

Two Months in a Houseboat

Excerpts of a letter by Alicia Morey Graham to the Monroe County Mail

Published November 27th, 1913

Introduction

By Bill Poray, Editor

This month we are featuring excerpts of a letter first printed in the Monroe County Mail on November 27th, 1913. The author, Alicia Morey Graham, was born in Fairport in 1883, the daughter of Joseph and Jennie Morey of South Main Street. Since 1870, Alicia Morey's grandfather and her father operated a dry goods store in the village. She attended Fairport schools, graduating in 1901. Although she had set her sights on attending Shepardson College in Ohio, recurring bouts of appendicitis prevented her enrollment. She soon gained a great interest in missionary work, sparked by her association with Fairport First Baptist Church, where she served in many roles, including substitute organist. Alicia Morey eventually began her coursework at Shepardson College, but again was struck with illness, this time malarial fever. Her father brought her home from Ohio, and after her recovery, she enrolled at the University of Rochester in the fall of 1904, and graduated in 1908. It was here that she committed herself to life as a missionary, as a member of the International Band of Students, "who have made the definite resolve to become foreign missionaries and who are fitting themselves in their college course toward that end."

It is generally accepted that the important work of David Crockett Graham in China occurred from the years 1911 to 1948, but he was in China several years prior. The proof is a letter from Graham received by Miss Alicia Morey almost seven weeks after it was sent, postmarked July 29th, 1907. They married three years later at the Morey's church, and a year after that, David Crockett Graham was ordained at the Fairport First Baptist Church.

On September 15th, 1911, Fairport's missionary couple were given a farewell reception by the congregation of their



The American flag is flown on the houseboat occupied by the Graham family. Alicia Morey Graham is standing in front of the mast. Daughters Ruth and Margaret are to her right, and baby daughter Harriet Jane is asleep inside.

Photo digitized by Thomas A. Hoogendyk
from a copy in the family archives; public domain—China

church. Shortly after, they left for China, where they spent most of the rest of their lives as missionaries.

The Graham children were often with their parents in China, and they were no doubt their mother's primary priority. Her husband's contributions to missionary work are well documented, as a pastor, professor, museum curator, and author. But beyond his work as a missionary, he was an archeologist, and anthropologist, and a collector of zoological specimens for the National Museum of the United States. It has been said that Graham collected almost 400,000 specimens, and that his work led to the identification of 230 new species, 29 of which carry his name.



~ Bob Hunt ~

Comments from your President

September 14th, time for my random comments for the October *Historigram*, so I am sitting in my carriage barn office. We were planning a bike ride to Newark today but with rain in the forecast we decided to stay home and work on some inside projects, one of which is to finish the cleanup from our barn sale

held last weekend. Why didn't someone tell us how much work a garage sale is? We still have some good junk left, so probably will hold another in the spring in spite of what horse sense tells us. We were amazed on what sold and what did not sell. Old wooden boxes, jugs, vases, and signs sold, while Depression glass and other glass items did not.

Living in Fairport, one certainly hears plenty of train whistles. I've been told about 75 trains pass through each day. In fact, one is passing as I write this. I am not disturbed by the sound, but find it soothing, especially in the night from afar. When a train approaches a road crossing the engineer blows the Morse code letter Q, which is two longs, a short and a long. I heard that it was a salute to the queen but I could find no resource stating that fact. The law and rule is to blow this sequence at each road crossing. Where there are multiple crossings less than a quarter mile apart, some engineers repeat the signal at long intervals, because that is what the rule requires, or some blow the required signal in short succession as each crossing is passed, or a combination of the two. There are sign posts along the tracks to inform the engineer that a crossing is approaching and when to blow the whistle. Many old railroad lines are no longer in use, and some have been transformed into trails. One can bike, hike, snow ski, or horseback ride on these old lines and will often see the old concrete monuments with a W denoting time to blow the whistle as there is a crossing up ahead. Today the signs are metal and will show two solid lines, a dot and a single solid line, again alerting the engineer of an approaching road crossing. A sign with W/MX means there are multiple crossings ahead and the whistle is to sound until the last crossing is occupied. Hear that in the distance? Another train is passing through, that's number two.

One of our favorite mini get-a-ways is Niagara-on-the-Lake, a beautiful village, great theater, fine dining and, of course, bike riding. We generally stay in Queenston at a place called South Landing Inn, like to get a room in the house or Inn section of the property, with a nice second story porch. It's a great place to unwind after a day of bike riding with a glass of wine from one of the local vineyards. There is a nice bike trail about seven miles in length which goes along the

Niagara River from Queenston to Niagara-on-the-Lake. One can go the other way towards the falls on the trail all the way to Fort Erie. We did the Fort Erie ride this year but started at a park a bit south of the falls and biked a 42 mile loop, a great ride. And there goes another train, number three.

I can't remember if in past *Historigram* issues I have mentioned the Merry-Go-Round Playhouse in Auburn, but we have enjoyed several great plays there this year. Yesterday we saw *Ghost*, a musical about, you guessed it, ghosts. We attend the 2 pm shows on Wednesdays, which allows us to get back to Fairport during daylight hours. It is about 1hr 15 minute car ride each way.

Next year's productions, their 60th season, starts off with one of our favorite plays, *Mamma Mia*, filled with ABBA songs.

And there it goes, the fourth train since I started writing this column just passed through Fairport.

Thanks for your continued support of the Perinton Historical Society, it is appreciated.

Bob
Rhunt356.rh@gmail.com
585-415-7053



Perinton Historical Society

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MUSEUM

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We need you!

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.–1:00 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 dscheirl@rochester.rr.com. We look forward to adding you to our volunteer roster!

Upcoming Programs & Events

Tuesday, October 17th, 7:00 p.m.

At the museum

Program: *All for Suffrage: The Anthony Family Takes a Stand*

Presenter: Jeanne Gehret

Tuesday, November 21st, 4:00–9:00 p.m.

At the museum

Event: *PHS Yuletide Traditions*

Opening bids accepted for silent auction items

Tuesday, November 21st, 5:00 and 7:00 p.m.

At the museum

Program: *Little Journeys to Pleasant Places*

Presenter: Bill Poray

Registration is required for this event. To register, please visit or leave a message at the museum at 585-223-3989 or by emailing Director@PerintonHistoricalSociety.org. Please leave your name, phone number, number of attendees and the time of the presentation for which you are registering (5:00 or 7:00 p.m.)

Saturday, December 9th, 10:30-11:30 a.m.

At the museum

Book signing-On Pins and Needles: A Christmas Tale

Author: Carole R. Young

Illustrator: Mary Lynn Miraglia

Meet the author and illustrator of *On Pins and Needles: A Christmas Tale*, selling for \$9.95. Cash and checks accepted.

Tuesday, December 12th, 6:00–7:00 p.m.

At the museum

Event: *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 12th, 7:00 p.m.

At the museum

A Jane Austen Christmas: Yuletide Traditions during the Regency Era

Presenter: Lisa Brown

Please bring a dessert to pass.

Check the November *Historigram* for additional special events occurring during our *Yuletide Traditions* fundraiser!



All for Suffrage: *The Anthony Family Takes a Stand*

Tuesday, October 17th
7:00 p.m. at the Fairport
Historical Museum

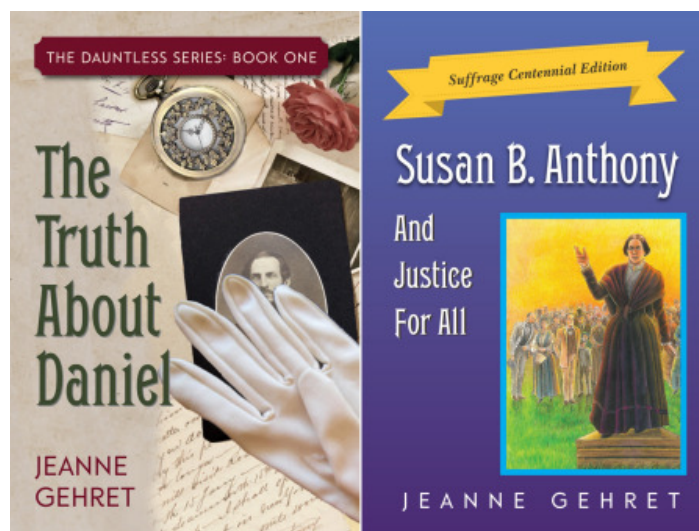
Author Jeanne Gehret will present a riveting 60-minute PowerPoint program including archival photographs



Susan B. Anthony's whole family put themselves on the line to promote equality for women and African-Americans. These startling relatives, though rooted in the Quaker values of nonviolence and frugality, included soldiers, radical publishers, and people of privilege.

Meet the brother who fought with John Brown, the dying sister who voted illegally with Susan, and the brother who killed, burned, and pillaged in the name of antislavery. Trace their comings and goings across early America, from Martha's Vineyard to the Kansas frontier. This riveting 60-minute program includes a PowerPoint presentation with archival photographs.

Jeanne Gehret filled the rooms in Fairport and Pittsford when she re-enacted Miss Susan B. Anthony in an event in July honoring the 100th anniversary of woman suffrage in New York State. This event is free and is open to the public.



Jeanne Gehret is the author of the 2017 historical novel about Susan's brother, *The Truth About Daniel* (\$15), and the recently-updated children's biography, *Susan B. Anthony And Justice For All* (\$10), both of which will be available for sale, cash or checks accepted, following the presentation.



David Crockett Graham,
his wife Alicia Morey
Graham, and their
daughters, Margaret,
Ruth, and Harriett Jane

*From the collection
of the Perinton Historical
Society*

Note: The excerpts of this letter have been reproduced verbatim. Spelling of certain Chinese words may be different from when penned by Alicia Morey Graham.

My Dear Mr. Greene,

My promise to write of our houseboat trip up the Yangtse has not been forgotten, but I must confess that its fulfillment has been neglected. When we reached Ichang, the end of our steamer travel, we found that our freight had not arrived though it had left Shanghai some time before us. Our houseboats had already been engaged and one family happened to have a few dishes and cooking utensils. So we immediately went aboard and all ate together until our things reached us.

There were three families and each had its own boat. Houseboats vary but ours were alike, the kind known as four room houseboats. Such a boat is about sixty feet long and ten or twelve wide. Twenty or twenty-five feet in front is reserved for a deck, not however for the pleasure or recreation of the passengers. Here the fifteen or twenty men employed as oarsmen and trackers sleep, eat, and work. Back of the deck are four rooms. The first two are each about seven feet long. The one next to the deck was used as a sleeping room and the second as a dining and living room. Behind this was the kitchen, somewhat smaller. The last room, which occupied the rest of the space, was known as the captain's room. Here were kept the ropes for the trackers and here the "rudder-man" stood, steering our boat through rapids and shallows. You can imagine that with the necessities of housekeeping even on a very limited scale our quarters were decidedly cramped. Our cook slept on the floor of the kitchen. Whenever he had a chance he went ashore to buy supplies. With a tiny stove and a table to share his compartment he had just about room to stand. but in some way or another he managed to keep us well fed.

During the day unless there is a good wind for sailing the men either "track" or row. Our boat had two oars, some have more—exceedingly awkward affairs, each manipulated by from six to ten men. They are not used as oars at home; I scarcely know how to describe the motion. The men stand in a row with backs toward the middle of the boat and both hands grasping the oar which is held parallel to the length of the boat. To the rhythm of their rude boatmen's songs and shouts and the pounding of feet, they move the oar back and forth, scarcely raising it out of the water. One wonders how the boat moves at all but it does.

At mealtime—which for a Chinaman is almost any time—the men sat on the deck with their bowls of rice and vegetables while the boat went on if there was wind enough to fill the sail or was brought to shore if there was not. Between Ichang and Chungking they ate three times a day; between Chungking and Suifu it was five times. All this not from a difference in need but because it is custom. If you want to know what custom is, come to China. It is the iron-clad thing that holds the people to certain ways of doing and thinking because it has been so from time immemorial. Reason apparently has no place in their reckoning.

It the evening an awning was erected over the deck and there the men slept rolled in their blankets and so close together that, as I heard someone say, "if one turned over, all had to turn." At daybreak they were up and off, following what seems to be a general Chinese custom of getting a good start on the day's work before breakfast.

Most of the way for the two months that we were on the houseboats, the men "tracked," that is, they walked along on the shore drawing the boat by a long rope to which they attached smaller ropes that were drawn out in a fan-shaped arrangement. Sometimes they had a smooth, sandy path; more often they had to climb over rocks so rough and steep that progress was difficult. They were either barefooted or wore only straw sandals. The rest of their clothing depended upon the weather. On a warm day their uniform was generally Nature's own. It is no uncommon thing to see a boat drawn by a crowd of men innocent of all clothing. They attract no more attention than would be given at home to a barefooted boy.

Between Ichang and Chunking the scenery is magnificent. The river flows through a series of gorges from two to thirty miles in length, the Ichang Gorge, the Granary, the Gloomy Mountain, the Ox Liver, the Windbox, and others. Great walls of rock rise on both sides and in some places the river bends so that one seems to be entirely shut in. Sometimes on top of a seemingly inaccessible rock a temple can be seen. In several places

images of Buddha are carved in the face of a cliff. At one spot, with the aid of field glasses, some ancient coffins are visible. They are hundreds of feet up the side of the gorge. No one knows how long they have been there or how they were put there. It is not improbable that they are thousands of years old. Besides the gorges there are the rapids. It is a rather exciting experience to go through them. Sometimes the ropes break and the boat goes down-stream at an unpleasantly rapid rate and the whole thing has to be done over again. In this way boats are frequently wrecked on the hidden rocks. It is necessary to have extra trackers in crossing the rapids. Some times as many as a hundred men and five or six ropes are used. The men go on all fours and every muscle is strained. Even then they are barely able to crawl along.

At two of the most dangerous rapids we all left our boat and walked. The first of these rapids, the worst of all, was reached early in the afternoon. So many boats were ahead of us and it took so long to get over that we had to wait twenty-four hours for our turn. Our captains were good enough to anchor our boats in the very edge of the rapids and the whole party had a good dose of a near relative of seasickness.

Another of the rapids has an interesting legend connected with it. It has existed only a few years and is called the New Dragon Rapid. People say that a dragon was buried under a mountain beside the river. He grew there for many years and finally became so large that he struggled for freedom. In digging his way out he caused a landslide which made the rapid while the dragon swam down the river. The landslide part of the story is true; as to its causes others might differ.

Our long journey ended in Suifu on April 9th. We arrived early in the afternoon. Our missionary friends came to the boat to meet us and some of the Chinese Christians came to give us a welcome. It was a noisy one I assure you. They used enough firecrackers to celebrate several American Fourths. At the riverside two men held a long pole to which were attached strings of firecrackers which were set going at one end and continued for what seemed like ten minutes though I suppose it was not more than two or three. When we were finally in our sedan chairs and started for the mission compound, a man ran along in front of our chairs or beside them with more firecrackers. And again when we reached the compound there were still more.

Things in Suifu have been quiet so far and bid fair to remain so. We have just heard of serious fighting at Chunking two weeks ago, not between opposite parties, but if you please, between rival factions of the same party. In one way or another, China seems doomed to have her share of trouble for years to come.

Very sincerely yours,
Alicia Morey Graham



A sedan chair in China at the turn of the century
Public domain—China

Chinese name: 葛維漢

MAY 6 1913
FILE
(Form No. 220—CONSULAR.)
(Corrected April 24, 1910.)

39529

DEPT. OF STATE
MAY 6 1913

CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION OF AMERICAN CITIZEN.

I, E. Carleton Baker Consul of the United States of America at Chungking, China hereby certify that David Crockett Graham is registered as an American citizen in this consulate. He was born March 21, 1884 at Green Forest, Ark. and is a citizen of the United States by birth (or naturalization). He left his residence in the United States on August 29, 1911 and arrived in Chungking, Szechuan on March 18, 1913 at Suifu, Szechuan is now residing for the purpose of doing missionary work. He is married to Alicia May Morey who was born in Fairport, N. Y. and resides at Suifu.

He has the following children:

Margaret Julia born in Shao-hing, Chekiang Province on November 22, 1912 and residing at Suifu and born in and residing at and born in and residing at and born in and residing at

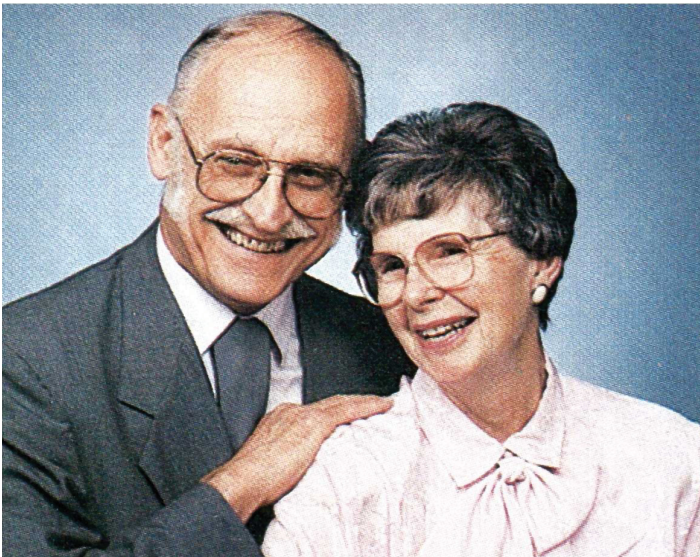
His local address is American Baptist Mission, Suifu.
No certificate of Registration issued.
The person to be informed in case of death or accident is Miss H. E. Graham, Wells Wells, Washington. (Sister).
His citizenship of the United States is established by Department passport No. 64058 of December 20, 1911.

This certificate is not a passport and its validity expires on March 22, 1914.
The following is the signature of David C. Graham
In testimony whereof I have hereunto signed my name and affixed my seal of office.

E. Carleton Baker
American Consul

Consular document of David C. Graham and family, while working at the American Baptist Mission in Suifu, China





Les and Eileen Slocum

Celebrating 21-year Museum Volunteer Eileen Slocum

By Vicki Masters Profitt

The Perinton Historical Society is proud to celebrate Fairport Historical Museum volunteer Eileen Slocum, who retired after the 2016 season following 21 years of service

Fairport Historical Museum volunteer Eileen Slocum was born in Jefferson, New York, a crossroads community located near Stamford. She had two younger siblings, a sister and a brother.

In 1967, Eileen and her husband Les moved to Fairport from Honeoye Falls after outgrowing their small house. The new house on Gentian Way was a newly-built five bedroom colonial, built before the “new” Fairport High School was constructed. Eileen and Les raised their family of two daughters and three sons at the Gentian Way house. Les ran his own business as a manufacturer’s representative, and Eileen served for thirty years as a nurse at Strong Memorial Hospital before retiring in 1995. Eileen lost her husband in 2008, and two of their children in 2013. Her oldest daughter resides in Arizona, and two sons remain in the area.

Following her retirement, Eileen became interested in the history of the Slocum family and her research brought her to the Fairport Historical Museum. She had always had an interest in history and enjoyed attending the monthly presentations, which led to her decision to volunteer at the museum.

Eileen’s favorite part about volunteering at the museum was helping people locate the information they were looking to find. Meeting new people and learning even more about the Perinton community was just a bonus! Eileen’s advice to other museum volunteers? Enjoy your fellow volunteers and the people who visit the Fairport Historical Museum.

Eileen has also been associated with the Congregational UCC Church of Fairport, the Jane Austen Society, SOFI, Advent House and she volunteered for Meals on Wheels for ten years.

Thank you, Eileen, for being such a stellar volunteer and for your warm smile and caring manner!

Yuletide Traditions Registration Takes Place September 23–October 21

Registration for *Yuletide Traditions 2017* is open! Please register to donate a gift basket, decorated wreath or tabletop tree to this important PHS fundraiser.

- Step 1: Register to donate between September 23rd and October 21st by completing and returning the accompanying form
- Step 2: Drop off your donation on November 18th or 19th
- Step 3: Place your bids on donated items between 4:00 p.m. on November 21st and 7:00 p.m. on December 12th during regular museum hours. Silent auction winners will be announced following the December 12th holiday party and presentation

Yuletide Traditions is also an opportunity to highlight local authors and artists in special events at the Fairport Historical Museum. Watch for information about book signings, musicians, kids’ crafts and even visits from Jolly St. Nick!

Additional information about *Yuletide Traditions 2017* special events will be found in the November issue of the PHS Historigram and on the Perinton Historical Society Facebook page and website, www.PerintonHistoricalSociety.org. If you are interested in joining our YT Committee or becoming one of our guests at a YT special event, please contact Vicki Masters Profitt (Director@PerintonHistoricalSociety.org).

Perinton Historical Society *Mission*

To provide interest in preserving and sharing local history through education and accessibility.

Special Recognition Level Memberships

As of September 18, 2017

Business (\$100)

Barranco's Clothing and Shoes

32 North Main Street, Fairport, NY 14450,

Phone: 585-388-1270

Fairport Village Inn, Wayne and Patty Beckwith

103 North Main Street, Fairport, NY 14450

Phone: 585-388-0112 <http://www.thefvi.com>

Robert Ruhland, Keller Williams Realty

2000 Winton Road S. Bldg. 1, Rochester, NY 14618

Phone: 585-303-6607 <http://bobruhland.yourkwagent.com>

Joel Cuminale, Turning Point Signs & Design

3 Railroad Street, Fairport, NY 14450

Phone: 585-377-9310 www.tpsigns.com

The Inn on Church

11 West Church Street, Fairport, NY 14450

Phone: 585-678-1106 www.facebook.com/theinnonchurch

New listings for special recognition:

DeLand (\$100-\$249)

Keith and Carol Anne Boas

Richard Bulman

Marjory and David Hall

Fritz and Georgia May

Richard and Juliet Moynihan

Padraic Neville

Ed and Gail Rybicki

Dorn and Janet Ulrich

Anonymous (1)

Potter (\$250-\$499)

Bob and Cindy Hunt

Doug and Jean Whitney

David and Linda Wiener

Anonymous (1)

Perrin (\$500 and above)

None this month



Eugene Harmor
1911—1998

A Matter of Perspective

By Bill Poray

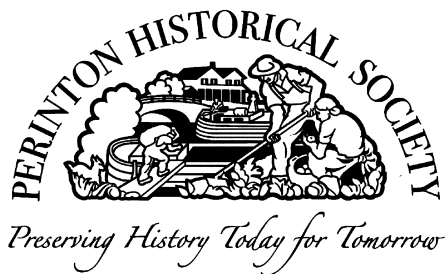
Bushnell's Basin has been home to some colorful characters over the years. I had heard people refer to one such character, known as "the hermit of Bushnell's Basin." There were stories of a man who lived in a haphazard collection of scrap metal and wood on the bank of the canal, not far from Richardson's Canal House. He rode an old bicycle and picked up bits of junk along the way, scowled at those he encountered, and was considered by some to be a scary old man. At least that's what I heard.

I never knew Eugene Harmor. But in the last year, I've heard from some people who did. Two separate accounts from middle aged men, who recalled a kind man from their youth. They each encountered him along the canal's banks, when fishing or just hanging out. They said he was never threatening, and was always friendly to them.

There was also the story of another boy, about ten years old, whose bicycle tire went flat while riding along Kreag Road on the way to Bushnell's Basin to buy candy. He had never had a flat tire before, and didn't know what to do. Suddenly a man appeared on an old bicycle. He said nothing, picked up the boy's bike and carried it while walking his own bike toward the Basin. The boy, concerned he might never see his Schwinn again, followed from a distance, scared of this scruffy old man who had taken his bicycle. Soon the old man arrived at a store. The man entered and quickly appeared with a patch kit. He taught the boy how to patch his inner tube. The boy never forgot the lesson, or the man.

Eugene Harmor was a World War II veteran. He was one of a dozen of his nearby family members to serve in the war.





Non-Profit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Permit No. 149
Fairport, NY 14450



This interior photo of the newly constructed Fairport Public Library was probably taken in 1938. It features the WPA (Works Progress Administration) mural by Perinton artist Carl William Peters.

*From the collection of
the Perinton Historical Society*

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 10:00–1:00 p.m. 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