



Perinton
Historical Society

Historiogram

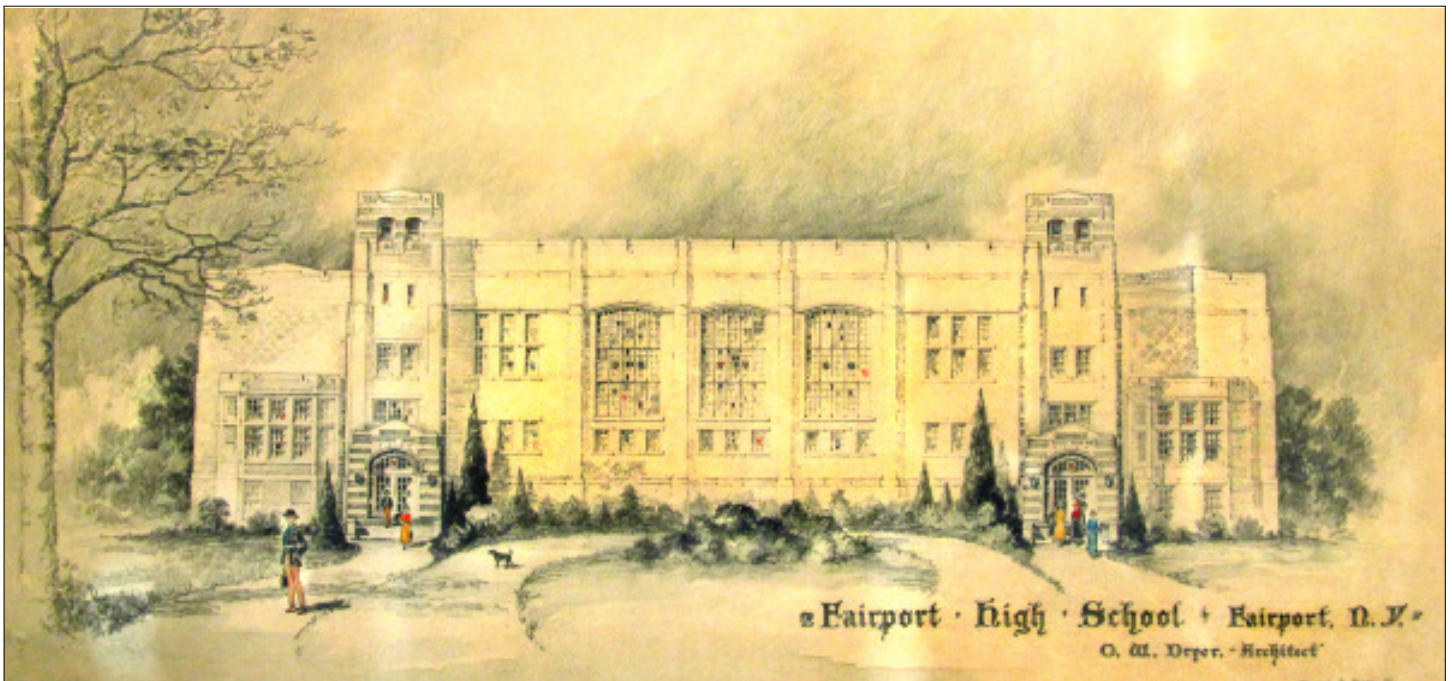
18 Perrin Street
Fairport, NY 14450

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Original Drawing of West Avenue School Donated to Perinton Historical Society

By William Keeler, Curator of the Fairport Historical Museum



Few buildings in Fairport evoke nostalgic memories from so many people as the old Fairport High School on West Avenue. Hundreds of students passed through the halls during this building's history and graduated from what was the only high school in town. The museum recently received a gift of an original presentation drawing of the Fairport High School, designed by Otis Walter Dyer and drawn by his son Harwood Brownell Dryer in 1923.

The design of the building has elements of both Art Deco and Gothic. You can see the Art Deco elements in the strong, straight, almost industrial-like lines gracing the corner towers in the front of the building. This design form was founded in France just after World War I and traveled to America in the

1920s around the time Otis Dryer was designing this building. Gothic influence can be seen in parapets in the roof and the slight rise in the middle of the window framing in the front of the building similar to Gothic structures in earlier eras. The most distinguishing feature of the building is the 720 panes of glass set in three bays. The drawing is in pencil with the exception of small splashes of color for pedestrians on the steps and an occasional colored piece of glass, which breaks up the monotony of the multiple glass panes in the front of the building.

The original design of the West Avenue School came from Otis Dryer (1858-1957.) Otis was born in the town of Rush. He studied architecture under Eugene Ernst of Stuttgart University in 1882. In March of 1884, Otis got his first big

Continued on page 3



Fairport's historic lift bridge during a recent snowstorm. The bridge will be 100 years old this year! Photo by Keith Boas



~ Bob Hunt ~

Comments from your President

Greetings! This is the winter that does not want to let up, for as I write this column, another big storm is moving up the east coast. Northern birds like Cindy and I appreciate the changes that four seasons bring, and yes, we are enjoying this winter as well, although it could be a little bit

warmer. The freshness and beauty of each new snowfall warms our souls, and Cindy often comments on the new white gowns on all the trees and bushes. One needs to get out and enjoy the vitamin N that nature brings our way. So far we have had five days of downhill skiing and two days of cross country skiing.

Phil, the groundhog, predicted six more weeks of winter, so that prophecy should ensure good skiing for our upcoming week in New Hampshire. For many years, we have enjoyed a quaint spot called Christmas Farm Inn, located in Jackson, New Hampshire.

In the fall of each year, I hang several bird feeders from a clothesline across our back patio. With the snow cover this year, we have had a large number of visiting birds stop by. There is an enormous flock of various types of sparrows who hang out in a large rose bush by our back door. They dart all day long from the bush to the feeders and back again. We also enjoy daily visits by the juncos, chickadees, titmouses or titmice (I don't know which is correct; maybe my good friend with the degree from St. Lawrence will let me know.)

A few weeks ago a few redpolls stopped by on their journey through town. Each morning and evening, mourning doves feed off the ground seeds scattered from the feeders by the others. A blue jay stops by on occasion and most evenings just as it is getting dark, two pairs of cardinals come by for their

daily feeding. What beauties they are. If you don't have a feeder, try one next year, for bird watching can bring hours of enjoyment.

Last Sunday the sparrows were suddenly bouncing off the windows like something had spooked them, and sure enough, upon closer observation, we noticed that a cooper hawk had flown into their favorite resting spot, the rose bush. He stayed there for a bit and then flew to a higher observation spot in the large white pine in the side yard. I watched him for about ten minutes, when he suddenly made a beeline, or hawkline I guess, to the large bushes a few houses away. I don't know if he found breakfast or not.

Winter will loosen its grip soon, so you should be thinking about starting your spring plants from seed, another joy as winter winds down. After I finish this article I am going out to cut a few branches from our forsythia bush along the side of the house to bring inside for forcing. Placed in a vase of water, they will be in yellow bloom in about ten days.

Thanks for reading my ramblings and for your continued support of the Perinton Historical Society, and we will chat again next month.

Bob Hunt, President
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HISTORIGRAM

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Perinton Historical Society

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break, working as a draughtsman for Jay Fay in Rochester. The following year the two men formed the partnership of Jay Fay and O.W. Dryer. They worked out of the Osburn House on South Avenue in Rochester, and designed everything from churches and schools to storefronts, houses, barns and apartment buildings. By 1912 the firm was dissolved by mutual consent. Otis Dryer opened his own office in the Cutler Building in Rochester that same year.

Flora Brownell and Otis Dryer were married and had two children, Harwood, born in 1895, and Eleanor, born in 1899. They moved from Arnold Street to a Brighton farm on East Avenue, on the corner of Penfield Road. A small barn behind the house became his office from just after 1937 until he retired in 1951.

Harwood Brownell Dryer followed in his father's footsteps and became a talented architect and artist. He was educated in the Brighton School system and at East High School. In 1914 he attended Cornell University's College of Architecture, and graduated in 1918. In the summers he worked for his father as a draughtsman. Although Harwood was a trained architect, his real love was art. While working with his father, he attended evening school at the Mechanics Institute and the University of Rochester to study fine and applied art. In 1924 he spent the summer in Europe, studying art and landscape architecture. He specialized in watercolors and built up quite a reputation for landscapes, both locally and nationally. As president of the Rochester Art Club in the late 1940s, he spent two weeks in Glacier National Park hiking and sketching the landscape.

Six years after graduating from Architecture School, Harwood Dryer joined his father in a partnership under the name of O.W. Dryer and H.B. Dryer, later changed to simply Dryer and Dryer. The team specialized in church and school designs. The drawing of the Fairport High School, completed in March of 1923, was one of Harwood's first drawings as a partner for this new firm. While it was his father who drew the technical blue prints for the project (he created more than 100 drawings for the building,) it was Harwood who drew our presentation piece to try and sell the concept to the client. Presentation pieces, such as this, are key elements in the design process. Artists, sometimes called delineators, are given the responsibility of transforming highly technical drawings into pleasing art work designed to show the client what the final product will look like.

The drawing of the Fairport High School is a pencil drawing on hard board and measures 15 x 29 inches. Because this was a drawing of a future building, the artist could take some license when creating the piece. Harwood added mature trees and landscaping to the scene, along with a dog and people in the foreground and on the steps of the school to give a sense of scale. Small splashes of watercolor were added to the people and some of the glass panes in the front of the building. The Dryers were awarded the contract and designed the new school, which opened in 1924.

The Dryers continued to get commissions for dozens of buildings in and around Rochester. In Fairport and Perinton alone they had proposed designs for more than 20 buildings from 1903 to 1955. These drawings were donated by the late Virginia Dryer, Harwood's wife, to the University of Rochester in 1993. O.W. Dryer retired in 1951, and died six years later. Harwood Dryer continued to work as an architect until he retired in 1976.

Throughout his life, Harwood Dryer had an appreciation of architecture and older buildings. He worked on several preservation projects. As president of the Rochester Historical Society in 1954, Harwood Dryer was responsible for saving the Livingston Park Seminary from being razed. He arranged for the building to be disassembled and stored until it could be reassembled at the Genesee Country Museum years later.

The West Avenue High School served the Fairport community until 1983 when it was closed and a new high school built on Ayrault Road. The building was converted to condominiums several years later. The glass panes in the three bays in the front of the building were removed and the area converted to small porches to accommodate the building's new use as residences.

The drawing of the West Avenue High School by H.B. Dryer is now on display in the south wing of the Fairport Historical Museum. A limited number of smaller copies of the original have been made, framed and are now for sale in our gift shop for those who would like a copy of this important drawing. Proceeds from the sale of this item are used to help support the Perinton Historical Society and the museum.

Projects in Fairport and Perinton Designed by Architects Otis W. or Harwood B. Dryer 1903-1955

*Blue prints on file at the University of Rochester
Rush Rhees Library's Rare Book Division*

- ▲ First Methodist Episcopal Church, 1903
- ▲ J.R. Clifford House, Church St. corner of Parker, 1912
- ▲ C.A. Dyer House, 27 Dewey Ave., 1918
- ▲ Village of Fairport, District 9, 1919
- ▲ Jacobson Block, West Ave., 1919
- ▲ Shilling Block, West Ave., 1919
- ▲ Fairport School District 12 and 10, 1922
- ▲ Fairport High School, Church St., 1923-1924
- ▲ Fairport High School, West Ave. 1924 & 1934
- ▲ F.A. Greene House, Crescent Rd., 1926
- ▲ J.W. Becker House, Crescent Rd., corner of Fairport Rd., 1926
- ▲ Midvale School, Baird Rd., 1926
- ▲ Yale Parce House, 1927
- ▲ R.W. Jessup House, 52 West Church St., 1936
- ▲ White Haven Memorial Park building, Marsh Rd., 1950
- ▲ A.R. Bowman House, Green Valley Rd., 1955
- ▲ Shacelford House, no date or location
- ▲ Town of Fairport library, no date or location



Outer Space and a Footlocker Filled with Memories

By Betsy Garner Carpenter



I'm fortunate to have a long-time friend who keeps me posted on Fairport area happenings. Last fall one of the news clippings I received was headlined, "Fairport students shoot for the stars." Printed on page 4A of the October 11, 2013 Democrat and Chronicle, the staff writer detailed how Fairport High School students were participating in a cooperative venture with NASA, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. The author wrote that the "students decided to focus on the problem of bacterial growth on the space station," orbiting 230 miles above the earth's surface. He noted that five teachers including Gene Gordon, a physics teacher, were serving as advisors for the project.

This reminded me of a former Fairport High School physics teacher, Raymond O. Bantle, who taught secondary students for 25 years (1953-1978), and whose name is included on Fairport School District's Education Wall of Distinction. I took Mr. Bantle's general science course in my freshman year. Given my flimsy grasp of mathematics, I knew better than to attempt his physics class. I will, however, always recall that he was a fine educator, one of three science teachers (Betty McKnight, Doris Odell, and Mr. Bantle) to whom our Class of 1958 dedicated its yearbook, the Hour Glass.

Over the decades I've gathered treasures that are important to me. This stash includes six FHS yearbooks, 1953 to 1958, housed in my one and only footlocker. Purchased in 1958, this unwieldy piece of luggage carried my college clothes, including Bermuda shorts and crinolines, from Fairport to central Ohio (thankfully styles have changed.) It has stayed with me through many moves sometimes filled with books, occasionally cradling my young son's toys, and for the past 30 years serving as "my vault" for a lifetime of remembrances.

In preparation for our class of 1958's fiftieth reunion, I retrieved these yearbooks from the "vault." On top of the pile was our class's amazing "purple people eater" colored Hour

Glass. While previous yearbook covers were comparatively sedate, ours was a bold, deep purple highlighted by gold and white interpretations of outer space. The front cover was designed by Sue Goetzman while the back cover featured the artwork of Betsy Kraai. Pat Rudy's concept of deep space graced the fly leaves of both covers. A space *man* caricature, intro-



duced to us on the Forword page, was designed by Karen Carlson and served as our guide. Yes, back in 1958 there was little if any thought given to the possibility of a woman soaring into outer space! Several classmates including Paul Kelly, Faye Myers, Ron Jensen and Dick Bostian incorporated this character in their artistic representations for different sections of the book.

The beginning sentences of our foreword read: "The 1958 Hour Glass has endeavored to portray life at Fairport Central High School. This year we have centered our theme around the present space age. Like rockets being launched into space we are being readied by high school for the fast moving life of our own world." Ha! In retrospect, little did we know how fast "fast" was going to be!

Our country's cold war with the USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) was in full swing by the mid-1950s. The exploration of space was a significant component of this, one that fascinated us as we learned about it from that new medium, **television!** It was a blow to our national pride when, on October 4, 1957, Soviet scientists launched Sputnik 1, the first man-made object to orbit the Earth. A month later, on November 3, 1957, Sputnik 2, carrying the dog Laika, remained in orbit for seven days. I must admit that as a seventeen year old, I was much more concerned about Laika's well-being than about our country's "second place" in the initial phases of this race.

As a nation, we were relieved when, on January 31, 1958, our first US satellite, Explorer 1, successfully lifted off from Cape Canaveral. It carried a scientific experiment designed by James A. Van Allen, an experiment that allowed us to discover the Earth's radiation belt. Less than two months later, Vanguard 1, engineered by scientists at our Naval Research Laboratory and the first solar powered satellite, was successfully launched and transmitted information for three years. The "playing field" had been leveled. The space race was on!

Members of our Class of 1958 were aware of all this. However, for most of us, interest in the “space race” did not top our list of concerns. We were consumed with planning for more immediate events such as the Senior Ball, our class play, our trip to New York City, and, lest we forget, what each of us planned to do after graduation.

Fortunately for us, two dedicated FHS teachers who served as our Hour Glass yearbook advisors deserve immense credit for focusing our attention on the big picture—Lloyd D. Smith, our citizenship education teacher, and Esda T. Street, our school’s art teacher. How could those of us who experienced any of Mrs. Street’s art classes ever forget her warm greetings, always referring to each of us a “dear heart?” We knew her favorite color was purple (aha, hence our yearbook’s color scheme), and that she was able to make an artist out of almost anyone who could hold a pencil. I can personally attest to this fact for I did my best to draw the profile of a horse’s head. It was awful! I colored it purple. Voila! Mrs. Street liked it, and, much to my horror, included it in our high school display case.

And Mr. Smith, just 18 years our senior, could, in his quiet, unassuming way, move mountains—us! Although the years have dimmed my exact recollection of this, I am sure he persuaded us that science was essential, that our yearbook’s dedication should be to our capable FHS science faculty, and that our Hour Glass theme should be space oriented. How far-sighted of him!



Some of our school mates “got it,” such as Jack Cummings, our director of physical education’s eldest son. Although younger than us, Jack created his concept of a space satellite for the annual Science Fair. The Hour Glass caption for the above photo read, “Sputniks! Space Satellites! Mr. Warner admires the model of a satellite made by Jack Cummings for the 1957 Fair.” Leon Warner was our high school’s lone guidance counselor, Future Teachers of America advisor, and Student Patrol advisor. He “multi-tasked” long before the term became popular!

Today I’m filled with nostalgia as I leaf through the pages of our 1958 Hour Glass. I could say that it’s a “trip back in

time” as I turn from one class photo to the next, each labeled with its T-TIME. Yes, this undoubtedly was another Mr. Smith “touch.” The concept of T-TIME, or travel time, still sparks scientific debate. For us, it was simply a way to tell each class’s graduation year.

It would be presumptuous of me to propose that our space-age interpretation more than five decades ago foreshadowed the amazing research currently being done by Fairport High School students. As reported, during the current school year, Fairport is engaged in the only collaborative effort between NASA and a New York State school. What an immense honor, as well as a fabulous creative opportunity.

But it might be fun for these students and their faculty advisors to visit the Fairport Historical Museum on Perrin Street where a copy of the 1958 Hour Glass is housed. I’ll wager there would be a few smiles and many chuckles as they turn its pages. And I must add that Sheb Wooley’s song, “The Purple Eater,” topped the Billboard charts in 1958!



Special Recognition Level Memberships

A membership and contribution of any amount are greatly appreciated and important to the future of the PHS. Business memberships will be listed as supporters in each issue of the HISTORIGRAM, on the PHS website and at the museum. The Deland, Potter and Perrin memberships will be recognized once in the HISTORIGRAM and listed on the website and at the museum, unless they prefer to be anonymous.

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Perinton Historical Society



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1259 Fairport Road - Fairport, NY 14450
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Tuesday, March 18, 7:30 p.m.
At the Fairport Historical Museum

Gamewell Telegraph Fire Alarm System

Presented by Matt Wells

A series of alarm boxes mounted on pedestals or telephone poles was used for notifying the fire department of a fire. Early boxes used this telegraph system, and were the main method of calling the fire department to a neighborhood in the days before people had telephones.

When the lever on the box was pulled, a spring-loaded wheel spun and tapped out a signal onto the fire alarm telegraph wire indicating the box number. The receiver (ticker tape) and bell at a fire station would then match the number to the neighborhood. Volunteer departments would also have a Diaphone horn that sounded the box number. This was the system used in the Fairport fire district.

Presenter Matt Wells wanted to be a firefighter since he was a young child. His father has been a volunteer fireman in Fairport for 42 years, so much of Matt's childhood was spent around the fire station. Matt became an Explorer with the Egypt Fire Department when he was 14 years old. At age 18, he joined the Fairport Fire Department, where he has been a member for the past 24 years. Matt has served as a career firefighter with the City of Rochester for the past 15 years. Matt's own collection of Gamewell memorabilia began 20 years ago after he spotted a box alarm at a flea market. He has acquired other items in his collection through the Internet and eBay auctions.



An early Gamewell fire alarm on display at the museum

Photo by Vicki Masters Profitt



Pictured here are some of the vintage bridal gowns and one of the wedding-group photographs that are featured in the new exhibit, *Decades of I Do*, opening at the museum on March 1st.

Photos by Vicki Masters Profitt

New Exhibit

Decades of I Do: Wedding Gowns of the 20th Century

**Debuts at the Fairport Museum
on March 1st**

Decades of I Do celebrates 100 years of 20th century brides in this new exhibit, which runs from March 1–July 31, at the museum. Eleven exquisite wedding gowns are showcased, seven of which come directly from the collection of the Perinton Historical Society, with an additional four dresses on loan from their owners. Wedding announcements and photos of the brides accompany many of the gowns, which date from as early as 1903 to the most recent 1997 gown. Come visit the Fairport Historical Museum to see the changes in styles throughout the years.

Decades of I Do is open during regular museum hours. And as always, admission and parking are free.

Children's Author Appearance

Saturday, March 22



Meet Rosalie Gabbert, author of the children's book, *Mr. Bee Man: The Story of Lorenzo Lorraine Langstroth, Father of American Beekeeping*, as she signs copies of her book. The event will take place at the museum on Saturday, March 22, from 9:30–10:30 a.m.

This picture book biography introduces young readers to Lorenzo Lorraine Langstroth,

“Father of American Beekeeping.” As a young boy in the early 1800s, Lorenzo loved to explore nature with its ants, cicadas, wasps and flies. When he grew older, Lorenzo became inquisitive about the honey bee. Why did honey hunters have to dig into bee nests found in tree trunks and boxes for a taste of the sweet stuff? Lorenzo's discovery of “bee space,” which is five-sixteenths of an inch, led to his invention of the movable frame hive. This revolutionized beekeeping all over the world and is still used today.

Sheila Jarkins created the illustrations to imitate the traditional work of the nineteenth century.

Rosalie Gabbert had retired from 10 years teaching in the early education field and found herself as a library children's specialist. Meanwhile, Benson, her apiculturist husband, was gradually building his honey bee business. Every hive body, frame, bottom board, inner cover and outer cover was precision cut from pine boards. Rosalie questioned the perfectness of the fit and was told “bee space” was critical for accurate beekeeping practice. And furthermore, Langstroth was responsible for this discovery. That peeked Rosalie's interest, especially when she could find no book for children regarding Langstroth. She decided to fix that, and after five years of lengthy research, *Mr. Bee Man* was finally published.

Hardcover \$20.00, softcover \$15.00, cash or checks accepted. Free admission and parking.

Volunteer at the Fairport Historical Museum

We are always looking for additional volunteers and would love to add you to our roster. Each museum shift consists of two volunteers who work a two-hour shift once a month. We especially need volunteers to cover Saturday mornings from 9:00–11:00 a.m.

If you are interested in volunteering at the Fairport Historical Museum, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator Gail Black at gcblack@rochester.rr.com for more information.



Decades of I Do: Grand opening on Saturday morning, March 1st, at the Fairport Historical Museum.

Photo by Vicki Masters Proffitt

Upcoming Events

At the Fairport Historical Museum

Saturday, March 1

9:00 a.m.

Our museum opens for the 2014 season with the grand opening of the exhibit:

Decades of I Do: Wedding Gowns of the 20th Century

Tuesday, March 18

7:30 p.m.

Program: *The History of the Gamewell Telegraph Fire Alarm System in Fairport*. Presented by Matt Wells

Saturday, March 22

9:30-11:30 a.m.

Meet children's author Rosalie Gabbert as she signs copies of her book, *Mr. Bee Man: The Story of Lorenzo Lorraine Langstroth, Father of American Beekeeping*.

Tuesday, April 15

7:30 p.m.

Program: *Abandoned: The Untold Story of Orphan Asylums* Presented and book signing by Michael Keene

At Perinton Park Pavilion

Tuesday, May 20

6:00 p.m.

Annual Meeting and Picnic for members of the Perinton Historical Society

At Greenvale Rural Cemetery

Tuesday, June 17

7:00 p.m.

Illuminated History tour: Actors portraying cemetery residents



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Recent photo of the school on West Avenue, now residential condominiums. For information on the architects, read the article on pages 1 and 3 in this issue of HISTORIGRAM.

Fairport Historical Museum

18 Perrin Street, Fairport, NY 14450

Beginning March 1st, the museum will be open to the public on Saturdays, Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays at the hours listed below:

Hours

Saturday	9:00–11:00 a.m.
Sunday	2:00–4:00 p.m.
Tuesday	2:00–4:00 p.m.
Thursday	7:00–9:00 p.m.

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

www.PerintonHistoricalSociety.org