

Pat Ahern, Jerry Earl and the USS Missouri

By Keith Boas

More than 600 Perinton men and women served in the United States Armed Forces during World War II. Of those, 31 lost their lives. Two who survived had quite a story to tell when they returned home to Fairport after the war.

Floating on Japan's Tokyo Bay on the morning of September 2, 1945, the mighty battleship USS Missouri was boarded by a delegation of Japanese dignitaries—adorned with formal top hats and morning coats. They came to surrender the Empire of Japan to the Allies, a final step which would officially end the savage conflict of World War II.

Those accepting the surrender included General Douglas MacArthur—Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz, and Admiral William Halsey—Commander of the 3rd Fleet. Along with them were official representatives from Australia, Canada, France, New Zealand, the Republic of China, the UK, the USSR and the Netherlands.

Heavy, low clouds hung over the Missouri during the ceremony. But just as the event concluded, the clouds parted, the sun came out, and more than 1,500 Allied aircraft soared over the ship. It was reported to be the mightiest display of air power ever seen.

Among the more than 2,700 U.S. Navy and Allied personnel on board the massive, 45,000-ton battleship were Fairport boys Patrick Henry Ahern and Gerald (Jerry) William Earl. Considering the huge crowd of spectators and photographers, it is not clear whether the young men actually witnessed the signing of surrender by the Japanese. But the fact that they were aboard the Missouri was enough to pump pride into the hearts of local residents when word of Japan's surrender on the ship reached Fairport.

Pat Ahern became an instant, local hero when news reached his family on Midvale Drive that the Missouri had hosted the surrender ceremony. Roger Boas, who lived just a few houses away on Midvale Drive, was



Spectators and photographers crowd the USS Missouri's superstructure to witness the formal ceremonies marking Japan's surrender.

Public domain photo from the U.S. National Archives



~ **Bob Hunt** ~

Comments from your President

August 14, 2015: I promised to tell you about the capture of John Fillmore II by pirates this month, but due to space limitations, I have submitted a short column; I will save this exciting tale for next month.

However, I do have something to report about Millard Fillmore.

About a month ago, I received a phone call from Patty Lear, a fairly new member of PHS, who after reading my comments on President Fillmore, informed me that her husband Bill Lear was also related to Fillmore, but wasn't exactly sure how. I invited her over to review the genealogy material I had collected over the years. She took the material with her to share with her sister and found they are also related, as second cousins to Millard through another son of John Fillmore II named Luther. So I guess that means Bill Lear and I are related.

We are still awaiting the painting of the museum to begin under a contract awarded by the Village. We also have been receiving help through a volunteer provided by the Village. She has cleaned and painted our folding chairs and applied mulch to the bushes in the front yard. If you have a few moments to relax, please come and sit in the garden behind the museum, so beautifully maintained by the Greenbrier Garden Club.

Cindy and I have enjoyed several bicycle trips this spring and summer—Franklin, PA where we biked along old railroad beds that have been paved and were once used to service the many oil wells in the area. The trails are along the Allegheny River with many vistas to enjoy the scenery. We have also biked around Niagara on the Lake, and spent a few days with the family biking along Pine Creek in Pennsylvania, just below Wellsboro, a nice 64-mile-long trail. And finally, this week we biked to Adams Basin to spend a night at the B&B owned by Pat and Dave Haines. Dave is the president of the Ogden Historical Society (I believe that is the correct name), a recently created society and one which we helped a bit by sharing some organizational material with them. Their museum is just south of Adams Basin in the Pulver House on Washington Street. Dave also plays along with Keith Boas in the Perinton Concert Band.

Thanks for your continued support of PHS and we will chat again next month, when maybe they will give me a bit more space.

Bob Hunt, President
585-415-7053, rhunt1@rochester.rr.com



Potter Place—Past & Present...

...is the theme for our 36th annual House Tour. On October 4th from 1:00–5:00 p.m., there'll be a feast of architectural styles to view! From Church St. to Potter Pl. to Hulburt Ave., the architectural styles of the 1920s, '30s and '40s will be showcased. These include Colonial Revival, Craftsman, Prairie, Neo-Classical, Tudor Revival, and Minimal Traditional.

In addition to touring seven lovely homes, visit the Potter grounds to learn more about the Potter family and its legacy:

- Potter Memorial, built by Spencer Philbrick, a local businessman, and once the grand home of Alfred and Hulda Potter, and their children, Alice, Bertha, and Fred
- Carriage Barn and mounting block, reminders of another era of transportation
- Veterans Memorial, originally constructed in 1946, modified in 1987, and reconstructed and dedicated in 2014
- Privy (outhouse), a rare brick *three-holer* moved from 76 E. Church Street to its present location behind the Memorial
- Community Gardens, once WWII victory gardens, on land made available by Fred Potter

The Potter Memorial, including all these areas, was designated a Village landmark in June 2010.

Society members will receive their tickets in the mail. Others who want to attend will need to become members. You can find a membership form on page nine of this issue of the *Historigram*. Forms are also available at the museum, Perinton Town Hall and Fairport Village Hall.

During the tour, we will also hold a reception at the Potter Mansion. Stop by to view historical displays and enjoy some cider and cookies.



This stately 1910 home was built in the Prairie Box or Four Square style with Craftsman features.

A Call for Docents: Please support the PHS by volunteering to welcome tour goers to the homes. Contact Elaine Lanni at 585-766-5467 or email at eellaannii@gmail.com to volunteer. This is a great opportunity to meet other members of the Historical Society and promote the history of our town!

The 2015 Perinton Historical Society Scholarship has been awarded to two Fairport High School seniors. Below is Seth Weidman's winning submission. Seth will be attending Rochester Institute of Technology, and has received a \$1,000 scholarship. Next month the Historigram will feature the winning essay of Daniel Smith, whose topic is related to Perinton's involvement in the Underground Railroad.

Fairport's First Congregational United Church of Christ

By Seth Weidman



A postcard view from the early 1900s

I'd always wondered about the history of my church; when it was formed, how it had changed over the years, and since my church is currently in transition (searching for a new pastor after our long-time pastor retired), I was curious about previous ministers. This scholarship application gave me the opportunity and incentive to satisfy my curiosity. Here's what I learned.

The church was founded in 1824 in the home of Jesse Perrin, with the original congregation consisting of only nine members. Perrin, originally from Massachusetts, is one of Perinton's pioneer settlers, and he fought as a sergeant in the Revolutionary War. The original nine included six women, which I found surprising. I would have guessed that at this period in history, more men would have been involved in a church's creation.

This is the oldest congregation in the Town of Perinton. The congregation met primarily in member's homes or school houses until the first church building was erected in 1833 at 26 E. Church Street in Fairport—its present site. A second, larger building was added at the same location in 1844, when the original building was moved to West Church Street. This building was used until 1868, when it was also moved, this time, to West Avenue. The main part of the building, in which I worship today, was built in 1869 for less than \$18,000! A few years later, Sunday School rooms were added, and in 1917, "toilet rooms" were built.

The sanctuary was changed to the way it is today in 1946. The beautiful sanctuary windows that I admire each week were restored in 1960. In 1971, another addition was added, creating the building we see today. This addition has also been used for years as home to the Bertha Agor Memorial Nursery School.



1924 interior view of the Congregational Church

I was pleased to learn that my congregation has been fairly progressive, noting the 1831 resolution that gave female members "if they wish, "...a vote in all matters that come before the church." This was nearly 75 years before females gained the right to vote in political elections! I also found it interesting that in 1835, Daniel Willson was almost removed from the church for "Sabbath breaking" because he

Continued on page 7

From Gerald Earl
Dear Friends:

Boy, it sure feels good to get back to the states, and I want to thank everyone in the War Service club for the wonderful cookies. We have been in port only six days now in the last 67 days, and let me tell you it sure is a welcome gift when I get the Fairport Herald-Mail so I can read what the folks way back there are doing. When you won't see land for over a month you get sort of lonesome, but it's things like the Herald-Mail that put the new spirit in you when you do get in port. I'd like to tell the folks there about what we have done but the censor doesn't allow it. I see in your paper where my brother is in Australia, and it sure was news to me, as we were near there too.

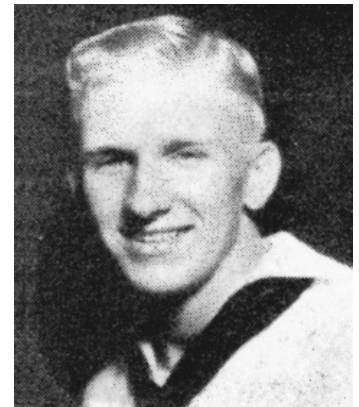
I'll have to close now, so keep up the good work, Fairport, and you can bet your bottom dollar that the navy will do their part.

Love to all,
Gerald Earl
U. S. S. Colorado
Sea 1/c Radio Technician
Care Fleet Post Office
San Francisco, Calif.

7/2/42



Seaman 1st Class Patrick Ahern



Seaman 3rd Class Gerald Earl

special dispensation because of his active military service.

Later, in the 1960s, Pat was an avid Scout leader and became Assistant Scoutmaster to the new Fairport Troop 142.

In Pat's *Town of Perinton War Service Record*, there was space to list previous military training and memberships with organizations such as the National Guard and ROTC. In the "Other" category, Pat wrote "Boy Scouts."

Pat Ahern died at the age of 64 on February 14, 1991.

Seaman 3rd Class Gerald Earl was the son of William and Ruth Earl of 41 Roselawn Avenue. He was born on July 8, 1924. Jerry enlisted in Rochester at the age of 17 on January 2, 1942 and was honorably discharged at Sampson Naval Training Station in October of 1945.

William, Jerry's father, also served in the Navy during the World War II and was a Seaman 1st Class. Jerry's brother Paul, too, was a Seaman in the Navy during the war (see newspaper articles).

only nine years old at the time. He recalls how his parents and neighbors talked for days about young Pat, the boy who had "witnessed" the surrender. No doubt, there was a similar buzz of excitement and pride among the residents of Roselawn Avenue, where Jerry Earl's family lived.

Seaman 1st Class Patrick Ahern was son to Alfred (Shorty) and Millie Ahern of 12 Midvale Drive (later re-numbered to 105). Pat was born on August 19, 1926. He enlisted in February of 1943 at the age of 17, and was discharged on June 3, 1946.

Being involved with the Boy Scouts was an important part of Pat Ahern's life, as both a teenager and later a father with two sons. In November of 1944, the local newspaper reported that Pat—home on a brief 24-hour Navy leave—was awarded the rank of Life Scout at a special meeting of the District Advancement Committee. And Scout records list him as the first Eagle Scout of Fairport Troop 208, awarded to him on December 1, 1945. Given the fact that Pat had turned age 18 earlier, on August of 1944, and that a boy can no longer be a Boy Scout once he reaches 18, Pat might have received



Arriving for the surrender ceremonies—
The Japanese delegation on board USS Missouri
Public domain photo from the U.S. National Archives



General MacArthur signing surrender terms on the USS Missouri

Public domain photo from the U.S. National Archives

A Little-known Fact

280 Allied warships were floating in Tokyo Bay during the surrender ceremonies on September 2, 1945—but no aircraft carriers. They were floating far outside the bay, held in reserve, in case the Empire of Japan changed its mind.

Brothers Meet in Marshall Islands ^{5/4/44}

Gerald Earl, radioman second class, has returned to duty with the Pacific fleet after spending his first leave at home since the war started. He has seen action in all parts of the Pacific and the latest ones were: Tarawa, Campoflague and Burlesque in the Kawajelein Atolls, Heartstring, Fragile and Parry Islands in the Eniwetok Atolls and was in a screening force that attacked Truk. Some of the other places he has been include Pearl Harbor, Fiji Islands, Efate, Esperito Santos, Santa Cruz and the Solomon Islands area.

The greatest surprise he has had was when they went into the lagoon at Majuro, a newly taken Jap stronghold in the Marshall Islands and saw his brother Paul, who is a machinist mate 1c in the Navy.

Both boys are the sons of William C. Earl ship fitter 1c who is serving in the Seabees and Mrs. Earl of Rose-lawn Ave.

Following the surrender ceremony, General MacArthur broadcast, via radio, this speech to the world:

Today the guns are silent. A great tragedy has ended. A great victory has been won.

As I look back upon the long, tortuous trail from those grim days of Bataan and Corregidor; when an entire world lived in fear; when democracy was on the defensive everywhere, when modern civilization trembled in the balance, I thank a merciful God that he has given us the faith, the courage and the power from which to mold victory. We have known the bitterness of defeat and the exultation of triumph, and from both we have learned there can be no turning back. We must go forward to preserve in peace what we won in war.

A new era is upon us. Even the lesson of victory itself brings with it profound concern, both for our future security and the survival of civilization. The destructiveness of the war potential, through progressive advances in scientific discovery, has in fact now reached a point which revises the traditional concepts of war.

Men since the beginning of time have sought peace... Military alliances, balances of power, leagues of nations, all in turn failed, leaving the only path to be by way of the crucible of war. We have had our last chance. If we do not now devise some greater and more equitable system, Armageddon will be at our door. The problem basically is theological and involves a spiritual recrudescence and improvement of human character that will synchronize with our almost matchless advances in science, art, literature and all material and cultural development of the past two thousand years. It must be of the spirit if we are to save the flesh.

Source: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/macarthur>





July 4th Parade Float

What do you get when you—

- Recycle a 4x8-foot plywood box that has been used for two previous floats?
- Several cardboard bicycle boxes donated by RV&E and cut to specific measurements?
- Some paint and several rolls of Gorilla tape?
- Several PHS dedicated volunteers donating their time and talent to put it all together and load the project on a donated Ricci's flatbed truck with the able assistance of driver John MacDonald for the sixth time?
- Add three people: Heather, Taryn and Tristan Bauer, who have ridden on all six floats, to ride on the truck and pass out candy?

ANSWER: A float commemorating the 80th anniversary of the founding of the Perinton Historical Society and looks like the front of the museum.

Thanks to Lucy McCormick, Sharon Catonese, May Thomson, Sue Templeton, Sue Broda, Anne Johnston, Dave and Sue Scheirer, Dave and Barb Wild, Bob Hunt and Harold and Ann Castle who have generously given their time and talent to build six floats since 2009.

We have become the ultimate recyclers. The only part of our float that was new was the shiny new Ricci's flatbed truck. Hope you had a chance to see our latest creation.

PHS Receives \$1,000 Donation from Friends of Fairport

On June 25th, PHS President Bob Hunt and Fairport Historical Museum Director Vicki Masters Proffitt attended a special ceremony in Fairport High School at which they accepted a check for \$1,000 from the Friends of Fairport. The PHS gratefully acknowledges the donation from this organization, which is comprised of Fairport school employees, and is thankful for their support.

Special Recognition Level Memberships—As of August 16, 2015

Business (\$100)

Ed Bradford, Liftbridge Financial Advisors
6 North Main Street, Suite 400w, Fairport <http://liftbridgefinancial.com>

Suzanne Lee Personal Histories
33 Chesham Way, Fairport
Phone: 585-267-6189 Website: <http://SLeePersonalHistories.com>

Joel Cuminale, Turning Point Signs & Design
3 Railroad Street, Fairport Website: <http://www.tpsigns.com>

Fairport Village Inn, Wayne and Patty Beckwith
103 North Main Street, Fairport
Phone: 585-388-011 Website: <http://www.thefvi.com>

Robert Ruhland, Keller Williams Realty
2000 Winton Road S. Bldg. 1, Rochester, NY 14618
Phone: 585-303-6607 Website: <http://bobruhland.yourkwagent.com>

DeLand (\$100–\$249)

James and Barbra Boyle
Richard D. Bulman
Norman Horton
Bill and Pat May
Fritz and Georgia May
Robert and Barbara Shaw
Charlie and Suzanne Tholstrup
Jim and Karen Unckless
Anonymous (2)

Potter (\$250–\$499)

Frank and Catherine Angevine

FHS Class of 1965 Celebrates Its 50th Anniversary



PHS member Bill Keplinger and FHS Class of 1965 alumnus Michael Schell at Jean Keplinger's presentation on July 25th.

The alumni were also treated to a display at the museum featuring Class of 1965 memorabilia.

Congratulations to the FHS Class of 1965, which celebrated its 50th anniversary the weekend of July 24th. The PHS was thrilled to host the celebrants at the museum, with a presentation by former Town Historian Jean Keplinger and display of class memorabilia. We appreciate the assistance of Class of 1965 members Nancy Antell Slaybaugh and Terry Holt, and museum volunteers Nancy Goodermote and Scott Winner, who helped staff this event.

"Fairport's First Congregational..." continued from page 3

harvested his grain on a Sunday. This is ironic because, this past fall, my part-time job required me to work Sunday mornings, making it necessary for me to skip church activities!

I discovered that, since the church's inception, there have been 32 pastors, with some serving less than a year, and the longest serving almost 30 years. My church has always been self-governing, having been established following congregational church principles. The opportunity was presented in the 1830s to join with the Presbyterian Church in Bushnell's Basin, but the congregation declined this offer. Apparently, the proposition was laid before them, and "the New England eye of the church began to see through the plot, and the New England blood began to boil, and the scheme failed."



Entryway to Fairport's First Congregational Church of Christ
Photo by Bill Poray

In 1961, the First Congregational Church joined the United Church of Christ (UCC), which is a union of Evangelical, Reformed, and Congregational churches. Learning about my church's rich history has made me appreciate those who sat in these pews before me and all they did to establish, grow and maintain the church in which I worship today.



Yuletide Traditions Returns for Its Second Year

The Perinton Historical Society is pleased to announce that its Yuletide Traditions fundraiser will be held again this year, and will feature even more beautiful items donated by individuals, businesses and organizations for a silent auction to benefit the PHS. Additional information is forthcoming.

Upcoming Events

Tuesday, September 15, 7:00 p.m. at the museum

Movies in World War II, program by Donovan Shilling. World War II was a dramatic time for many people. The motion picture industry was especially alert to concerns the public had for our soldiers fighting overseas. Besides producing the usual movies, they made such patriotic films as *Guadalcanal Diary*, *One Minute to Zero*, *Five Graves to Cairo* and the classic *Casablanca*. They also made full-length feature productions called *The Ram-parts We Watch*. Come hear about how the public reacted to these wartime movies, many of which were shown at Fairport's own Temple Theatre.

Fairport native Donovan Shilling is a retired teacher and school principal. He has also taught classes on local history at the Rochester Museum and Science Center for more than 20 years. Shilling has written 15 books about characters, places and events in Rochester.

Now through October 18th during regular museum hours

World War II Memorabilia, exhibit from David Wild's collection on display at the museum

Saturday, September 26th, 10:00-11:30 a.m. at the museum

Old-Fashioned Game Day, kids' event

Come rain or shine and play games of yesteryear.

Presenter: Suzanne Lee

Sunday, October 4th from 1:00-5:00 p.m.

House Tour: Potter Place—Past and Present

Tuesday, October 20th, 7:00 p.m. at the museum

Question of Sanity: The True Story of Female Serial Killers in 19th Century New York

Presenter: Michael T. Keene

Tuesday, November 17th at the museum

6:00 p.m., *Yuletide Traditions*

Opening bids accepted for silent auction holiday items

7:00 p.m., *Historic Highlights & Heartwarming Discoveries: Collection of Stories*

Presenter: Bill Poray

Saturday, December 5th, 10:30-11:30 a.m. at the museum

Book Signing by Author Donovan Shilling who will sign copies of *A Towpath Tale*, *Rochester's Movie Mania* and *Made in Rochester*, plus several other titles.

Tuesday, December 8th, 6:00-7:00 p.m. at the museum

Annual Holiday Party & Program: History of Band Organs & Christmas Sing-Along

Presenter: Tim Wagner

Yuletide Traditions: Final bids accepted for silent auction. Winners will be announced at the end of the Mr. Wagner's program. Please bring a dessert to pass.

Outline *Architectural Style Guide* Complete

By Doris Davis-Fritsch and Catherine Angevine

With the completion of the final six styles, Modernistic, Minimal Traditional, Ranch, Split Level, Shed and Contemporary, the online Architectural Styles Guide is finished.

The project began in 2009, when the Historic Structures Committee came across a Village architectural style guide that Ruth Ewell created in 1988. Wouldn't it be fun to revisit and update this wonderful old guide? And now we had a website where we could post photos of actual Village homes to match the architectural descriptions in the guide. Little did we know that it would take us six years to complete and we would research twenty three styles.

It is amazing how many architectural styles our little Village contains. Almost every example of architectural history is on our streets, and most of the photo examples come from Village housing stock. The styles range from simple folk houses to grand homes designed by nationally known architects such as John Rochester Thomas or John Foster Warner, and everything in between.

When we chose a house for a style example, we stayed as close as possible to the original build. This was not easy as house features have been added on, repaired and replaced over the years.

Please visit the Architectural Styles Guide on the PHS website at perintonhistoricalsociety.org. Click on History then go to Architectural Styles. Also, take the Tour! Print out the "Introduction to Architectural Styles in the Village of Fairport" tour booklet. Challenge yourself to find and name all the different styles in the Village.

As a final assignment we asked ourselves what are our favorite styles and why. Here they are:

Doris chose **Queen Anne**:

"I grew up in a house of this style in a small town, much like Fairport. I did not know it was a specific style, just that it was a Victorian house. As it turns out, we have learned that Victorian refers to an era, not a style. During this period you can find structures built in six different styles. The Queen Anne has steeply pitched, irregular roof lines, cutaway bay windows and features such as wrap-around porches, upstairs inset porches, turrets, spindle work and decorative shingles. It is all about avoiding smooth surfaces—anything goes! Fairport has many examples of this style with two outstanding examples at 11 and 48 West Church Street."



11 West Church Street—
A fine example of Queen Anne style architecture

*Vintage photo from the collection of the
Perinton Historical Society*

Catherine chose **Minimal Traditional**:

"For some reason, these simple little Depression and post-war era houses appealed to me. Maybe it's because the Depression had such an impact on my family. Or, perhaps, it's because I remember—as a child—going through one for sale when my sister and brother in law, a returning WWII veteran, were looking for an affordable home. They were built by a government and a society willing to come together in a unique alliance when the nation was deeply troubled. These were small, simple houses built when there was not much money but a keen desire to have a home. They are all over the Village. In fact, once you recognize the form, you will see them everywhere."

Photos and Web Design: Doris Davis-Fritsch
Research and Text: Catherine Angevine

*Historic Structures Committee
Perinton Historical Society*



Support the Perinton Historical Society with Your Membership

If you haven't already renewed your annual membership in PHS or would like to join for the first time, please fill in the form below and send in now. All memberships renewed before October 1th will include admission to the October 4th house tour. We hope to hear from you soon.

Special Recognition Levels: Our membership form includes special recognition levels of membership authorized by the Board of Trustees. The Business membership will acknowledge the member as a supporter of the Perinton Historical Society in each issue of the *Historigram*, on the PHS website and at the museum. The DeLand, Potter and Perrin memberships acknowledge greater monetary contributions: These members will be recognized once in the *Historigram* and listed on the website and at the museum, unless they prefer to remain anonymous.

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ City, State & Zip: _____

E-mail Address: _____ *Historigram*: Email () US Mail ()

Please check the level of membership you prefer:

- () Individual\$15
- () Family\$25
- () Sr. Single [65 or older]\$10
- () Sr. Couple\$15
- () Patron\$50
- () Extra Contribution\$_____

Special Recognition Levels:

- () Business\$100
- () DeLand\$100–\$249
- () Potter\$250–\$500
- () Perrin\$500 & above

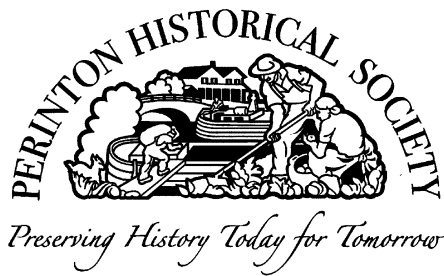
Our membership year runs from
September 1st to August 31st

To make our programs successful, we depend on the generous gift of your time and talents. Please consider volunteering by joining a committee.

Check areas of interest:

- () Board of Trustees – governing body for PHS
- () Finance Committee – budgeting, grant writing, gift shop
- () Fundraising – Yuletide Traditions, etc.
- () Education – helping with adult and children's programs
- () Museum Volunteer – 2 hours per month
- () Inventory of Museum Holdings
- () Property Committee – upkeep of the facility
- () *Historigram* – articles, editing, production, distribution
- () Historic Tours – house, cemetery, landmarks
- () Technology Committee – assessment, planning, implementing
- () Seasonal Projects – parades, Canal Days, etc.
- () Other – Give us your ideas _____

Please make checks payable to **Perinton Historical Society, 18 Perrin Street, Fairport, NY 14450**



Non-Profit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
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Fairport, NY 14450



The front door of the Kott residence at 60 Potter Place features a one-of-a-kind wreath made of baseballs, gathered from their lawn, that found their way from the athletic fields across the street. See it and more at our annual **House Tour** on October 4th.

For more information, see page two.

Fairport Historical Museum

18 Perrin Street, Fairport, NY 14450

The museum is open to the public on Saturdays, Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays at the hours below:

Saturday 10:00 a.m.–Noon	Tuesday 2:00–4:00 p.m.
Sunday 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 **585-223-3989**.

www.PerintonHistoricalSociety.org