

The Perinton Sesquicentennial Aqua Parade—Conclusion July 22, 1962

By Patrick L. and Frank N. Pittinaro

In 1962 Perinton celebrated its sesquicentennial. A centerpiece of the festivities was an Aqua Parade on the canal. Our father, Francis (Frank) Pittinaro, was chairman of the event.

Personal Recollections of the Authors

Frank N. Pittinaro:

The Aqua Parade was two days before my 12th birthday and I was aboard Float 18, the Aqua Car. I boarded the Aqua Car at the Fairport Marina. Being in a float gave me a first-hand view of the entire parade route and the people all along the banks of the canal. The Parker Street Bridge was full of people, and there were crowds all along the canal wall by Dudley's Lumber yard. The Main Street Bridge was wall-to-wall people and there were viewers behind all the houses along the route.

When we made the corner past Fairport Marina and I saw Perinton Park and the Fullamtown Bridge just packed with people, I knew all the hard work done by Dad and his committee had paid off. This was an unbelievable sight.

Patrick L. Pittinaro:

I was 15 and went with my father to Perinton Park. He was the emcee of the event and we were on the judge's stand. I got to see all the floats and the great numbers of people on the Fullamtown Bridge and in Perinton Park.

We arrived early and had a difficult time getting to the judges stand because of the crowd. My father was nervous as a cat. He could not believe the crowd and had no idea as to the number of people in the village. Due to congestion at the launch, the parade started late, which added to his anxiety.



As the Fairport VFW Band warms up on their floating-barge bandstand, floats assemble prior to the Aqua Parade just west of the Parker Street Bridge. Note the Ragu gondola, which was piloted by Tony Pittinaro.

Photo by Rev. Albert D'Annunzio

Aftermath:

To put the magnitude of this event into context, it is important to understand what Perinton looked like in 1962. The 1960 US census data indicated Perinton had a population of 16,314. Perinton was not the sprawling township it is today; it was rural Monroe County.

Continued on page 4



Comments from your President

September 14, 2016:

Greetings. I'm writing again from my office in the carriage barn, waiting for some badly needed rain. Today we were planning a bike ride to Adams Basin for a night stay at the beautiful Adams Basin Inn Bed and Breakfast. This inn was

~ **Bob Hunt** ~

an original stop on the canal and has a rich history starting in 1827. The present owners, Pat and David Haines, are more than willing to share the history with visitors. Since we do not enjoy riding in the rain, we will drive to Adams Basin and hope for a late afternoon ride for a couple of hours and then a nice dinner in Spencerport. Tomorrow looks to be a nice day for riding so we will ride back to Fairport in the morning and then return for our car at the inn.

I have to tell you about the mural artist, Fernanda Gonzalez Latrecchiana, from Argentina. She's been spending a few days with us prior to the mural conference taking place here the week of September 18, which will be over by the time you receive this newsletter. Fernanda is the artist who will be painting the mural for the Fairport Rotary Club, and will feature the lift bridge. The mural will be 16 feet wide and seven feet tall. She started the mural during the Fairport Music Festival. Her mural idea is to have a young boy sitting on the canal bank reading a book and looking at the lift bridge and Fairport skyline in the background. The top arched beam of the bridge will say Fairport Rotary Club and the support strut beams will list some of the club's various projects over its the 90 years of service to the community and world. For example, the club's first project in 1926–27 was the purchase of uniforms for the Fairport High School Band.

At the music festival, Fernanda sketched out an outline of the boy on the mural, and this is where it becomes interesting. I took Fernanda to the museum when she arrived to see the Carl Peters mural, which she absolutely loved. There was also a mural book for sale in our gift shop featuring Carl's murals painted in the area, which I purchased for her. We put the book aside for review on another day. A few days later, Fernanda came to me with an astonishing discovery. In the book was a picture of a sitting girl reading a book, looking exactly like the boy she had painted for her mural. I told you in a past issue of the *Historigram* about the ghost gonging my clocks in my office. Now we have the spirit of Carl somehow passing on an image for use in her mural. In the open book, the boy is reading, Fernanda is planning to show a portion of the mural found at our museum as recognition to Carl.

I cannot explain how the image Fernanda is using of the boy so closely resembles the girl in the mural book. Carl's

Perinton Historical Society

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spirit must still be with us. We are now waiting anxiously for Fernanda's completed work. The mural will be shown in Albany for a few months before returning to Fairport next spring for its final display location.

Enjoy the scarecrow displays on October 8th and root for the PHS scarecrow in the competition.

Thanks for your continued support and we will chat again next month.

Bob Hunt, President

585-415-7053, rhunt1@rochester.rr.com



Volunteer Recognition and Training Seminar

Our 2016 Volunteer Recognition and Training Seminar is scheduled for Saturday, October 22nd from 12:00–2:00 p.m. at the museum. This is a wonderful opportunity for museum volunteers to get to know one another and to hear about the fun things that are happening at the museum. The seminar is open to all, including new and veteran volunteers and those who haven't yet volunteered but are thinking of doing so. Please RSVP by October 18th to our PHS Volunteer Coordinator, Sue Scheirer, using the contact information below.

Museum volunteers work one shift per month greeting and assisting visitors. New volunteers are paired with veterans for each shift, and training is provided. We are always looking for new volunteers to staff the museum, and especially need volunteers on Saturdays from 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. and Sundays from 2:00–4:00 p.m. If you can give of your time just a few hours a month, please contact PHS Volunteer Coordinator Sue Scheirer by phone at 585-377-3789 or at dscheir1@rochester.rr.com. We look forward to adding you to our volunteer roster!

Upcoming Events

Sunday, October 9th
from 1:00–5:00 p.m.

2016 House Tour–North Side Stories

Be sure to check out the immigration exhibit at the museum through November 12th.

Tuesday, October 18th
at 7:00 p.m. at the museum

Psychic Highway: How the Erie Canal Changed America

Presenter: Michael T. Keene

Tuesday, November 15th
from 6:00–7:00 p.m. at the museum

PHS Yuletide Traditions

Opening bids accepted for silent auction items

Tuesday, November 15th
at 5:30 and 7:00 p.m. at the museum

Who Moved my House? Stories behind the relocation of an incredible number of structures in Fairport and Perinton

Presenter: Bill Poray, Town Historian

Note: To accommodate everyone interested in attending, there will be two program times. **REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED.** To register, please email Director@PerintonHistoricalSociety.org, or leave a message at 585-223-3989 and provide your name, phone number, number of attendees and time for which you are registering (5:30 p.m. or 7:00 p.m.)

Saturday, November 19th
from 10:00–11:00 a.m. at the museum

Artist Betsy Ogles, of Flower City Decorative Artists, offers beautiful artwork for sale.

Sunday, November 20th
from 2:30–3:30 p.m. at the museum

Author Peter Burford book signing: *Wines of the Finger Lakes*

Saturday, November 26th
from 10:30–11:30 a.m. at the museum

Fairport's finest organ grinder, Tim Wagner, plays seasonal tunes on his Finster Baby mechanical organ.

Saturday, December 3rd
from 10:30–11:30 a.m. at the museum

Children's craft with Suzanne Lee and a visit from Santa Claus at 10:30

Sunday December 4th
from 2:30–3:30 p.m. at the museum

Visit from Santa Claus at 2:30 p.m. followed by children's author Sally Valentine who will sign her books, *The Ghost of the Charlotte Lighthouse*, *Theft at George Eastman House*, *What Stinks? An Adventure in Highland Park*, *Lost at Seabreeze*, *Stormed* and *There Are No Buffalo in Buffalo* (a book of poems).

Sunday, December 11th
from 2:30–3:30 p.m. at the museum

Young adult author Jeff Miner signs his new book, *The Sailweaver's Son*

Tuesday, December 13th
from 6:00–7:00 p.m. at the museum

PHS Yuletide Traditions

Final bids accepted for silent auction items

Silent auction winners will be announced at the conclusion of the evening's program.

Tuesday, December 13th
at 7:00 p.m. at the museum

Annual Holiday Party & Program: *White Christmas*

Presenter: Michael Lasser

Please bring a dessert to pass.

Yuletide Traditions 2016

Beginning November 15th and ending December 13th, visitors to the Fairport Historical Museum will have the opportunity to bid on beautiful gift baskets, wreaths and tabletop Christmas trees that have been decorated and donated for silent auctions by members of our community, organizations and businesses.

Donor registration runs until October 22th. This is a wonderful opportunity to get together with friends and co-workers to create an amazing item for a worthwhile cause. Donations will be acknowledged at the Fairport Historical Museum, in the December *Historigram* newsletter, and on the Perinton Historical Society website.

All proceeds from the silent auctions benefit the Perinton Historical Society (PHS) and support its educational programs and operation of the museum.

For information on becoming
a member of the Perinton Historical
Society, visit our website at—
www.PerintonHistoricalSociety.org.



"Aqua Parade Conclusion" continued from page 1

An article in the Fairport Herald of July 25, 1962 read as follows:

Canal Carnival Lures Thousands

The weatherman smiled, the sun shone, as an estimated 20-30,000 people lined the banks of the canal to view a parade of boats and floats followed by a water skiing exhibition.

Never in Perinton's history have so many people converged on Fairport and never before have such had a colorful array of craft traversed the canal waters to such an enthusiastic audience.

About forty craft were in the procession from a 16 ft. canoe to a mammoth barge pushed by a State tug and burdened to the Plimsoll mark with the entire High School Band. Gay with flags and bunting, various floats representing people, places and events in Perinton's past history, and all drew waves, cheers and applause.

The judges had a difficult time selecting the winners but decided that the Merit Award should go to Bill Barton of Pennsylvania who entered a tiny (and properly functioning) paddle wheel craft. Neil Moore's "Maybelle," fashioned into a many tiered birthday cake, and was voted the "most beautiful." The Statue of Liberty theme of the Howard DeNise craft was awarded "most beautiful cabin cruiser." A homemade houseboat, the handiwork of Bruce Teal of Brighton, was voted "most representative of the Old Erie Canal Boat theme." The boat carried twelve passengers in "early days costume." A special award was made to the Aqua-Sno Skiers.

Francis Pittinaro was chairman of the event and much of the work and organization of the affair was in the hands of the San Sebastian Society.

Above: An elegant, vintage cruiser glides past the judge's stand at Perinton Park.

Below: Members of the Aqua-Sno Skiers perform on the Erie Canal. Photos are from the archives of the Perinton Historical Society



There were several additional articles throughout the paper. One mentioned the traffic jams and parking issues and credited Chief Tom Aldrich and his officers for maintaining an orderly flow of traffic. Another article focused on the water skiers:

Water Skiers Thrill Crowd

The Sesquicentennial Committee and some thirty thousand who watched their exhibition are grateful to the Aqua-Sno Skiers for their thrilling exhibition of water skiing Sunday afternoon.

The group, formerly known as the Bay View Skiers, with headquarters on Irondequoit Bay, have presented frequent exhibitions over the past several years. Limited by the narrow canal, their prowess on the water sticks was only a sample of their abilities. The male members of the group put on a hilarious exhibition and members of the clown boat drew constant laughter with their antics.

OTHER FACTS AND TRIVIA ABOUT THE AQUA PARADE

Provided by Frank N. and Patrick L. Pittinaro

- How many readers know that the reigning Miss New York State in 1962 was from Fairport? Miss Marge Bruening in Float No. 5
- San Sebastian Society was an organization of Italian descendants who pooled their money via monthly dues to pay for medical expenses. Most did not have access to health insurance. It is now a defunct organization.
- The Oxbow was a section of the canal behind what is now Minerva Deland School. There is an island in the canal there and the floats were to traverse around the island.
- The canal bridge on West Church Street was known as the Fullamtown Bridge.
- Access to the canal was not easy. In 1962 there was only one place in the area to launch and retrieve boats/floats: The Fairport Marina, just west of Main Street Bridge.
- A small portion of the planning and logistics for the event has been mentioned already, but there was much more: applying for permits and approvals from NYS Canal Authority; coordination of the closing of the canal to normal traffic; finding resources to pay for committee expenses; soliciting float sponsors; soliciting organizations (and people) to participate (Queens and bands don't just magically appear on floats); determining awards; selecting judges, coordinating a judges stand (empty flatbed semi-trailer); contacting Rochester newspapers (when and how); contacting the three TV stations (no cable in 1962); parking and traffic coordination; cleanup. Since the size of the crowd exceeded expectations by a large margin, some logistics were not considered (i.e., where to park all the cars and how to keep traffic flowing).
- As reported in the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle, "...the parade covered four miles of water and took 2 ½ hours and was followed by a two hour ski show".
- Many people involved with the Sesquicentennial contended that the crowds far exceeded the estimate of 30,000.

Footnote: This article was completed February 11, 2016. Our father, Frank Pittinaro, passed away on February 13, 2016 at 99 years old after an extended illness. Due to a debilitating stroke, he was unable to contribute to this work. We never got to share this article with him.



Special Recognition Level Memberships *As of August 20, 2016*

Business (\$100)

Ed Bradford, Liftbridge Financial Advisors

6 North Main Street, Suite 400w, Fairport, NY 14450

Website: <http://liftbridgefinancial.com>

Suzanne Lee Personal Histories

33 Chesham Way, Fairport, NY 14450

Phone: 585-267-6189

Website: <http://SLeePersonalHistories.com>

Fairport Village Inn, Wayne and Patty Beckwith

103 North Main Street, Fairport, NY 14450

Phone: 585-388-0112

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>

Forever Financial Advisors, LLC

Annie McQuilkin, MS, CFP®

140 West Church Street, Fairport, NY 14450

Phone: 585-598-1377

Website: <http://www.foreverfinancial.com>

Pixos Print

75 Goodway Drive, Rochester, NY 14623-3000

Phone: (585) 500-4600

Website: ReadytoRun@pixosprint.com

Joel Cuminale, Turning Point Signs & Design

3 Railroad Street, Fairport, NY 14450

Website: <http://www.tpsigns.com>

New Listings for Special Recognition

DeLand (\$100–\$249)

Calvin and Rose Bulman

Mr. and Mrs. Patrick Grace

Marjory and David Hall

Joe and Samantha Kosiorek

Duncan T. Moore and Gunta Liders

Ed and Gail Rybicki

Jack and Nancy Slaybaugh

Anonymous

Potter (\$250–\$499)

Linda and David Wiener

Doug and Jean Whitney

Perrin (\$500 and above)

Robert C. Stevens



2016 PHS House Tour Sunday, October 9th

Please join us from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. as we tour five historic homes on Fairport's north side!

Visit the Church of the Assumption for a reception and to view exhibits on the area's rich history.

Tickets will be mailed to all members. Purchase additional tickets at the Fairport Historical Museum, Perinton Town Hall, Fairport Village Hall and Fairport Public Library during regular business hours.

From the PHS Archives: **Fred Chesbro**

By Bill Poray

Most people know the names Perrin and DeLand, and with good reason. Streets and schools are named after some of our early notable families. But plenty of other people lived here, too. And although you will not see their names on a street sign or building, that doesn't mean their lives were not interesting. Within the vast collections of the Perinton Historical Society, stories of many of these people come to life—people such as Fred Myron Chesbro.

Born in 1892, Fred Chesbro was a 1910 graduate of Fairport High School, a dignified brick building first known as the Classical Union School, located on West Church Street. His parents, Paris Chesbro and Matilda Hafeley Chesbro, lived in Fairport, as did his grandparents, Myron and Ann Chesbro.

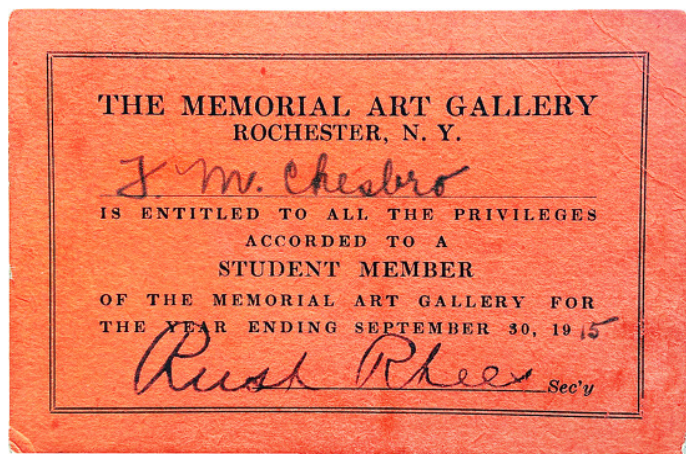
Although Fred Chesbro played football for Fairport, it was at the University of Rochester that his athleticism really shined. A four year player, he was named captain of the team in his senior year.

Headlines in the Rochester newspapers frequently featured the name Chesbro. One of my favorites: "Chesbro, with Injured Ankle, Pulls Trick Play that Earns for Yellow Its Lone Touchdown." The story goes on to explain: "Captain Chesbro, who caught a forward pass, turned his ankle severely. Quick action on the part of Dr. Otis, who was able to pull the dislocated joint into shape, kept Chesbro in the game."

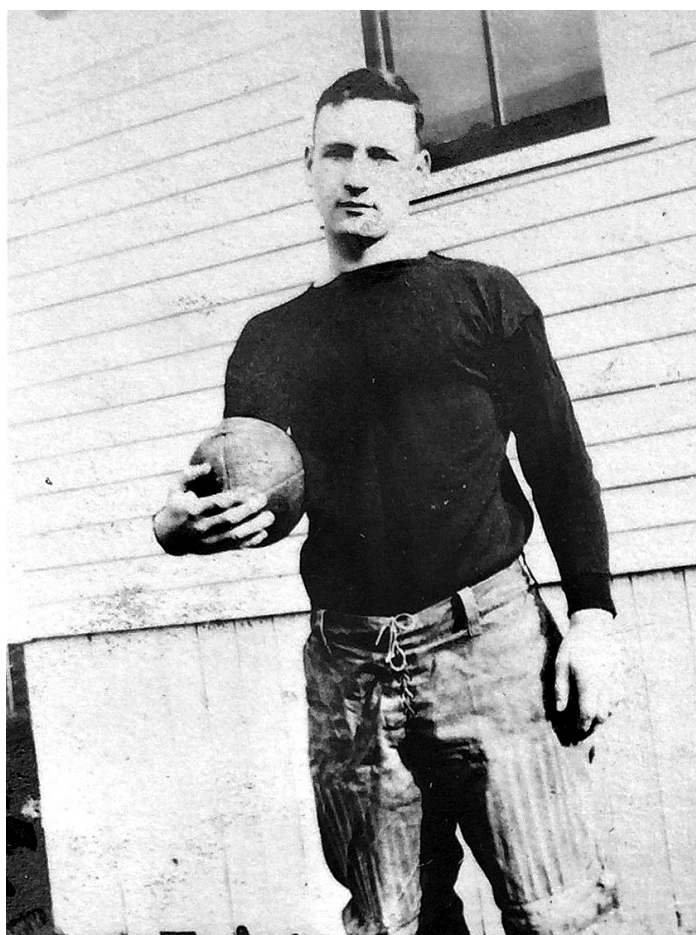
Fred went on to score the touchdown, and led the University of Rochester football team to a memorable season.



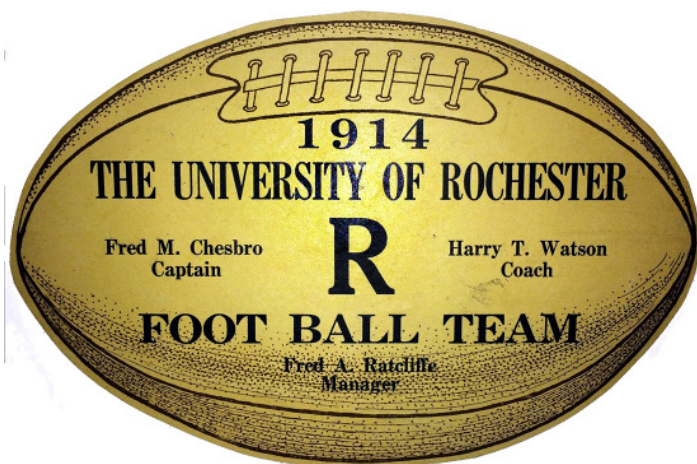
Fred Chesbro wears a Fairport sweater on the family porch on John Street (now Lift Bridge Lane) with sister Mabel Chesbro (left) and friend Emma Wright (right).



Fred Chesbro's student pass to the Memorial Art Gallery, founded only two years earlier. Note the authorizing signature by U of R President Rush Rhees.

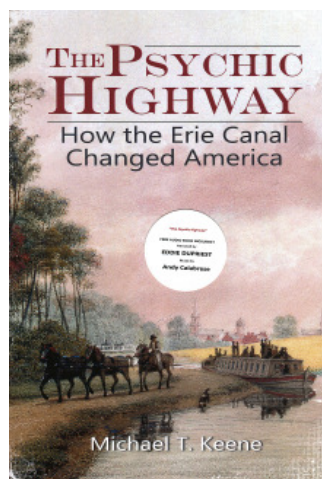


University of Rochester football team captain
Fred Chesbro of Fairport



Next Month:

Fred Chesbro trades in his football uniform for that of an infantryman in WWI.



Author Michael Keene to Discuss

*Psychic Highway:
How the Erie
Canal Changed
America*

**Tuesday, October 18th,
at 7:00 p.m. at the museum**

Psychic Highway uncovers how the Erie Canal opened up vital passageways that led to the advent of the major social, political, and religious movements that swept through upstate New York during the 19th century. Michael Keene delves into the canal's inspiration, evolution and impact on American life and how the canal bridged the gap of communications and travel, setting the stage for history-altering events.

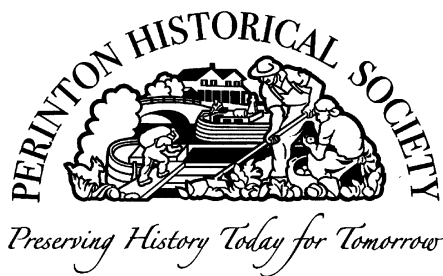
The canal delivered people to important places for important reasons, such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott to Seneca Falls for history's first women's convention; to Rochester to meet and support abolitionists Frederick Douglass, Gerrit Smith, and Harriet Tubman or to witness the Fox Sisters summon spirits and their eerie knockings.

Mr. Keene will be available following the presentation to sign copies of *Psychic Highway*. The book sells for \$20, cash or checks accepted. His other books will also be available for purchase.

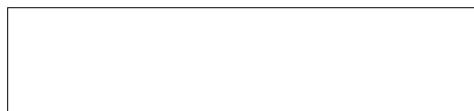
Michael T. Keene is an affiliate member of the Association of Public Historians and contributor to *New York History Review*. He has combined his interests in local history, writing, and film making to explore unique and fascinating episodes of 19th-century New York history. The events that bubbled out of this period include the women's rights, abolitionist, and anti-Masonic movements, as well as the origins of modern spiritualism, seven new religions, sects and utopian communes.

This event is free and open to the public.





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What is it?

Bigger than a bowling ball—and a lot heavier, too. It had a great view of Fairport for 85 years, but was hidden from sight. Now it rests in our museum gardens.

What is it?

See next month's issue of the *Historigram* for the answer.

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–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