

## 200 Years on the Erie Canal!

*By Bill Poray*



This early canal scene is a reproduction of a painting by Edward Lamson Henry (1841–1919). Many years ago, Art and Wendy Muldoon kindly allowed former PHS President Bill Matthews (1925–2003) to reproduce their print of the painting.

*This year, Perinton and Fairport celebrate 200 years of navigation on the Erie Canal. The first events will be held on the afternoon of Friday, May 20<sup>th</sup>, and will primarily be held on the north and south banks of the canal, just west of the Main Street lift bridge in Fairport. More information can be found on page 6 of this issue.*

The commonly accepted date identified with the completion of construction of the original Erie Canal is October 26, 1825. Beginning in Buffalo, Governor DeWitt Clinton, aboard the *Seneca Chief*, led a flotilla of boats, which made their way to New York City. The celebratory journey took ten days, and reached its conclusion as Governor Clinton poured a keg of water, taken from Lake Erie, into New York Harbor.

But many portions of the canal were navigable years earlier. The section between Utica and Syracuse was completed in 1820. In Perinton, navigation on the canal began in April of 1822. The earliest reference found thus far was published in the *Cherry Valley Gazette*, Otsego County. It quoted a Rochester source, and stated: “*Transportation on the Erie Canal commenced on the 11<sup>th</sup> instant, from Heartwell’s Basin.*”



This portion of the 1822 map of Monroe County shows the path of the Erie Canal through Pittsford and Perinton.

In the first months of operation, Heartwell’s Basin was visited by boats with the names *Perseverance*, *Macedonia*, *Trader*, *Favourite*, and *Democrat*. Some carried freight, some were filled with passengers, and others handled both simultaneously. Flour, packed in barrels, was one of the largest volume products shipped on the Erie Canal in this area. Other commodities loaded onto our earliest boats included pearl ash (used in baking), cider, and pork. Incredibly, 2,660 gallons of whiskey, along with three kegs of lard were unloaded from a boat in Clyde, Wayne County, on May 21, 1822.

*Continued on page 4*



## From your President

April 13, 2022

Today, I sat on my rocking bench in the Secret Garden and had a nice chat with my new friend. Auburn the chipmunk, agreed that it's exciting to see the green buds on the dappled willows telling us that spring has

sprung. Beautiful blue scilla have popped up in the crescent around the bird bath and the allium surrounding them have started their journeys toward the sun.

The annual Greenbrier Garden Club plant sale is another sign that spring has arrived. After a pandemic hiatus, the club is moving forward with its sale on the sidewalk of the museum on Saturday, May 7<sup>th</sup>, beginning at 9:00 a.m. Please stop by to support the club, which has done so much for the Perinton Historical Society in over forty years of maintaining the museum's gardens.



Scilla in Vicki's garden

The popular PHS virtual cemetery tour returns on May 17<sup>th</sup>. It will kick off the bicentennial commemoration of the Erie Canal completion through Fairport with a special timeline of canal-related events and portrayals of four interesting characters.

The town of Perinton and village of Fairport are planning some special canal bicentennial events on May 20<sup>th</sup> and PHS will be involved in those festivities as well.

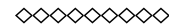
A special PHS cruise on the Colonial Belle will take place on July 16<sup>th</sup>. (See page 7 of this issue for details.)

Plans are in full swing for the June 21<sup>st</sup> members' event at the museum. We hope you will stop by between the hours of 6:00–8:00 p.m. to enjoy an evening of food, fun, and

friendship in celebration of our members.

The upbeat tempo of Katrina and the Waves' song, *Walking on Sunshine*, is just what I need today. There are so many things to celebrate—spring, flowers and chipmunks scampering about in the garden.

I look forward to seeing many of you at our events this spring and summer.



## Perinton Historical Society

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

<i>President</i>	Vicki Profitt
<i>Secretary</i>	Suzanne Lee
<i>Treasurer</i>	Linda Wiener
<i>Communications</i>	Jane DeMeis

### TRUSTEES

Keith Boas	Nancy Slaybaugh
Bob Hunt	Jim Unckless
Lucy McCormick	Matt Wells
Bill Poray	

### MUSEUM

<i>Director</i>	Vicki Profitt
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### MISSION

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

The HISTORIGRAM is published nine months per year by the Perinton Historical Society. The content of our newsletter is provided by PHS Board members and committee staff. Opinions expressed in any article in this newsletter are those of the author of the article alone and are not those of the PHS unless expressly stated otherwise.

*Editor:* Bill Poray      *Art Director:* Keith Boas

*Production & Distribution:* Jim Unckless

*Proofreading:* Irene Poray, Nancy Slaybaugh



## Coming Programs & Events

**Saturday, May 7<sup>th</sup>, 9:00–12 p.m. at the museum**

Event: Greenbrier Garden Club Annual Plant Sale

**Tuesday, May 17<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. at the museum**

Program: Celebrating the Erie Canal Bicentennial  
Cemetery tour

**Sunday, May 29<sup>th</sup> at 2:30 p.m. at the museum**

Program: Underground Railroad:

A Secret Crusade to Set People Free

Presenter: Wendy Murray

**Tuesday, June 21<sup>st</sup>, 6:00–8:00 p.m. at the museum**

Event: PHS Members Only Open House

**Saturday, July 16<sup>th</sup> from 2:30–5:30 p.m.**

Event: Colonial Belle Cruise (See page 7 for more information.)



Celebrating the canal—this early 20<sup>th</sup> century photo shows some local residents enjoying a porch at the Oxbow.

### ***Cemetery Tour*** **—Celebrating the Canal—** **200 Years in Fairport**

This year, in honor of the 200th anniversary of the completion of the Erie Canal through this community, our cemetery tour will highlight Fairport residents who have a connection to the canal. It's hard to imagine life in Fairport without the canal; even today, it influences how we live and play. Come learn about the Erie Canal's history in Fairport through the stories of packet boat captains, inn owners, canal superintendents, the Calico Canaler, the Cherry King, the country's oldest muskrat trapper, and other fascinating locals. These eternal residents are buried in numerous local cemeteries (some in Fairport, some not), but all of them lived or worked here and had close ties to the canal. This presentation will feature early maps of the canal and the town, numerous photographs, artifacts from the museum's collection, and several first-person accounts of life on the canal throughout the past two centuries. The event will be in person at the museum. No registration required.



### ***PHS Member to Present*** **Underground** **Railroad Program**

The Underground Railroad, a secret conspiracy enacted through the efforts of thousands of American women and men in the early to mid-19th century, will be presented by Wendy Murray, a member of the Perinton Historical Society. This expansive collection of photographs and drawings will feature gut-wrenching original stories about Black fugitives, as they traveled on the Underground Railroad, seeking personal safety and freedom from the evils of slavery. Escorted along many forgotten trails, this narrative explores the sacrifice and bravery that abolitionists endured as they extended a hand to create new lives.

Wendy Murray is a wife, mother and grandmother of five. She was raised in a family of 12 children, being the third eldest. After spending twenty years in Asheville, North Carolina, Wendy worked as a campus minister on two university campuses for the Diocese of Charlotte, and later became a volunteer coordinator for Catholic Charities. Upon returning to New York State, she and her husband bought a house in the village of Fairport and promptly joined the Perinton Historical Society. She also serves on the House Tour Committee.

**In person at the museum**  
**No registration required**



The reference to Heartwell's Basin is said to have been based on the early presence of Oliver Hartwell. Yes, I have used two spellings for the same name in the last two sentences, carrying on a two-century tradition of confusion with regard to the spelling of the name. No matter how it is spelled, by January of 1824, and possibly even earlier, the Heartwell name was abandoned in favor of Bushnell's Basin. William Bushnell had quickly become the most active and prosperous businessman in the young, thriving canal port.

We have been fortunate to locate a detailed description of our section of the Erie Canal, as it existed in the spring of 1822, published in an Otsego County newspaper:

*"Heartwell's Basin is situated about eleven miles east of Rochester, and is at present a depot for a part of the flour manufactured in Rochester, Avon, Wheatland, Geneseo, Lima, Bloomfield, etc. There are now in store at that place about 10,000 barrels flour; besides other stuffs, which will probably be immediately freighted to the Atlantic waters... In addition to the above, there are two other places of deposit within about six miles east of Heartwell's Basin, at which flour and other property to a large amount is deposited in readiness for transportation. It is worth to remark that three months ago the positions selected for these deposits were mere arable fields, without buildings."*

In addition to Heartwell's Basin, the "two other places" referenced above are almost certainly Fullam's Basin, where Perinton Park resides today, and Knappville, once located at the point in which Lyndon Road crosses the canal in eastern Perinton. Both early canal ports eventually faded away.

Westbound boats could proceed no further than Heartwell's Basin until the completion of the Great Embankment in the autumn of 1822. Considered to be one of the great engineering feats of its time, the Great Embankment provided the solution to the geographic dilemma of crossing the Irondequoit valley. The elevated passageway consisted of two man-made ridges, coupled with natural glacial ridges, for a total distance of almost a mile. The earthen embankment carried the canal over 70 feet above Irondequoit Creek.


Two hundred years later, the Great Embankment continues to serve the same purpose, although it has had more than its share of catastrophic failures, the most recent in 1974.

Commercial activity on the canal grew rapidly upon completion of the Great Embankment. In the spring of 1823, the Utica Gazette announced, "The canal is now navigable from this place to Rochester." The newspaper reported 91 boats and three rafts passed through Utica in just a few days in late April, many loaded with flour. Much of that flour likely came from Rochester's burgeoning mills, soon after known as the "Flour City."

Several months later, canal traffic from the east was

**Buffalo, June 3. 1826**

**THE LINE OF**



**PACKET BOATS,**

*From Buffalo to Utica,*  
**After the third day of June, inst. will run**  
**Through in Three Days.**

Leave Buffalo every day at	8 A. M.
Black Rock, 1-2 past	8
Lockport,	3 P. M.
Newport,	11
Brockport,	3 A. M.
<b>Rochester,</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Fullam's Basin,</b>	<b>2 P. M.</b>
<b>Palmyra,</b>	<b>5</b>
Newark,	8
Lyons,	10
Clyde,	1 A. M.
Montezuma,	4
Port Byron,	6 A. M.
Weed's Port,	7
Jordan,	9
Canton,	11
Nine Mile Creek,	1 P. M.
Syracuse,	3
Manlius,	6
Chittenango,	8
New-Boston,	9
Canastota,	10
Oneida Creek,	11
Rome,	4 A. M.

**And arrive at Utica the third morning at 8 o'clock in time to take the Morning Boat for Schenectady, which runs through in 2 1/2 hours.**

This 1826 advertisement for passenger travel by packet boat gives an indication of the importance of Fullam's Basin in the early years of the Erie Canal. Note that it is the only stop listed between Rochester and Palmyra.

finally able to cross the Genesee River in Rochester. This report from a Rochester source was republished in the Rutland, Vermont Herald in September of 1823:

*"It is expected that in a few days the water will be let into the aqueduct across the Genesee River at this place. It will be an interesting and novel sight to behold boats floating over the river at the height of about twenty feet above the water. The aqueduct has already become a subject of considerable curiosity, and strangers may be seen at all hours of the day inspecting it, and expressing their admiration of its beauty and solidity."*



Despite the glowing review, the original aqueduct over the Genesee River had a short life. It was replaced less than twenty years after its construction by a second aqueduct. The 1918 rerouting of the Barge Canal to the south of Rochester made the aqueduct obsolete for navigation.

Soon after, the 800-foot long aqueduct was repurposed as a tunnel for a new Rochester subway system, which operated from 1927 to 1956. At the same time, vehicle traffic was accommodated by adding a roadbed on top of the subway tunnel, named Broad Street.



## 200 Years on the Erie Canal!

### *May 20<sup>th</sup> Celebration Events*

On the afternoon of May 20<sup>th</sup>, three new historic markers will be unveiled, including—

**On the canal at Bushnell's Basin (1:00 pm)**

**At 234 South Main Street (1:45 pm)**

**At Kennelley Park (2:30 pm)**

Then, from 3:00–6:00 pm at Kennelley Park, canal-related Perinton Historical Society archives and photos will be on display, along with free canal-side history tours given.

Additional activities will be held into the evening hours at Kennelley Park and on the newly developed canal-front area along the north side of the canal, west of the Main Street lift bridge.

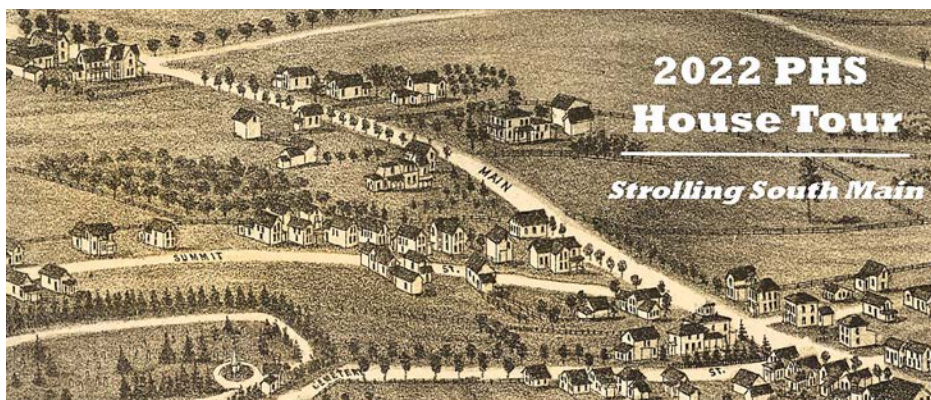
**Stay tuned for additional information  
as May 20<sup>th</sup> approaches!**



## Surveying the Erie Canal

These surveyor's transits are currently on display at the Fairport Historical Museum. Recently donated by local canal enthusiast Mike Caswell, they make up an impressive collection.

Included in the display is an early 1900s photo of the men who belonged to our local “engineering corps.” At least two local men are in the photo: Girard M. Parce, and Hubert K. Bishop. Surveyors used transits similar to these in identifying the detailed route for the Erie Canal.



## Save the Date for Strolling South Main

On Sunday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>, you'll have the opportunity to visit six lovely homes on South Main Street in the village. The in-person PHS House Tour is back. Mark your calendar today!

## 2021–2022 Special Recognition Level Memberships

*As of April 15, 2022*

### **Business (\$100)**

#### **Fulkerson Services, Inc.**

111 Parce Avenue, Fairport, NY 14450  
Phone: 585-223-2541, Website: fulkersonservices.net

#### **Lift Bridge Yarns**

24 High Street, Suite 1, Fairport, NY 14450  
Dawn Verdugo & Jessie McNaughton  
Phone: 585-364-0521, Email: Dawn@LiftBridgeYarns.com

#### **Frank N. Pittinaro, C.P.A.**

William Webb & Associates, LLC  
404 East Atlantic Boulevard, Pompano Beach, Florida 33060  
Phone: 954-943-1650, Email: Frank@webbcpa.com

#### **Canandaigua National Bank & Trust**

72 South Main Street, Canandaigua, NY 14424  
Phone: 585-394-4260, Website: cnbank.com

#### **Lucien A. Morin II, Partner**

McConville Considine Cooman and Morin, P.C.  
300 Meridian Centre Blvd., Suite 110, Rochester, NY 14618  
Phone: 585-546-2500, Email: lmorin@mccmlaw.com

#### **Barranco's Clothing and Shoes**

32 North Main Street, Fairport, NY 14450  
Phone: 585-388-1270, Email: BarrancosClothing@gmail.com

#### **Fairport Village Inn**

Wayne and Patty Beckwith  
103 North Main Street, Fairport, NY 14550  
Phone: 585-388-0112, Website: thefvi.com

#### **Salle d' Escrime of Prescott, AZ A Fencing Club**

Patricia Dodge Waples, Owner

### **Perrin (\$500 and above)**

Kathleen Cloonan & Barry Childs



Scenes from the 2021 Open House: (Top) Artist Susan Prener and (below) members by the House Tour information table

## **Celebrating PHS Members on June 21<sup>st</sup>**

In 2021, the PHS Board of Trustees hosted a members-only open house in lieu of the annual meeting and picnic. (See photos above.) This allowed us to gather together in a different way during the pandemic. The wonderful comments we received about this new event, from many of the 125+ attendees, have prompted us to offer it again in 2022.

PHS members can drop by the Fairport Historical Museum on Tuesday, June 21 any time between the hours of 6:00–8:00 p.m. for the 2022 open house. We will have gift bags, snacks, author appearances, music, games and prizes.

Members will have the opportunity to stroll the beautiful museum gardens, which have been maintained by the Greenbrier Garden Club for more than forty years. Displays will feature photos and information about the fall PHS House Tour and volunteer opportunities. Ballots for the PHS budget and board of trustees will be accepted on this evening, as will membership renewals.

The PHS has flourished since its founding in 1935 thanks to your support. We hope you can join us for this special event celebrating our members.







## Celebrate on the Colonial Belle

*By Kay Joslyn*

This summer, PHS will celebrate the bicentennial of the Erie Canal with an afternoon boat trip on the Colonial Belle. On Saturday, July 16<sup>th</sup> from 2:30–5:30 p.m., Bill Poray and Vicki Profitt will narrate as we cruise along this historic waterway from Fairport to Pittsford's Lock 32 and back. We will learn about the people and places that made the canal such an integral part of our community.

Ice cream sundaes will be served and passengers will receive tickets for an on-board raffle. There also will be a cash bar.

Tickets are \$50 per person and will be sold at the museum during operating hours. We will be selling tickets to PHS members only from June 2<sup>nd</sup>–7<sup>th</sup> prior to being offered to the public. Tickets will also be available at the member open house at the museum on June 21<sup>st</sup>. There are a limited number of tickets and we want to give PHS members first chance.

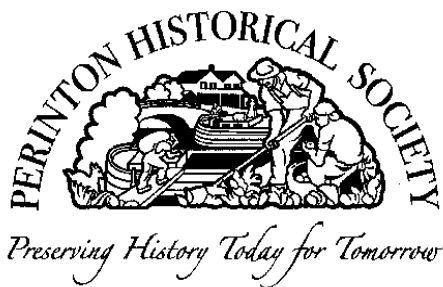
Please plan to join us for this special bicentennial event. Contact me at [kbjoslyn@frontiernet.net](mailto:kbjoslyn@frontiernet.net) if you have questions.



The cruise will take us past Bushnell's Basin (middle photo) and further west to Pittsford's Lock 32, where it then will head back to Fairport. Along the way, we'll navigate past the trendy shops and restaurants of historic Schoen Place (bottom photo).

*Photos by Keith Boas*





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Fairport, NY 14450



## DeLand Family on Permanent Display

The DeLand family, perhaps more than any other, played an essential and unique role in the history of Fairport. This impressive collection, which is on permanent display at the Fairport Historical Museum, illuminates the stories of generations of the family, and their lasting contribution to Fairport and Perinton.

**Fairport Historical Museum, 18 Perrin Street, Fairport, NY 14450**

The museum is open to the public on the following days and times: Saturdays from 9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m. and Sundays and Tuesdays from 2:00–4:00 p.m. Free admission. Group tours, presentations and special projects are by appointment. Please call and leave a message at **585-223-3989**.

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