

# HISTORIC PITTSFORD

fall, 2008

NEWSLETTER

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Edited by Karen Hultz

## *Statement of Purpose*

*Historic Pittsford is a not-for-profit organization chartered and incorporated under the New York State Department of Education. Committed to the preservation of Pittsford's rich heritage of nineteenth and twentieth century architecture and the special character and sense of place it has provided, Historic Pittsford also faces the complexities of today.*

## **PITTSFORD CEMETERY**

*By Audrey Johnson*

The Pittsford Cemetery Association was formed in 1842 by an act of the New York State legislature. Nathan B. Cole sold six acres of land to the Association for \$300.00 which was the original parcel. Since that time, many other parcels have been added.

Ira Bellows was the first president of the newly formed Association and he chose for himself and his family, a very prominent plot. It is just across from the cannon and the Veterans plot. Four other men served on the Board. Today we have nine volunteer trustees who meet monthly and strive to keep the grounds in good condition.

In 1922 the land on the east side of Washington Road, commonly known as the Annex, was purchased from Claire Davis. In total there are 29 acres of land owned by the cemetery - much of it still unsurveyed but ready for that when needed.

This cemetery is the only one of the four located within the town still in use and it is a private organization whose income is in the sale of graves and generous contributions from residents residing in a "Friends Fund". Other cemeteries no longer operating are the Pioneer Cemetery, The East Street Cemetery, and the Joshua Lilly graveyard on S. Wilmarth Road. These are all officially closed for burials but are kept mown by the town of Pittsford.

Buried in the Pittsford Cemetery are veterans from every war in which the United States has been engaged. There are at least three Revolutionary War veterans at rest here. They are Captain Henry Gale, Major Ezra Patterson, and Timothy Barnard who was bodyguard for General George Washington during 1777-1778. Fifteen other Revolutionary War veterans are buried in the Pioneer Cemetery and Simon Stone is in an East Street plot.

Also in the Pittsford Cemetery is buried one veteran from the Civil War who wore the gray



of the Confederate Army. His name is John Thurmon and he fought against the Yankees in Missouri and Mississippi. He eventually moved to East Rochester where he worked at the car shops. He was considered a fine upstanding citizen of that community and he marched every year in the Memorial Day Parade, wearing his confederate uniform. John married and raised five sons. He died in 1919 and his grave is marked with a confederate flag and marker. The Pittsford American Legion tends his plot and makes sure there is a flag.

Another interesting veteran is Alpheus Hodges. He was credited with firing the first shot at the battle of Gettysburg. Hodges was only 20 years old when he fought in that famous battle. He lied about his age when he joined the Army in 1861. He was captured by confederate troops and was slated to go to the infamous Andersonville Prison but was instead sent to Belle Isle. That probably saved his life. Interestingly, Hodges also settled in East Rochester and was employed by the car shops.

If you stroll through the Pittsford Cemetery, you will discover the tombstones marking the final resting places of many well known and prominent families. The roads are well marked, the grass is mown, and the venerable trees are trimmed. We, the trustees, endeavor to keep this burying ground neat and well cared for to show our respect for the many persons entombed here. Our efforts were rewarded by the Landmark Society last year and by the award given by Historic Pittsford in July. We ask for the help of all members of the community to keep our graveyard in fine condition.

# DEDICATION OF THE JACKIE WEBBER FOUNTAIN

(This was the speech given at the dedication of the Jackie Webber Memorial Fountain on August 8, 2008 at the Pittsford Community Library)

We meet today to remember a very special person, Jackie Webber, with this work of sculpture, a permanent symbol to help us remember. We honor her here, but we also remember her every day in many ways, as our friend, as our colleague, and as a crusader who helped preserve this Village, Pittsford.

We remember Jackie in the handsome house on Monroe Avenue that she and Bill cared for, for many years, one of our proudest survivals from the historic past.

We remember Jackie in the Village, in the trees and flowers that beautify our daily lives.

But most of all, we remember Jackie as a colleague in saving Pittsford. Jackie was one of the small original group that began Historic Pittsford, recognizing that this historic village was being threatened by 20th century standards of development.

This group felt that our heritage here would not survive under the pressures of modern efficiency unless we could demonstrate that pretty places attract people, people who buy and maintain old buildings, people who prefer to shop in welcoming places.

In 1969, the new group of dedicated residents took up the cause of getting others to join them in recognizing Pittsford Village as a unique group of historic buildings.

It's hard to envision today, when the merits of preservation have been demonstrated in many ways and many places, but in the 1960's downtown Pittsford Village had two gas stations at the four corners, one of them blocking the side of the Phoenix building, now the home of Mitchell Pierson Realtors. Several houses on State St. had lost most traces of their original features under "modernization". A few stores were empty. Others were dull and dingy.

Historic Pittsford began with a campaign to draw attention to the resources available in the Village. Fortunately, Andy Wolfe, the editor of the local newspaper, adopted the crusade. At the time, the National Trust for Historic Preservation was encouraging local citizens to survey their architectural resources. The Pittsford group undertook to collect what was called "Architecture Worth Saving" and publish it, first in the newspaper and then as a guide book. Paul Malo, an architect and preservation consultant from Syracuse, was hired to select candidates and write the text for a survey of Village and Town.



Jackie volunteered to help with that survey. It was she who drove the consultant to the various possible buildings and allowed him to make the notes from which he would later write the book *Architecture Worth Saving in Pittsford, Elegant Village* which won an award from the New York State Council on the Arts.



Funds for these activities came from a series of antiques forums, bringing experts from out-of-town for a weekend of interesting lectures. Each of the forums was enhanced with an attendant exhibition of outstanding furnishings borrowed from local owners. Jackie was important there as well, both in arranging for the eye-opening exhibits and in hosting the visitors. Sometimes, she met the visitors at their planes. Sometimes she graced each table with one of her classic flower arrangements. Sometimes she lifted one end of a desk being carried into the exhibit. That was Jackie. She did what needed to be done.

We can't forget Jackie. With this addition to the library garden we hope that future generations will remember too.

## MEMORIAL FOR JACKIE WEBBER

By Jean France

Funds in memory of Jackie Webber, a longtime member of Historic Pittsford and resident of 31 Monroe Avenue, were gathered by Historic Pittsford. After long debate and investigation, it was decided to use the funds for a memorial fountain in the Pittsford Library garden.

The idea of a standard Victorian figural fountain was rejected in favor of a more naturalistic solution.

David Spencer, a local artist, works with natural stone and landscapes elements to make what he calls "natural stone water sculpture." The Webber Memorial fountain is made specifically for its location in the library garden. Two natural stones, selected and shaped by Spencer, were hollowed out to allow connecting pools of water, linked by a recirculating stream that makes a tiny waterfall.

The Jackie Webber Memorial Fountain was dedicated August 8, 2008, in a brief ceremony attended by the Webber family as well as by Village Mayor Bob Corby, Town Supervisor Bill Carpenter, Library Director Marjorie Shelly and members of Historic Pittsford.

# REMEMBERING PAUL MALO

By Jean France

With the death of Paul Malo in July, Historic Pittsford lost a friend.

In the mid – 1960's, a small group of local residents organized Historic Pittsford, recognizing that the quality of life in Pittsford was influenced by the Village's collection of interesting historic buildings. That unique atmosphere was being threatened by the pressures of 20th century development.

Historic Pittsford's first effort was to call attention to the quality of local resources by a preservation survey of the Village, later expanded to cover the Town.

Syracuse architect Paul Malo, was engaged to prepare this report on Pittsford historic architecture, published first in the Brighton-Pittsford Post and then in the book *Architecture Worth Saving in Pittsford, Elegant Village*, now in its second edition.

Since this first connection with Historic Pittsford, Paul Malo has often been called on by the Landmark Society and other preservation groups, to fill the role of out-of-town expert, evaluating and rating surveys of other Monroe County locations. He was often consulted as an expert in the architecture of the Thousand Islands and the Adirondacks.

Malo was an architect as well as a preservation consultant. He was the designer of the elegant gazebo added by Bill and Jackie Webber to their home at 31 Monroe Avenue.

## ANNUAL MEETING

Historic Pittsford's annual meeting was held Monday, July 14, 2008 at the lovely home of Fran and John Fadden. Attendees were able to take a tour of this beautifully restored cobblestone farmhouse before partaking of a hot dog cookout accompanied by home cooked potluck dishes.

Outgoing president Joe Maxey conducted the business portion of the meeting and highlighted the activities of HP over the last year.

Two new board members, Peggy Brizee and Peter Webster joined the Board for a two year term and officers of the Board were elected.

John Parker concluded the meeting by presenting this year's preservation Achievement Award to Pittsford Cemetery Association for their ongoing preservation of historic property, and their leadership of public effort in the continual advancement of historic and cultural preservation since 1842. The award was accepted by Hazel Knickebocker.

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

We live in a unique and envied town and village. In no small way Historic Pittsford has contributed to this good fortune. It is not luck that we have a charming town with informed and interested people. Our mission is to be community educators, teachers of the appreciation of the past and stalwart supporters of our historic background, and fine architecture. We have no authority as an organization, but we have a strong voice heard through the halls of the town and village offices. Your continued support of our cause keep the others wondering "how do they do that?"

The Fall has brought us to a new year for Historic Pittsford. As a group, under the able guidance of outgoing President Joe Maxey, H.P. had a very productive 2007/2008. Our programs were well attended and enjoyed by everyone. Some highlights were the tour of the renovated Zornow grain mill and silo (still under construction), the "New Landmarks of the Future" program and the annual picnic meeting at the charming cobblestone home of Fran and John Fadden. Our participation in the

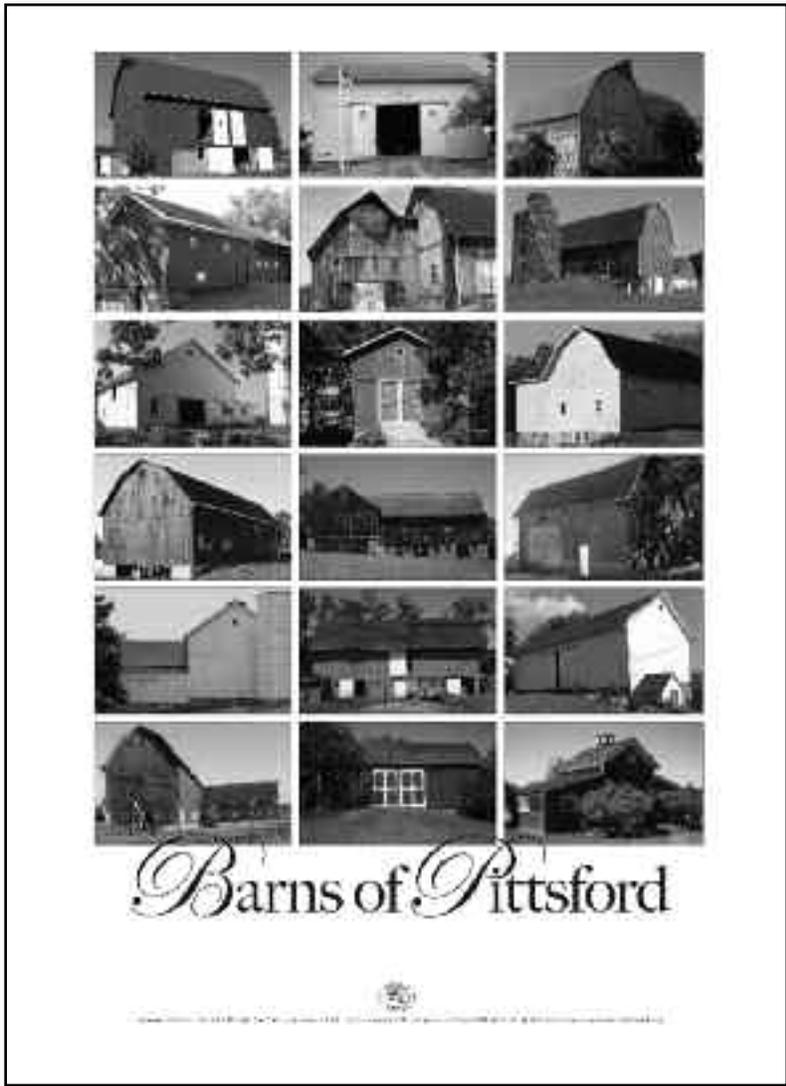
annual Pittsford Days has been obvious and most gratifying. The "Little House", our headquarters and museum has been visited by an ever increasing number of residents and visitors (especially the school kids). We will be doing some major work there too. I will keep you informed in future newsletters of our progress.

To keep an organization like ours vibrant and effective we need to continue to grow in both numbers and contributions of time and effort. We do appreciate new members and must have them for survival, but we need active participation from lots of our members (not just the Board). We need volunteers and ideas. See or call any of our staff to help.

The Board, including our two new members, Peggy Brizee and Peter Webster, join me with enthusiasm to keep this great thing going.

The new Barns of Pittsford poster is stunning – get one! See details in this newsletter.

Rusty Likly, **President**  
Historic Pittsford



# Barns of Pittsford

## ORDER FORM

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

POSTER ONLY \_\_\_\_\_ QTY \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$15.00 EACH \_\_\_\_\_

MOUNTED POSTER WITH SEALED EDGES QTY \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$55.00 EACH \_\_\_\_\_

(ALLOW 7-10 BUSINESS DAYS FOR MOUNTED POSTERS.)

TOTAL NO. OF POSTERS \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

(CHECKS PAYABLE TO HISTORIC PITTSFORD)

ORDERS MAY BE PICKED UP AT THE LITTLE HOUSE  
ON WEDNESDAY & SATURDAY MORNINGS FROM 9AM TO 12 NOON

**THE LITTLE HOUSE**  
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