



Perinton Historical Society Historiogram

18 Perrin Street
Fairport, NY 14450

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The Old Stone House "Where it was Always Sunshine"

By *Bill Poray*

For many years, the Fairport Herald-Mail published essays under the banner, "Back Home Letters," encouraging former residents to reminisce about their formative years in Perinton. The most prolific letter writer was Herbert A. Howard, born in 1860.

Members of the Howard family first arrived in Perinton from Bridgewater, Massachusetts in the 1830s. Five brothers (Ansel A., Daniel J., Lorenzo T., Marshall G. and John L.) came to Perinton, along with their elderly father, Ansel Sr. The Howard family members were wagon makers in Belchertown, Massachusetts. Lorenzo and John stayed in Belchertown, building "Democrat Wagons," and shipped them by packet boat to Perinton, where their older brother Ansel, Howard's father, sold them at his store in Fairport. A few years later, John and Lorenzo also came to Perinton, bringing their wagon-manufacturing operation with them.

In this edited letter, Herbert A. Howard joyfully recalls his youth and his uncle Marshall's beloved cobblestone house. The home still stands today, just east of the VFW Post on Route 31F (Macedon Center Road).

Note: I have added certain clarifying statements in parenthesis and italics.

Buffalo, N.Y.
March 26, 1935

Dear Art (*boyhood friend Arthur Newman*):

There are many farms around Fairport, but there was only one special farm. Were you to go north you would come to the Rowe Marlett farm where I used to go with my mother and her knitting, but that was not the farm. Were you to go up High Street and over the top of Vinegar Hill you would come to my Uncle Frank Dunbar's farm where lived dear old Aunt Hattie and where I used to play ball with Clara. But that was not the farm, nor the one beyond and round the curve where lived Uncle Marshall and where I hunted eggs and played barn baseball with (*cousin*) Charlie. Of course that was a dear old farm because my grandfather lived there at one time, but he died long before I was born.

Were we to go west of the village there would be the Joseph Hawkins farm, nor was that the farm. Going south up on old Turk Hill we would come to Will Henry's father's farm, and Mrs. Henry and my mother were cronies and I always enjoyed



The old
cobblestone
house at 438
Macedon
Center Road

going there, but even that was not the farm. No, there is only one more place where that farm could be.

Continued on page 4



Comments from your President

~ Bob Hunt ~

Greetings! As I sit to write my comments for this month's HISTORIGRAM, I reflect on what a beautiful day it is to be in Fairport (Oct. 13, 2012). The weather started out cool, but the sunny, blue sky soon made our community come alive with the activities of the Scarecrow Festival.

As I walked about the village, the Safe Journey 5K race was just finishing at the Box Factory parking area, so there were hundreds of racers congratulating each other and enjoying the fellowship associated with the event. The scarecrows on Main Street were ready to be enjoyed by visitors from near and far.

Merchants were outside their storefronts, selling their wares, and Kennelley Park was alive with activity as well. The Fairport Partnership was on hand. There was kettle corn, hot dogs by the Fairport Perinton Merchants Association, and music at the gazebo. All this was in addition to the normal Saturday morning farmer's market. At this point, I decided to open the museum, which turned out to be a good decision. From approximately 10:00 a.m. to 2:15 p.m., we had about 40 visitors and sold 15 house tour tickets.

A lot has happened since chatting with you last month. We supplied 40 hours of volunteer time at the three-day Fairport Partnership Oktoberfest and will receive a donation for our efforts. Thanks to all who helped with this event.

On September 25th, our Board of Directors held a strategy meeting to plan our direction for the next five years. This was an excellent session and all members contributed ideas and concerns relative to PHS. We started by going through a SWOT exercise, and listed what we perceived as our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. We then used stick-on dots to elect our top three strengths and top three weaknesses.

Our top strengths turned out to be our monthly membership programs, monthly newsletter, the HISTORIGRAM, and the museum. The top three identified weaknesses were the need to grow our membership, technology being used at the museum and the need for more volunteers.

The remaining time was used to discuss methods to turn our weaknesses into strengths. I will discuss one area in each of the next three issues of the HISTORIGRAM and will begin this month looking at our technology situation. There is a need to get PHS to a higher level relative to computers, data storage and access, social media, and how we communicate with our members. The brainstorming list included use of cloud technology, having a scanner available, accession system update and security, membership information and records, Pay Pal account, back-up systems, QR codes for viewing of displays, flat screen TV programs, and photo storage. We jumped right into this at our last board meeting when Linda

HISTORIGRAM

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~ Our Mission ~

The Mission of the Perinton Historical Society is to promote interest in preserving and sharing local history.

Wiener convinced one of her clients to help us. Evan Tzimas of Innovative Solutions has agreed to take us into the future, on a pro bono basis, by reviewing where we are and then working with our committee to get us where we want to be. The committee thus far includes Jim Unckless, Chair; George Wolf and Doris Davis-Fritsch as members. If you have an interest in this area please let me know.

Finally, I just returned from a great House Tour experience and must give many thanks to all the volunteers, homeowners, and to Deborah J. Wilcox Mabry for coordinating the tour. Thank you Deb. What you do is appreciated.

News Flash: I just received word that our PHS scarecrow received 3rd place honors! Congratulations to Lucy McCormick, Sharon Catanese and the rest of the team.

Thanks for your continued support of PHS. We will chat again next month.

Bob Hunt, President

Rhunt1@rochester.rr.com / 585-415-7053



WE WANT YOU!

The Fairport Historical Museum is looking for volunteer docents. If you have just two hours a month to donate your time, we want you! Please contact Vicki Profit.

vprofit@rochester.rr.com
or 585-233-1204

PHS Scarecrow is a Winner



October 13: The competition was stiff. *Pinocchio* made a timely political statement: "Vote for Pinocchio—at least you can tell when he is lying." And *Larry, the Band Leader* honored the retired Fairport Fire Dept. drum major Larry O'Meal. But the Historical Society's *Sherlock & Co.* made a respectable 3rd place showing at this year's Scarecrow Festival. The trio of Sherlock, ghost, and black cat delivered the message, "Solve history mysteries at the Fairport Historical Museum!" Thanks go to Lucy McCormick, Sharon Catanese, and Ann and Harold Castle for their winning effort. And the team thanks Bob Hunt for treating them to fabulous ice cream at the Moonlight Creamery. Photo by Doris Davis-Fritsch



**Sunday, November 11, 12:30 pm,
At the Fairport Historical Museum**

Children's Program: Celebrating Our Veterans

In honor of Veterans Day, learn about some of Perinton's brave soldiers who served in various wars, from the Revolutionary War to modern times, and learn which war came right to Perinton's doorstep! Also, in honor of Election Day, learn about voting and cast your vote for the name of the new PHS kids' mascot!

**Tuesday, November 20, 7:30 pm
At the Fairport Historical Museum**

The Amazing Life and Times of Oliver Mead Tomlinson (and his daughter, too!)

Presented by Bill Poray

In the May issue of the HISTORIGRAM, Editor Bill Poray provided a summary of the life of one of Perinton's early pioneers, O.M. Tomlinson. The research trail led him from the archives of the Fairport Museum, to the rare documents collection of the Buffalo Public Library, the Calaveras County Historical Society (California) collection, the historic archives of the University of California, Berkeley, and finally, the Provost Marshal's Office in Washington, DC.

The story of Oliver Tomlinson, and also of his daughter, Statira Tomlinson Maltman, demand more review than that which can be provided in a short essay in the HISTORIGRAM. In this PHS program, Bill Poray will reveal rare documents, photos, and publications which will shed light on a Perinton pioneer whose life was inspirational, incredible and maybe a little weird as well!



Detail of 1834 Holmes-Hutchinson canal map

Bill Poray has been a member of the Fairport Historical Preservation Commission since its inception in 2007, and is also a Trustee of the Perinton Historical Society. Mr. Poray's recent projects include the identification and restoration of a depression-era bronze sculpture now located at the Fairport Post Office, and the discovery of an 1898 Fairport Village Census, which he has digitally reproduced and transcribed for use by historians, genealogists, and others interested in local history. Bill also presented a PHS program in November of 2011 on the Art and Life of Fairport Artist Carl Peters.

Well, I might as well tell you now where that farm is. It is on the Macedon Center road where my cousin Lloyd lives (*at the time this was written—1935*), and where it was always sunshine. To me that farm was a paradise, and many Saturdays found me there. I was cautioned before starting, and told to go down John Street (*Lift Bridge Lane*) as far as Baker's Bridge (*bridge at Turk Hill Road*), and then on over Thomas Creek.

The West Shore railroad was not then in existence, so there was nothing but the Howard crossing to look out for, and then a gradual rise brought us up to the old stone house.

And how I did like to hear the birds sing, there (*their*) singing was better than what we heard in the village, and there were so many different birds. The whole world was attuned to my boyish nature. Yes, it was a dirt road, and I was not barefoot. I was always on the lookout for snakes, and once I saw one and killed it, and then I felt badly. That snake had as much right to live as I did. I very well remember one time our church had a Sunday school picnic up in Brown's woods. I went with my mother before the main body of the Sunday school, and we took the wrong road after going over the Howard crossing, and I remember how the others laughed at us for taking the wrong road, and I can see "Lil" Adamson as she made fun of us. You see we took the road that leads up to the old stone house.

It was on that very day I first heard America sung, and it was sung by Col. Clink (*no, not the Col. Klink of Hogan's Heroes fame*). Now I don't know anything about who he was; it is only a memory, but there must be something to it. But we will let the picnic go. I am more interested in getting to the old stone house.

I was at my Uncle Marshall's so much I really felt ashamed and didn't go direct to the house but went up into the barn where all of Charlie's (*Charlie Dank—farm hand*) tools were, and whistled, and made a noise for Charlie to hear. Some two or there (*three*) years before that Uncle Marshall left grandfather's old place and moved to the stone house. Uncle Daniel had been living in the stone house, but he moved to the village.

The barn was about 250 feet from the house. Pretty soon my cousin Anna (*Anna Howard, born 1854*) came to the door and looked out. How well I can see her as she stood with a hand on each hip. They know who it was that was making all that noise, and soon Charlie came out. His shop up over the carriage barn was a wonder to me. Charlie could make anything you wanted, from a pig's tail whistle (*see related story—Pig's Tail Whistle on the opposite page*) to a rolling pin, and many a housewife he has pleased with the making of some kitchen utensil.



Circa 1948, from the collection of the Perinton Historical Society

How everything comes up before me; that little red, outside summer kitchen, with the bell hanging up on the side, and old Vina grinning all over. (*Lavina Smith, born 1803, died 1882, buried at Greenvale Cemetery*). She was the daughter of a Baptist minister down in old Plymouth county (*Massachusetts*), and my grandfather's will provided for her, as she was not of a sound mind – and I have that will.

I must have been about 10 years old (*about 1870*), and everything is stamped on my memory's wall, such as the cider barrel by the side of the stone entrance to the down stairs or fruit cellar. "Sucking cider through a straw" was an old song for us to sing. I remember one dish my aunt Emma often had and that was samp. You never hear of it nowadays, and pudding and milk was another bang up dish, and I enjoy it know just as much as I did 65 years ago.

Then in the west wing of the house, first floor, was an old organ of some kind. It had leaden pipes that Charlie and I used to blow through. I hope that west wing is still as it was. But nights, when I was allowed to remain over night, were the great event. Up over the dining room was the place where Charlie and I used to throw pillows. Those were halcyon days, at least we liked to paint them so. Every single farm I have mentioned stands out in bold relief. I don't have to imagine anything; it is right there.

The old stone house is very dear to me in memory. I think it was built by a man by the name of Hunt (*in fact, it was—by Lorenzo Hunt*). I wouldn't be surprised if there was a relationship between this Mr. Hunt and Milton Budlong. High up on the house is a date, and the letters.

It was always a sad time for me when 4:30 came around, and my mother always told me that was the time I was to leave Uncle Marshall's. Sitting on the fence across from Charlie's home one could see good old Zerah Burr's house, and to speak that name brings to mind both Mr. and Mrs. Burr at once—

Zerah with his specs and Mrs. Burr taller than Zerah. I always remember Mr. Burr because he used to pull my curls in church (*Congregational church*) when we used to sit on the east side of the church facing the west in the "Amen pews."

That old stone house could tell many tales of jolly times, and I can easily think of Dan Brown and his sister Florence as being there. They were cousins of my father, and their mother married Dr. Brown who lived many years ago on Parker Street at the very end of Pleasant Street. There must have been family reunions, but they were long before my time.

Those deep, set in windows, those tinkling baubles that hung from the lamps, the huge fireplace in the dining room with the mysterious wall closets where Charlie kept his trinkets. Great Scott!! Can I ever forget them!



1872 map identifies the location of the cobblestone house, owned by Marshall Howard

And then to sit on the fence across the road and to look down on the New York Central, and right at the foot of the hill was the railroad bridge. To the east we could look for miles, and away off was Knapp bridge (*today it is known as the Lyndon Road bridge*) then following west we would come to the Ayrault woods, and between us and the woods was the cedar swamp and between this swamp and the woods was the Erie canal. And flowing through that cedar swamp was Thomas Creek, and in that creek was a favorite swimming hole where Charlie and I disported ourselves.

The going home was not nearly as fast as the going up, with the birds singing and the looking forward to the happy times to come. And now Charlie is a staid old scientist and I am mooning over childish memories and old enough to know better.

The old stone house says she is 91 years old (*now 168 years old*) – no evasion – different from most girls.

Yours, Herb



Pig's Tail Whistle

*Reprinted from The Illinois Farmer—
A Monthly Agricultural Journal;
Vol. VII, 1862*

A FALACY EXPLODED. We had always heard it asserted that it was impossible to "make a whistle from a pig's tail" but in this age of invention, improvement, progress, the obstacles which lay in the way of accomplishing this feat have been removed, and we acknowledge a Christmas present of a whistle made from a PIG'S TAIL. The successful man is a Vermont Yankee – one not known to fame in this region as the most untiring and accomplished Writing Teacher in the West. The article shows ingenuity and inventive genius. Accompanying his whistle was the following letter:

Mr. Editor:

You will be presented in the coming holidays with fat Turkeys and good things in abundance. You will be wished a "Merry Christmas" and "Happy New Year," and to make it so, I present you with a whistle, made of – a Pig's Tail – to whistle dull care away with during the holidays, and enjoy yourself in the coming new year. I have whittled it out during my spare moments, to answer that standing objection of the Old Foggy – "You can't make a whistle out of a pig's tail." You see the thing can be did.

Yours Truly,

Thomas E. Hill, Gazette, Waukegan

Special Thanks—

To May Thomson, who had previously sewn curtains for the Merriman-Clark Room on the museum's lower level, and has also created table runners located at the bottom of the stairs and selected appropriate tablecloths.

Thanks also to Ann Castle and Lucy McCormick for their assistance with these projects.

Spotlight on Fairport Landmarks

The John E. Howard House—70 South Main Street

By Bill Poray

In 2010, the Fairport Historic Preservation Commission designated the Fairport Federal Credit Union building at 70 South Main Street, a historic landmark. From a historic perspective, the property is known as the John E. Howard house.

The house was originally built in the 1840s or perhaps the early 1850s. A Landmark Society survey of 1976 indicates that the architectural style of the house may have originally been either Federal or Greek Revival, but was probably altered to its present Italianate design soon thereafter.



Early photo of the home of John E. Howard, prior to 1892. Mr. Howard is believed to be in the center. Used with permission by the owner, the Fairport Federal Credit Union

The building features many strong Italianate design cues, including widely overhanging eaves with brackets in a drop ball design, gracefully arched porch supports, and a rooftop cupola. The Fairport Federal Credit Union implemented a sensitive rehabilitation to the exterior of the building several years ago, taking care to maintain important historic elements of the structure.

As detailed in the “Back Home Letter” on page one, members of the Howard family first came to Perinton from Belchertown, Massachusetts in the 1830s. Gillette’s 1858 map of Monroe County indicates that brothers John and Lorenzo Howard had houses next door to each other on South Main Street, at approximately the area where the current entrance to the Village Landing is today. Shortly thereafter, John and his wife Louisa relocated to the structure we now recognize as the Fairport Federal Credit Union building. Perhaps this is when the house was enlarged and changed to its current Italianate design.

In 1867, the Village of Fairport was incorporated, and in 1868 the first village elections were held. John E. Howard was



Three of the five Howard brothers in the 1880s. From left, John, Daniel, and Ansel. From the collection of the Perinton Historical Society

elected to serve as a Trustee on the first Fairport Village Board. Mr. and Mrs. Howard were also very active in the Fairport Congregational Church, and were highly respected in the community.



The John E. Howard House in 2012

The Fairport Federal Credit Union has completed a sensitive rehabilitation to the building's exterior, maintaining important historic elements of the structure.

The Howard's daughter, Sophia, also played a historic role in early Fairport. Born in 1844, Sophia attended Philadelphia Medical College, a renowned school specifically for female students. After graduation, Miss Howard worked for a time in the hospitals of Boston, gaining experience in her profession. She eventually practiced in Canandaigua, and later, in Auburn.

In Fairport, she holds the distinction of seeking elected office in the Fairport School Elections of 1881. This was the first time women were allowed to run for office and vote in school elections. Sophia E. Howard ran for the position of Trustee, as did a Mrs. Griffith. While both lost, each was a true pioneer. The 19th Amendment to the Constitution granting women the right to vote did not come into existence for another 39 years.

The John E. Howard house was sold in 1901 to Doctor Charles White and his wife, Doctor Francis Hulburt White. After graduating from Michigan University in 1900, the Whites became fixtures in Fairport for many years to follow. Their offices were located on the first floor, and living quarters were on the second floor. Charles served for many years as the Village Health Officer. After her husband died in 1933, Doctor Francis Hulburt White continued her medical practice in Fairport until her death in 1943.

In about 1940, Doctor John N. McEachren gained ownership of the house and offices at 70 South Main Street. Like his predecessors, his medical practice and family home were located in the house. For the next 45 years, Doctor McEachren served countless members of our community. Incredibly, the house served as a physician's office for 84 consecutive years.

The Fairport Federal Credit Union has since owned the building, and has demonstrated great sensitivity to the responsibility of owning this local landmark.

In the early years of Fairport, residences lined South Main Street, from the lift bridge toward Church Street. The John E. Howard house is unique, as the closest house to the lift bridge, still standing, from this long ago era.



A GREAT DAY!

The Perinton Historical Society's 42nd Annual House Tour on October 14th was an absolute, unqualified success. Even the weather cooperated with a dry afternoon.

Nine wonderful properties on West Church Street were featured, and the Fairport Historical Museum was open extended hours to welcome members. Volunteers performed their roles admirably, and the large crowds of PHS members clearly enjoyed the tour.

Special thanks go to Deborah J. Wilcox Mabry, who pulled this all together with style and grace. It was truly a day to remember.





Preserving History Today for Tomorrow

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Our Newsletter *Behind the Scenes*

Volunteers play an important role in the creation of the HISTORIGRAM. After each issue is printed, pages are assembled and folded. Stickers and address labels are attached, completing the process. Jim Unckless then takes the finished product to the Post Office for delivery.

Pictured in this photo are (left to right) Jim Unckless, Carol Alvt and Martha Shafer. Other volunteers include Marge Gearhart, Jane Henne, Anna Steuerwald and Stuart Barone.

Thanks to all for your help and participation!

Fairport Historical Museum

18 Perrin Street, Fairport, NY 14450

The museum is open to the public on Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays on the hours listed below. If you want to do research or have other needs at the museum on other days and/or times, you may make an appointment. Call and leave a message at 585-223-3989. Group tours, presentations and special projects are by appointment.

HOURS

Sunday 2 pm - 4 pm
Tuesday 2 pm - 4 pm
Thursday 7 pm - 9 pm

www.PerintonHistoricalSociety.org