class ball players in those days. You could always count on seeing "Charlie" on first base even though he did have to tie up the old white horse down town and let somebody's freight go. "Joie" and I were sitting under an umbrella – didn't want to get tanned and perhaps we were keeping score. You know it's hard to remember back so far.

Did we get beat? Not much! Yes, George used to do the act with his right arm, and perhaps you have seen that old press. It used to hold forth over Shaw's livery stable right next to Hank Norman's blacksmith shop. Gosh! I can see it all before me just as plain as the hairs in Ann Hallett's butter. Ed can tell you all about them.

Herb Howard

~ *The Early Days* ~

From the *Monroe County Mail*
"Home News" Column
May 21, 1903

- ◆ The Main Street bridge is being replanked this week.
- ◆ There is an unclaimed letter at the Fairport post office addressed to Miss Kate Flynn.
- ◆ The zoology class of the high school are said to be making great progress in their studies and are securing a large and interesting collection of specimens. There are several young ladies in the class, who are overcoming their repugnance to beetles, snails, toads and serpents, but they haven't captured a mouse yet.

~ 100 Years Ago this Month ~

Advertised in the FAIRPORT HERALD
October 11, 1911

Never Out Of Work.

The busiest little things ever made are Dr. King's New Life Pills. Every pill is a sugar-coated globule of health, that changes weakness into strength, languor into energy, brainfag. into mental power; curing Constipation, Headache, Chills, Dyspepsia, Malaria. Only 25c at I. D. Bramer's, Fairport, and J. M. Franklin, East Rochester.

To Museum and Perinton Historical Society
Friends from the

Greenbrier Garden Club

Best Wishes on the upcoming year! Every now and then I feel a need to let you know about the rear, side and sometimes front gardens that are maintained by Greenbrier Garden Club. The gals, and some are still members, have been doing this for over 30 years. It's our Community Service Project. Patty Beckwith and Jean Hamel are our coordinators at this time and schedule the fall and spring cleanups. Each member takes a week in the summer to tidy up, dead-head spent blooms, prune, sweep the driveway and water if necessary. Our membership currently totals 28. Everyone enjoys the work and, if mother nature helps out, the work goes smoothly.

This year we are celebrating our 50th anniversary. We took a trip to the NY Botanical Gardens and some other places along the Hudson River. August 28th, the Sunday "Irene" visited, we had a Garden Party with current and past members. We had 47 guests and it was spectacular. Mary Ruth Smith, an original garden worker at the museum, has the longest membership—since 1977.

Our newest project will be to install a brick path leading to the West Ave. complex behind the museum.

Joyce Lyle, President
Greenbrier Garden Club



Life and Letters of Kate Gleason

October 18, 2011, 7:30 pm
at the Fairport Historical Museum

Presented by Janis Gleason

Susan B. Anthony called her the ideal business woman of whom she had dreamed fifty years earlier. Playwright Eugene O'Neill saw her as the symbol of greed and emasculating ambition. Kate Gleason, groundbreaking nineteenth-century industrialist, mechanical engineer, and real estate developer, was her own best invention. The truth of her dynamic life, in all of its complexity, is revealed in Janis Gleason's biography of this legendary American woman.

Over the course of two decades, Jan Gleason's extensive research pertaining to the life of Kate Gleason has taken her from New York, to California, to South Carolina and over to France. She currently serves as Vice President of the Gleason Family Foundation and is a past Board President for the Rochester-based Writers and Books.

Jan has received numerous awards for her contributions to the literary arts and civic organizations. A former student of the University of Arizona, Mrs. Gleason is married to James S. Gleason, the grand-nephew of Kate Gleason and Chairman of Gleason Corporation. The Gleasons reside in Greenbrae, California, and Cabo San Lucas, Mexico, and have two daughters.



Perinton Historical Society

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Bill Poray	Jim Unckless
David Wild	George Wolf

MUSEUM

<i>Director/Curator</i>	Bill Keeler
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Comments From Your President

Since my comments to you last month, I have been busy trying to become better informed about your museum, how it operates and who does what in keeping the building and site in presentable condition. For a start, I had a wonderful conversational breakfast with our curator, Bill Keeler, and he filled me in on a number of topics and answered many questions...but I still have much to learn. I discovered there are volunteers who mow the grass, trim the hedges, take care of the gardens, put flowers in the planters, shovel snow, watch the museum when it is open, make the Historigram appear monthly at your home, touch up areas in need of paint and many other activities inside and outside. I came to an understanding that volunteers are extremely important in the operation of your museum; being very instrumental in keeping our operational expenses and thus the dues structure as low as possible. So, if you can spare an hour or two as a volunteer please contact me or another board member with your area of interest. Thank you and you will feel good about yourself and your museum.

Some other items Bill and I discussed were—

- The importance of getting young students interested in local history through the school program of having our 4th grade students visit the museum. Since we are facing economic times of tight school budgets, I will be exploring ways of insuring we don't lose this important program.

- Volunteer training: One or two classes will be planned later this year.
- The possibility of starting a student History Club at the museum.
- Areas of need at the museum: More on these items in a future issue.
- Acquiring artifacts and which items are important for our museum.

On Tuesday evening August 16, partnering with the Fairport Rotary Club, we sponsored the band *Its My Party* for Cruz Nite. We were allowed to set up a display table with information about PHS, with the idea of getting the word out about what a wonderful asset we have in the village. David Wild displayed a few of his antique toys which drew attendees to our table. Cruz Nite is in its 10th year and that evening was one of the largest crowds ever.

We hold our PHS Board meetings at 7 pm the second Tuesday of each month (except for June and July), so if you have an item you want the board to hear about or consider, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you and I'll talk with you again next month.

Bob Hunt, 415-7053, rhunt1@rochester.rr.com



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Want to have FUN while volunteering?

**Help Raise Funds
for your Historical Society.**

**Volunteer to Help at
Fairport's Octoberfest!**

Friday, October 7th, 4 pm to 12 pm

Saturday, October 8th, Noon to 12 pm

GREAT BANDS, FOOD AND BEVERAGES!

Call or email Bob Hunt for more information:

415-7053 Rhunt1@rochester.rr.com

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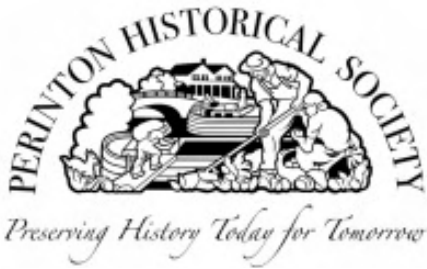
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From the 1913 Fairport Directory



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Fairport Historical Museum

18 Perrin Street, Fairport, NY 14450

HOURS

Sunday 2 p.m. - 4 p.m.
Tuesday 2 p.m. - 4 p.m.
Thursday 7 p.m. - 9 p.m.

Group tours, presentations and special projects are
by appointment: Please call 223-3989
and leave a message.

Visit our website:

www.PerintonHistoricalSociety.org



The gardens at the Fairport Historical Museum have
been beautifully maintained by the members of the
Greenbrier Garden Club for more than 30 years.

Historigram

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