

# Perinton Historical Society **Historigram**

18 Perrin Street  
Fairport, NY 14450

Vol LII  
No. 4

December 2019  
585-223-3989

## Fairport Yuletides of Yesteryear

*By Karen Allen*

*In our modern times, we still embrace many family and cultural traditions during the holiday season. I was wondering, though, about the folks who spent the early years here in Fairport, and the surrounding Perinton area, in those days of “yesteryear.”*

*How did they celebrate this festive time of year? I also wondered just what was going on in our fair little port in those days. I looked through the historic newspaper archives and have compiled a few tidbits, from the turn of the last century, that I hope everyone will find interesting.*

Christmas in 1901 was a bit different than it is today, though certainly not entirely unrecognizable to most of us. The churches in Fairport were an important part of community social life and played a significant role this time of year. The announcements in the newspaper list the Methodist Episcopal Church providing a sermon on “The Christian Side of Christmas” while at the same time promising to have a Christmas tree and a “pleasing program for the youth.” The Free Baptist Church of Fairport also promises to have a tree and “something in the way of a surprise for the children.” The focus on children during the holiday was just as important then as it is now.

The Fairport Herald had a very interesting column in December of 1902 on how to dress your Christmas tree with tapered candles in a way that would be safer, and less likely to cause a fire. It involved drilling holes in the tree trunk, painting flat sticks green, drilling holes in those to hold the tapers and then attaching and inserting these around the tree. This was supposed to keep the candles from bouncing up and down and subsequently lighting on fire those “presents” that were put on the tree for the children. The presents listed, being bags full of fruits and nuts, popcorn on strings, paper chains, cornucopia baskets, silk garlands and a winged Christ child attached with rubber bands. This, of course, still sounds like a fire hazard to the mind of any person in our more modern times.



Perhaps you have heard the phrase, “If you don’t like the weather, wait five minutes and it will change!” I think it must have gone back quite a long ways. Apparently in 1905 Fairport had a green Christmas. If you have lived in this area for any length of time you have probably experienced at least one of these in your time. In 1905 they were also looking forward to building more houses come the spring of 1906. The area was definitely in a state of growth and development.

In 1913, before the Great War to come, the social pages of the Fairport Herald were full of Christmas festivities. These included a reception and ball held by the Order of the Eastern Star and The Pinnacle Club’s New Year’s Eve dance. There were lists of all the area’s college students, including many young women. These lists told when they were coming home and, of course, what college they were attending and what they were majoring in. While it’s clear these columns provided bragging rights for the families, they also tell us about the importance of time spent together with family members at this time of year. I imagine it was also a way

*Continued on page 4*



## Comments from your President

~Bob Hunt

November 15th, 2019:  
Once again, I am writing  
from my office in the carriage  
barn, on a chilly fall but

winter-like day, ready to share some thoughts for the December *Historigram*. I hope everyone enjoyed Thanksgiving with family and friends. As we enter this busy time of the year, please find time to relax a bit each week, possibly getting some vitamin N from a walk with Mother Nature.

In the October *Historigram* I mentioned our trip west to visit Cindy's brother Buck and family. What a wonderful trip it was, with the highlight being with the family in Northwest Montana for four days, and some great memories. In total we drove 5,222 miles, traveling out along Route 2, a bit south of the Canadian border. We picked up Route 2 in the upper peninsula of Michigan. We returned on a more central route through Wyoming, Nebraska, Illinois, Indiana and Ohio. The fall foliage was at its peak through Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota. While in Minnesota we picked up some wild rice, and have already made chicken mushroom and wild rice soup. It was delicious and one to repeat. Cindy and I also dodged a major snow storm of 29 inches by two days in Devils Lake, North Dakota.

Route 2 travels through very rural and desolate country in North Dakota and eastern Montana. One exception is when you get to the northwestern section of North Dakota, the Williston Basin. Williston is a city of about 15,000 people and is a boomtown because of the oil found there. The Bakken Shale formation, and several of the nation's largest oil fields are located here. This area is sitting atop one of the largest oil reserves in the world and has completely transformed the once sleepy village into a thriving modern-day boomtown. It seemed to me that I was driving one of very few cars in a sea of pickup trucks. There were only two cars where we spent the night, with the rest being trucks.

Getting to western Montana, Route 2 travels along the southern boundary of Glacier National Park. The larch, or

Tamaracks, also known as larch trees, in Glacier National Park. They were all over the west, and just changing to their beautiful gold color.

Photo by Bob Hunt

tamarack trees abundant in this area had started the change into their golden yellow color.

On the trip home we headed south down to Yellowstone where we found the park basically closed, with one road in from the north and one out through the northeast. We did see a few bison herds and hit a bit of snow, about six inches, as we left Yellowstone and headed for Cody, Wyoming. If you are in this neck of the woods, Cody is a must stop. Plan a couple of days, giving time to visit the Buffalo Bill Center of the West with its five museums located in one large complex. The admission ticket is good for two days and is needed to see everything. You will see lots of western art and other items of interest. From Cody it was off to see Devils Tower in northeast Wyoming. I camped there during my ride across the country by bicycle in 2000.

Next we traveled over the Big Horn Mountains, where we encountered quite a bit of snow. From there we dropped down into Nebraska, and witnessed lots of corn, soybeans, hay and cattle. Cherry County is larger than the State of Connecticut and the largest producer, at 166,000 head, of beef cows in the country. And if you are ready for a good snort, there are 3.1 million pigs in Nebraska.

We finished off across Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio. It was a great trip, but it's always good to put your head down on a familiar pillow. I can't travel across this great country without thinking about the pioneers in their covered wagons, and the hardships they must have faced.

Items that will be on the test: Washington, Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota all became states this month, November, in 1889.

Thanks for your continued support, it is appreciated. Let's chat again in the next issue of the *Historigram*.

Happy Holidays!

Bob Hunt, President

585-415-7053, rhunt356.rh@gmail.com



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## Special Recognition Level Memberships

*As of November 15, 2019*

### Business (\$100)

**Robert Ruhland (aka Mr. Perinton), Keller Williams Realty**

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

Phone: 585-303-6607

Website: <http://bobruhland.yourkwagent.com>

**The Inn on Church**

11 West Church Street, Fairport, NY 14450

Phone: (585) 678-1106

Web: [www.facebook.com/theinnonchurch](http://www.facebook.com/theinnonchurch)

**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 14550

Phone: 585-388-0112

Web: [thefvi.com](http://thefvi.com)

### DeLand (\$100–\$249)

**Total: 35 DeLand memberships for 2019–2020**

**New since last month:**

Emily and Peter Brincka

Juliette Moynihan

### Potter (\$250–\$499)

**Total: 6 Potter memberships for 2019–2020**

### Perrin (\$500 and above)

**Total: 1 Perrin membership for 2019–2020**

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## Upcoming Programs and Events

**Saturday, November 30**

11:30 a.m.—12:30 p.m. at the museum

**Event:** Face painting by Girl Scouts and a visit from Santa

**Sunday, December 1**

2:30—3:30 p.m. at the museum

**Event:** Girl Scouts Gathering

**Saturday, December 7**

10:30—11:30 a.m. at the museum

**Event:** Free children's craft with PHS member Karen Allen, visit from Santa and face painting by Girl Scouts

**Sunday, December 8**

2:30—3:30 p.m. at the museum

**Event:** Topping Ladder Company presentation

**Presenter:** Doug Topping

**Tuesday, December 10**

6:00—7:00 p.m. at the museum

**Event:** *Yuletide Traditions* final bids accepted for silent auction items. Silent auction winners will be announced following the evening's program.

**Tuesday, December 10**

7:00 p.m. at the museum

**Event:** Annual Holiday Party

**Presenter:** "Quantasonic Pipes" featuring Steve Whitman and Dick Hendrick. **Please bring a dessert to pass.**

**Saturday, December 21**

9:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.

Museum's last day open before closing for the season

**Tuesday, January 21**

7:00 p.m. at the Fairport Public Library

**Program:** From Sportscaster to Digital Journalist

**Presenter:** John Kucko

This program is co-sponsored by the Fairport Public Library, and reservations are required. Please call 585-223-9091 or visit [www.FairportLibrary.org](http://www.FairportLibrary.org) for reservation details. Reservations will be taken beginning December 1.

**Tuesday, February 18**

7:00 p.m. at the museum

**Program:** Frederick and Anna Douglass in Rochester

**Presenter:** Rose O'Keefe

**Saturday, February 29**

10:00 a.m.—12:00 p.m. at the museum

**Event:** Volunteer Recognition and Training Seminar

**Saturday, March 7**

9:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.

The museum opens for the season.

**Tuesday, March 17**

7:00 p.m. at the museum

**Program:** Dr. Seuss Goes to War

**Presenter:** Rosemary Irwin

**Tuesday, April 21**

7:00 p.m. at the museum

**Program:** The Architecture of James H. Johnson, architect of The Mushroom House

**Presenters:** Katie Eggers Comeau and Christopher Brandt

**Tuesday, May 19**

6:00 p.m. at the Perinton Park Pavilion

**Event:** PHS Annual Meeting and Picnic



for the young people to know who was in town and to reconnect with friends, too. Not everyone had a telephone in those days. According to Jay Zagorksy of Ladders.com, by 1914, at the start of World War I, here in the United States there was only one phone for every ten people.

Holiday dinner in the early 20th century was somewhat similar, according to the ads from supermarkets, like J.D. Webb's in The Monroe County Mail on December 23, 1915. Their suggestions for Christmas dinner included turkeys, suckling pigs and the Christmas goose but also suggested such delicacies as duck, rabbit, headcheese and oysters. Their ad includes "courteous treatment," no doubt a precursor to customer service.

In 1916 the social column of The Fairport Herald on December 27, mentions a teacher coming down with typhoid. It is tucked in among the reports of all the parties that were held at the various churches in the community, leaving one to believe that typhoid must have still been fairly commonplace during the World War I time period. Although it was not a green Christmas that year, the Fairport Herald reported that the mail was not delivered due to the severity of the weather. It is also mentioned that "Several families about town celebrated Christmas in their homes with beautiful trees for their children." Apparently, a tree was not a given for every household during this era.

The expectations for the types of gifts one would receive has changed a bit over the past century. In both December of 1918 and 1919 The Fairport Herald's recommendations for gifts from local merchants is a bit different from what most of us would be interested in receiving today. Most modern folks probably wouldn't be too excited to receive electric flashlights, nut picks, scissors, mops, waste paper baskets or clotheslines as gifts. It was certainly a different time as hatchets, guns and axes were advertised as useful gifts for the holidays. But there are some classic gifts that still hold true today, such as ice skates, Pyrex dishes, carpentry tools, dolls, Christmas ties, jewelry, watches, and rocking chairs, depending on the recipients, of course.

The elderly were also thought of during the holidays as well. The Boy Scouts, working with The King's Daughters of First Baptist Church, sought to make Christmas a happy time for the residents at the Fairport Baptist Home in December of 1918. They brought the residents there a tree and decorated it for them and then attached a gift for each one of them. Other volunteers donated ice cream for dessert as well as nuts and oranges.



The Best is None too Good  
for Your  
**Christmas  
Dinner**

WE are prepared to supply all your needs to make this year's feast the best you ever enjoyed. We mention a few of the good things to be found here:

Prime Roast Beef	Turkeys	
Choice Spring Lamb	Geese	
York State Pork Loins	Ducks	
Mixed Nuts	Chickens	
Malaga Grapes	Fowls	
Grape Fruit	Mince meat	
Oranges	Plum Pudding	
Cranberries	Raisins	
		Choice Celery
		Cluster Raisins
		Currants
		Christmas Trees
		Holly Wreaths
		Holly in Bulk

**HOLLANDER & ROOT :: FAIRPORT**  
WHERE QUALITY COUNTS

There were also charity drives in the area during this time period. One of the most notable was Christmas Seals, which was raising money to help stop the spread of tuberculosis and was working with the National Tuberculosis Association. The people of Fairport were very much involved in helping to raise money for this cause. Both the Boy Scouts and The Fairport Grange sold Christmas Seals in December of 1919.

The Fairport Herald consistently lists family and friends gathering together during the holiday season, multiple church and fraternal organizations hosting parties and fundraising for those less fortunate. As much as the particulars of the season have changed, the spirit has remained the same.

Though more than one hundred years have passed, Fairport remains a lovely place to call home and enjoy the holiday season.





## Kids Create with Karen

Bring your little elves into the museum on Saturday, December 7 between 10:30—11:30 a.m. to create a craft with PHS member Karen Allen. The foam snowman craft is fun for all ages! Santa will be there to visit with the kids and the Girl Scouts will provide face painting. Free event with no registration required.

## Nativity Scenes from Around the World

During the holidays, the Perinton Historical Society is pleased to exhibit thirty nativity scenes from around the world. The crèches come from two different collectors, both of whom are PHS members.

Gail Mazur began traveling the world in the 1990s following the death of her husband. In her travels, Gail found nativity scenes unique to the locales in which she was visiting. The scenes Gail collected come from the countries of Italy, South Africa, Mexico, Costa Rica, Spain, Peru and Germany.

The most unusual crèche in Gail's collection is an intricately carved set constructed of tagua nuts from Ecuador. This material is also known as vegetable ivory. Back in the 1880s, Rochester was well-known for manufacturing buttons made from tagua nuts, at a time long before plastic came into existence.

Our Historical Society's recording secretary Suzanne Lee also collects crèches in her travels and while at home in Fairport. Our display includes eighteen of Suzanne's scenes and feature a cloth crèche for children and a terracotta piece from Guatemala.

The nativity scenes in the exhibit come in a large variety of shapes, sizes and materials and are fascinating to see.

There are thirty of them currently on display at the museum.



Stop by the museum during regular hours through December 21 to determine which nativity scene is your favorite!



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## Yuletide Appreciation

The Yuletide Traditions fundraiser takes much planning and many people to make it successful. Museum Director Vicki Masters Profitt would like to thank the following people for planning and executing another fun fundraising event: Lucy McCormick, Dan Allen, Karen Allen, Will Allen, Ann Castle, Nadine Fiero, Suzanne Lee, Joyce Lyle, Pat May, Peg McGee, Dave Scheirer, Sue Scheirer, Terry Holt, Karen Wickens and Linda Wiener; to our Santa, Joe DeMeis; and to the museum volunteers who helped to decorate the museum for the holidays and set up YT. Special thanks to Membership Chair Jim Unckless for sending YT info to PHS members, to Doris Davis-Fritsch for publicizing all the special events on the PHS website and to Communications Director Jane DeMeis for publicizing the YT events in the media, on Instagram and on Twitter.

A debt of gratitude is also owed to our members, neighbors, friends, organizations and businesses who donated gift baskets, trees, wreaths, gift cards and decorative items to YT, bid on YT donations, spread the word about Yuletide Traditions, attended the special events and purchased items in the museum gift shop. Your support allows the Perinton Historical Society to continue sharing the amazing history of Fairport and Perinton with our community!

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## In the Christmas Spirit

The Fairport Historical Museum will be a very busy place on Tuesday, December 10! Final bidding on our Yuletide Traditions silent auction items takes place from 6:00—7:00 p.m., followed by a wonderful sing-along concert by Quantasonic Pipes. We will also celebrate the holidays with our annual party. Please bring a finger dessert to pass.

Did you know you can support the PHS whenever you shop on Amazon.com? Just log in to *Smile.Amazon.com* and select the Perinton Historical Society as your charity of choice. Amazon will donate a portion of the sale to the PHS. Thank you for your support!

Gift shop sales help support the operation of the Fairport Historical Museum. We appreciate your patronage at the holidays and throughout the year. The museum gift shop has a wonderful selection of unique gift ideas, ranging from autographed books by local authors to hand-painted slate tiles showing scenes from early Fairport and many other items in between.

Cash and checks are accepted as payment in the museum gift shop.



A Topping ladder in use at the Poray farm in Williamson in about 1910

*Photo from the Bill Poray photo archives*

## Do You Have a Topping Ladder?

*Doug Topping will discuss the Topping Ladder Company's history on Sunday, December 8 at 2:30 p.m. in the museum's lower-level program room. Free admission. No reservation needed.*

The Topping Ladder Company was part of Marion, New York's business profile for many years. It was started by Howell Topping in 1860 at 92 South Main Street and moved to 105 South Main Street in 1884, where it existed until 1997. The Topping family owned it from its beginning until 1965 when Clifford Topping sold the business to Connor Ladders in Rochester.

A Wayne County book published in 1874 lists the company as a manufacturer of ladders, cutting boxes, churns, wagon jacks, peach crates and croquet sets, among other things. During the late 1800s, Topping shipped ladders via the Erie Canal to clients in Rochester and the Hudson Valley, where fruit production was high. Portable fruit evaporators and dryers were advertised in 1880, and a salesman's model of an apple dryer still exists. Howell's son, Charles, joined the business, adding intricate grill work and additional products to the company's output. The Marion Washing Machine was patented by Charles Topping in 1889 and was made through the 1890s. The washing machine in the PHS collection was manufactured by Topping Ladder Company.





# *Yuletide Traditions*

The PHS holiday fundraiser

## *With Appreciation*

to the individuals, organizations and businesses that  
donated to Yuletide Traditions:

The Allens  
Susan Broda, Anne Johnston &  
May Thomson  
Kathleen Cloonan  
The Corner Bookstore  
Craft Bits and Pieces / Senior  
Options for Independence  
Fairport Brewing Co. & Wes Harris  
Fairport Rotary Club  
Jim & Linda Fassanella  
The Folino Family  
Girl Scout Troop 60336  
Jan Dwyer Hess  
Nanette Hoffer & Judy Mason  
Nancy Hutchings  
Patricia Impson  
Kathryn Joslyn  
Suzanne Lee  
Lift Bridge Yarns  
Joyce Lyle  
Chuck & Sharon Marang  
Mark's Pizzeria  
Karen Martin

Erin McCormick  
Lucy McCormick  
Moonlight Creamery  
Perinton Quilt Guild  
Marilyn Profitt  
Vicki Masters Profitt  
Red Bird Market  
Rita Prince State Farm  
Insurance Agency  
Dave & Sue Scheirer  
Laura Schmidt  
Alexa Schwartzbeck  
Mary Stevens, Blanche Shearer &  
Carol Johnston  
The UPS Store  
Sylvia Vecellio  
Emily Webster  
Wegmans Perinton  
Jean Whitney  
Windy Acres Handcrafted Furniture  
and Vintage Decor  
Anonymous



## Downton Abbey Takes Its Bows

There is so much going on at the Fairport Historical Museum! Bring the family to our special events, bid on wonderful gift baskets at our silent auctions and be sure to check out the unique items for sale in the museum gift shop (cash and checks accepted.) While you are visiting, take a last look at the Downton Abbey costume exhibit, which ends its run on December 21. The museum will then close for the season, reopening on Saturday, March 7.



## Chill Out to the Sounds of Quantasonic Pipes

Each year, the PHS attempts to instill an element of fun into its holiday party. On December 10 at 7:00 p.m., the fun is magnified as we sing along with Quantasonic Pipes, a duet featuring Fairport native Steve Whitman on tuba and his euphonium-playing pal, Dick Hendrick.

## John Kucko: From Sportscaster to Digital Journalist

For 30 years, John Kucko anchored sports and covered major sports events across America. He pretty much covered every Bills home and away game for more than 25 years. John was the on-air point man for Nexstar Broadcasting, reporting from major events for 125 markets across the United States. He traded covering 19 Super Bowls, multiple golf major championships and other sports events for taking pictures and videos of waterfalls, trains, lakes and sunsets—and much, much more.

John will speak about this major career transition, his passion for WNY and the Finger Lakes Region and his appreciation for history. John will deliver a video and image presentation featuring some of his favorite captures.

This program is co-sponsored by the Fairport Public Library, and reservations are required. Call 585-223-9091 or visit [www.FairportLibrary.org](http://www.FairportLibrary.org) for reservation details. Reservations will be taken beginning December 1.



### Perinton Historical Society

#### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

<i>President</i>	Bob Hunt
<i>Vice President</i>	Vicki Profit
<i>Secretary</i>	Suzanne Lee
<i>Treasurer</i>	Linda Wiener
<i>Communications</i>	Jane DeMeis

#### TRUSTEES

Keith Boas	Lucy McCormick
Bill Poray	Jim Unckless
Matt Wells	David Wild
George Wolf	

#### MUSEUM

<i>Director</i>	Vicki Profit
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# The Goose Diamond of Roselawn Avenue

*By Bill Poray*

Christmas of 1927 was a real celebration for the Peck family of Roselawn Avenue. Bert and Caroline, both in their sixties, were at a point in their lives where they were able to splurge a bit. Their two grown children would be with them for the holidays, including Laura, who lived with her parents, and her brother Carl, who had recently moved to Brooklyn, and was making a triumphant return to his hometown from the big city.

Bert and Caroline decided to give their children something extra special for the holiday. After a trip to the South Main Street jewelry store of George D. Young, the Pecks were considering something extravagant, diamond rings for both Laura and Carl.

Planning for the Peck family Christmas dinner included a trip to the meat department at Sibley's in Rochester. Caroline picked out a nice fat fresh goose, a bit more plump than the others. The store delivered the bird to the Peck's Roselawn Avenue house a day or two later, in time for Caroline to prepare it for the holiday dinner.

In dressing the goose for the oven, Caroline followed her usual practice, including opening the gizzard, where she found the typical assortment of bits of sand, gravel, and a tiny shell or two. Not long after the preparation was complete and the goose was in the oven, the jeweler, George Young, came

by the house with a selection of loose diamonds, from which Bert and Caroline would select two, to be placed in settings for the Christmas presents to Laura and Carl.




Mr. Young was a bit perplexed when Caroline informed him that their plans had changed, and that instead of two diamonds, only one would be purchased. When he inquired as to the reason for the change, he was informed that it all came down to the Christmas goose. You see, along with the sand, gravel, and tiny shells Caroline cleaned from the gizzard of the goose, there was also a beautifully cut, one-half carat diamond.

Laura Peck wore her goose-diamond ring proudly for many years. As time passed, she gave it to Susue Packard Leith, a daughter of her good friend and neighbor on Roselawn Avenue, Clara Moore Packard.

Although the ring is 92 two years old, we have no idea how old the diamond is. If only we could ask the goose.



The Goose Diamond of Roselawn Avenue



## Our Display of Gifts

So many times you wish to give a friend some dainty little remembrance at Christmas time. Our gift display was purchased with just this idea in mind. Prices are little, assortments are large.

**GEORGE D. YOUNG**  
WATCH AND CLOCK SPECIALIST  
Open Evenings to 10 o'clock until Christmas  
Phone 398      Opposite Town Hall      32 S. Main

**Perinton Historical Society**

## ***Mission***

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

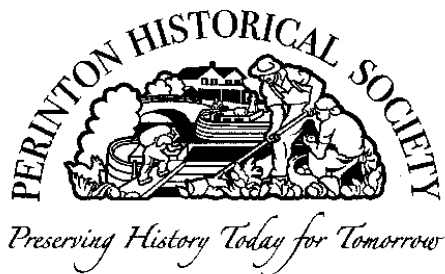
## **HISTORIGRAM**

*Published nine months per year by the  
Perinton Historical Society*

Editor: Bill Poray      Art Director: Keith Boas

Production & Distribution: Jim Unckless

Proofreading: Irene Poray



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



Hockey Tournament on the Canal in Fairport, Winter of 2010—2011  
*Photograph by Keith Boas*

### ***Season's Greetings from the Perinton Historical Society***

The Fairport Historical Museum—18 Perrin Street, Fairport—will be closed from December 22<sup>nd</sup> through March 6<sup>th</sup>. It will reopen on Saturday, March 7<sup>th</sup>. During this period, you may call Vicki Masters Proffitt at 585-233-1204 or email at [director@perintonhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:director@perintonhistoricalsociety.org) to book a group tour or do research.

**[www.PerintonHistoricalSociety.org](http://www.PerintonHistoricalSociety.org)**