



# Perinton Historical Society HISTORIGRAM

18 Perrin Street  
Fairport, NY 14450

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## Murder in Perinton 1881: Case for the Prosecution Part 3 of 5

The trial of Matthew Hickey began December 12, 1881 in the city of Rochester. Both the Union and Advertiser and Democrat & Chronicle published the transcripts from the trial so their readers could follow what was said.

There was no doubt that a murder occurred and that Matthew Hickey shot and killed Fred Ruffer. The trial was to decide if Hickey had deliberately and knowingly planned to kill Fred Ruffer (first degree murder), or if Ruffer's death was accidental (murder in the second degree). The difference was death by hanging or life in prison.

Judge William Rumsey of Bath, NY presided over the trial. The prosecution was led by District Attorney Edward B. Fenner and the defense was led by the Raines brothers, George, Thomas and William. To assure a fair trial, 186 jurors were summoned, 61 from the city and 125 from the towns. The final 12 jurors broke down to 4 men from the city of Rochester and 8 men from the surrounding towns.

The stance of the prosecution was that Matthew Hickey ordered Fred Ruffer out of the field. Fred re-

fused and Matthew went back to his house, got his shotgun, returned and shot Fred Ruffer dead. As District Attorney Fenner put it "If we prove these facts to your satisfaction we shall claim a right to ask your verdict of murder in the first degree as killing with premeditated intent."

The whole incident started the previous Spring when Michael Hickey, Matthew Hickey's son, rented 14 acres of the Hickey farm from his father, the debt to be paid over a period of time on a weekly basis. All but \$5 of the debt had been paid by the end of the summer. Michael raised oats on the land and sold them to Fred Ruffer of Victor in August who paid in advance of the harvest. In late August, Fred Ruffer, his brother Jacob, and Matthew Hickey Jr., all showed up in the field to harvest the oats. Matthew Sr. upon seeing the boys in the field felt that Fred Ruffer and his friends did not have a right to harvest the oats because there was still an outstanding payment of five dollars which had not been settled. As Jacob Ruffer testified, Matthew Hickey Sr. said "I see you boys are not going to get out of here." Fred Ruffer replied "No, I have bought these oats and I am not going out of here til I die." After that statement Matthew Hickey shot him through the breast.

The prosecution next brought up Justice of the Peace Murdoff. The Justice testified that he had met with Matthew Hickey Sr. several days before to discuss the final payment for the oats. Justice Murdoff advised Hickey to take legal action against his son Michael. His suggestion was that he ask a judge to demand payment of a dollar a week until the debt was

### ≡ Our Mission ≡

*"The Mission of the Perinton Historical Society is to promote Community interest in the preservation of local records, structures and artifacts for posterity, and for the enlightenment of the people of our town of Perinton."*

paid. The testimony proved that there were chances presented to Hickey to resolve the debt without violence.

Several other testimonies were heard before the prosecution rested its case on the 15th of December.

### ***New Gift Shop Item...***

## **Not Your Ordinary Postcard...Anymore**

Have you ever wondered about the life of the lowly post card? It is sold for 50 cents or less at most gift shops and purchased by passing tourists. The inscription on the back is usually "Having a great time!! Wish you were here. Love...". Sending a post card is always a trick. Very few people keep a spare post card stamp in their desk drawer and it usually takes a special trip to the Post Office to acquire one.

It was not always this way. Postcards began as a fad in the United States in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The U.S. Post Office encouraged their use because of the additional revenue they generated. Companies as far away as Germany would compete to produce the most appealing and colorful cards. At one time you could order personal pictures from Kodak on post card stock. The Fairport Museum has several dozen post cards of local scenes from this era.

Today, you can still find postcards in most gift shops but the selection is very limited. For the gift shop owner, he or she usually has to invest in buying from 500 to 1000 cards at a time. Sometimes it takes years to sell a large stock of cards before they fade in the sun or florescent lights.

At the Fairport Museum Gift Shop we have hundreds of cards dating as far back as 1985. We sell an average of five to six cards a year. At the rate of 5 postcards a year, our current supply will be exhausted by the year 2383. So what's a gift shop owner to do?

There is a company in Hampton Bay, NY called Forest Savers that has a unique solution to the "postcard problem". The company will take these surplus postcards and use

The next day Matthew Hickey's lawyers began their defense.

*Note: Quotes in this article were taken from the Union and Advertiser 12-14-1881.*

*Next month: Part IV - The Case for the Defense.*

them as the cover for a small wire bound notebook. The Museum Gift Shop has had 250 of its surplus post cards converted to these useful notepads. These notebooks come in three scenes; One is a line drawing of South Main Street looking north showing the Village Hall and Packett's Landing circa 1990, the second is a scene of the Main Street Bridge looking south with the Village Landing on the right circa 1990 and the third is a picture of Fairport's bicentennial quilt which was made to celebrate our nation's 200th birthday in 1976.

If you're looking for that special post card, you still have time (over 330 years) and now you can buy a matching notebook to go with your post card. Come pick up a few for yourself and for gifts at our Museum Gift Shop.



**Notebook cover showing the Main Street Lift Bridge looking south**

# November Meeting to Feature a talk on Roseland Park

Known as the "Playground of the Finger Lakes", Roseland Park was a fixture on the northern shore of Canandaigua Lake for sixty years. Whether you sat by the lake, played miniature golf, or rode the carousel, many people from Rochester and the Finger Lakes region have pleasant memories of Roseland.

On Tuesday evening November 13th at 7:30 PM at the Perinton Community Center on Turk Hill Road, author and archivist Lynda McCurdy Hotra will give a talk about the new book *Roseland: Playground of the Finger Lakes 1925-1985*. Written in partnership with Sherman Farnham, the book has been over 15 years in the making. The manuscript was originally written for an exhibit at the Ontario County Historical Society. It has since been updated and expanded in this wonderfully illustrated book.

Built in 1925, Lakeside Park as it was called, was one of the first roadside parks in the country. Throughout the late 19th and early 20th century amusement parks were found at the far reaches of trolley lines in an era when roads were mostly dirt and automobile rather scarce. The park was first called Roseland in 1928. Roseland has always been billed as a family friendly park and key destination in the Finger Lakes.

Lynda McCurdy Hotra will take us through the history of Roseland Park and share with us many of the memories from the early years to its closing in 1985. After the meeting books will be available for sale and will be signed by the author. The meeting and talk at the Perinton Community Center is free and open to the public. The facility is handicap accessible with plenty of parking. So join us and come take a nostalgic trip back to Roseland.

## Roseland Time Line

Taken from the book  
*Roseland: Playground of the Finger Lakes*

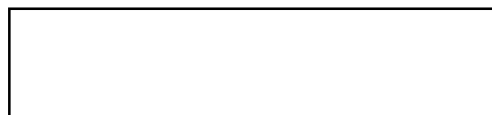
- 10/2/1894 William Muar, founder of Roseland Park, is born in Rochester, NY.
- May 1925 Muar opens Lakeside Park. Rides include a merry-go-round and danger defying automobiles operated on an inclined track.
- 1928 Lakeside Park's name is changed to Roseland Park.
- 1930 Miniature golf debuts at the park.
- 1931 Shuffleboard courts are installed.
- 1936 Pinball machines are removed because they are deemed unsuitable entertainment for children.
- 1941 A carousel is bought from Long Beach Park, moved and run by George Long at Roseland.
- 1948 Park expands by another hundred acres.
- 1950 A sixteen gage railroad train is installed.
- 1961 Lester Boyce purchases Roseland Park.
- 1969 The Gold Nugget replaces Galloping Gertie.
- 1971 "Pay One Price" ride tickets are introduced.
- 1978 The Yo-Yo ride replaces the ferris wheel.
- 9/2/1985 Roseland Park closes.
- 10/15/1990 Carousel Center opens in Syracuse featuring the former Roseland Park carousel.



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18 Perrin Street  
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## FAIRPORT HISTORICAL MUSEUM

18 PERRIN STREET, FAIRPORT, NY 14450

### REGULAR HOURS

Sunday 2 p.m. - 4 p.m.

Tuesday 2 p.m. - 4 p.m.

Thursday 7 p.m. - 9 p.m.

The first two Mondays of every month the Archives open for  
Community Researchers only from 8 a.m. to noon.

Visit our website:

[www.angelfire.com/ny5/fairporthistmuseum](http://www.angelfire.com/ny5/fairporthistmuseum)

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