

HISTORIC PITTSFORD

Spring 2019 NEWSLETTER

DR. HARTWELL CARVER

by Audrey Johnson

The charming home at 41 Monroe Avenue and its builder have an interesting history – known to many long-time residents but perhaps needs to be reviewed for those newer residents of our community.

The home sits atop a small knoll surrounded by trees and landscaping designed by another Pittsford son named Francis Hastings Gott, the house is a copy of one seen by its owner in New York City and is, according to two sources, constructed of brick and immediately covered with board and batten siding. The sharply peaked roofs and the scrolling edges on its eaves give this Gothic beauty a romantic look.

The house was produced by a man whose name was recognized by many railroad enthusiasts because of his connection to the transcontinental railroad. That quest became a passion to the man who lived in Pittsford in the person of Dr. Hartwell Carver.

Dr. Carver was born in 1789 to a family of old Pilgrim stock who lived in Rhode Island. The family came to Otsego, NY when Hartwell was five years old. He had very little early education but possessed a brilliant mind and attended Hamilton College when of correct age. He studied law, but did not graduate, due to “some difficulty that arose between him and one of the professors”. He then decided he would rather study medicine and went to New Haven where he presented himself to Yale where he was admitted and received his AM and MD degrees. After his graduation, he came directly to Pittsford where he opened his practice and became extremely successful in a very short time. In fact, some sources say that he was able to clear \$1000 his first year, pay off all of his expenses, establish a fine medical library and build himself a small house.

Even though Carver had an extremely large practice, he took time off to travel to Buffalo and Lockport where he



and some associates opened a few mercantile businesses which were successful. He spent some time in New Orleans where enjoyed himself immensely. In 1831 he went to London to study more medical techniques and then traveled the continent.

When he came back to Pittsford in 1853, he resumed his large medical practice, and was able to obtain a plot of land from David Sutherland and

began building his home. He was extremely pleased with the results but his interest and passion had been taken by railroads. Now we, who can fly in a plane around the world, no longer have the deep desire to have a train that can travel from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean, but in the early years of the country, Dr. Carver felt it would be a great boon to the development of the nation. He spent a great deal of time speaking about the venture, writing letters to congressmen and prominent people. It was the time the Civil War was raging across the country and absorbing money and energy for that endeavor rather than investing in Dr. Carver’s dream.

Finally, after many years of lectures and writings and urgings, by 1860’s many others thought the idea was a great one and by 1869, the ceremony of driving the “golden spike” at Promotory Point, Utah completed Dr. Carver’s passion. Some sources say that Carver did not live to see its completion, but others say he died in 1875 and prior to that had erected the tallest and most ornate tombstone in Mt. Hope Cemetery. Dr. Carver never married and had no issue, but his mother and married sisters are buried in the same plot.

The residents of Pittsford may take pride in claiming this amazing medical practitioner and dreamer of dreams that became a reality and he was known as the “Father of the Transcontinental Railroad.” He left our community with a legend as well as a beautiful tangible structure at 41 Monroe Avenue.

THORNELL ELEMENTARY STUDENTS RECEIVE NYS RESEARCH AWARD

by Vicki Profitt

The fourth-grade students in Mrs. Toni Stevens-Oliver's 2017-2018 class at Thornell Road Elementary in Pittsford worked with Illuminated History historian Vicki Masters Profitt to complete a year-long project researching Pittsford's Civil War soldiers. The eight soldiers highlighted include: Major Harvey E. Light, Captain James R. Chamberlin, Dr. Matthias L. Lord, Sergeant John B. Bacon, Private Edward T. Ambrose, Private Charles A. Tillotson, Private George B. Wiltsie and Sergeant John H. Thurmon, C.S.A., all of whom are buried at Pittsford Cemetery north of the village.

The children scoured census and military records and located information in newspapers which pertained to the soldiers. Collages depicting the soldiers' stories were created with the help of Thornell Road Elementary art teacher, Helga Lubbers. Instructional Technology Specialist Tina Jarvis assisted in the project by setting up the augmented reality aspects of the project. Armed with their knowledge, the students wrote a book sharing the tales of these local heroes.

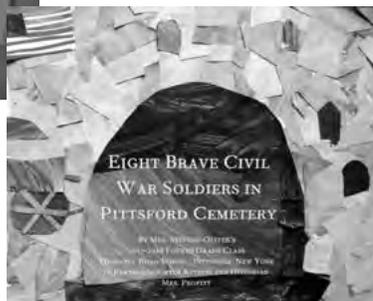
Major Harvey E. Light, of the 10th Michigan Cavalry, is the highest-ranking Civil War soldier buried at Pittsford Cemetery. Captain James R. Chamberlin, 3rd New York Cavalry, founded the Chamberlin Rubber Company in Rochester in 1866, which is still in existence today. Dr. Matthias L. Lord was commissioned Assistant Surgeon to Rochester's famed 140th New York Infantry, which was commanded by Colonel Patrick O'Rorke. Edward T. Ambrose (108th New York Infantry) and George B. Wiltsie (4th New York Heavy Artillery), both privates, were prisoners of war. Edward survived the prison camp, but George succumbed to illness after many months as a prisoner. Private Charles A. Tillotson of the 108th New York Infantry was killed in his first battle, at Antietam, the single bloodiest day of battle of the Civil War. Sergeant John H. Thurmon was a Confederate soldier in the 2nd Missouri Cavalry who moved from Missouri to New York in the late 1800s to find work at the Merchants Despatch Transportation company in what is now East Rochester.



An especially exciting aspect of the *Eight Brave Civil War Soldiers in Pittsford Cemetery* book is the augmented reality content that can be viewed using the free app BlippAR on a smartphone or tablet. Not only did the students research and write the book, but they also created scripts based on the soldiers' lives. Those scripts came to life when members of each research group portrayed their soldiers in video clips that can be watched using the BlippAR technology and holding a phone or tablet over the gravestone photos in the book. The students also discuss the documents they accessed for research. To order the book, please visit: <https://cwsoldierspittsford.shutterfly.com>.

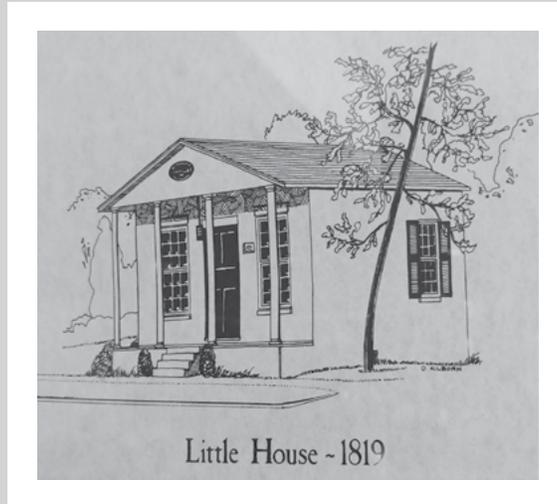
Part of the project involved the proposal of an historic marker to be placed at Pittsford Cemetery to celebrate the 81 Civil War soldiers interred there. Vicki Masters Profitt, with the approval of the Pittsford Cemetery Association (www.PittsfordCemetery.org), has applied for a grant from the William G. Pomeroy Foundation (WGPFoundation.org) to supply the marker. If approved, the historic marker will be placed at the cemetery entrance opposite Golf Avenue so visitors are aware of the history contained within.

These incredible students were honored to receive the New York State Archives Student Research Award, which was presented to the class in Albany, New York, on October 17, 2018. Congratulations to Adam, Aiden, Ava, Chris, Giovanni, Jack, James, Josiah, Kyra, Leila, Maggie, Mary, Matthew, Mikaela, Misa, Rohan, Ryan, Sam, Sarah and Sukhmani and to their inspiring teacher, Toni Stevens-Oliver!



PRESIDENT'S CORNER - PRESERVATION MATTERS

Historic Pittsford's Board of Directors has had a busy last-few-months celebrating the 200th birthday of the Little House. It is actually quite remarkable that a little over 50 years ago, the Little House, located on Monroe Avenue, was saved from destruction. A group of preservation-minded folks arranged for the Little House, formerly located across the street from its present location, to be moved and rehabbed. Over the course of its 200 years, this iconic structure has seen many uses and has witnessed the growth and development of our Country.



In 1819, the year the house was built, the quaint building witnessed an America overseen by President James Monroe; an American flag with 21 stars on it for just that year; and the Speaker of the House being Henry Clay. Pittsford at that time was a part of Ontario County and Herman Melville, Walt Whitman, Abner Doubleday (of baseball fame), Julia Ward Howe (Battle Hymn of the Republic) and Queen Victoria were born.

In 1819, financial panic swept across the country. The growth in trade that followed the War of 1812 came to an abrupt halt. Unemployment rose, banks failed, mortgages were foreclosed, and agricultural prices fell. Investment in western lands collapsed. This first depression of a new America was alarming in its scope and impact. In New York State, property values fell from \$315 million in 1818 to \$256 million in 1820.

The "Era of Good Feelings", within which the panic occurred, marked a period in the political history of the United States that reflected a sense of national purpose and a desire for unity among Americans in the aftermath of the War of 1812. On the home front, local War of 1812 hero

Caleb Hopkins bought the land and built his home on Clover Street (where those sunflowers are now planted every year by Caleb's 4th great grandson.)

Fast forward to 2019, the Little House still stands, having witnessed two centuries of American history and having served a myriad of functions throughout - doctor's office, residence, travel agency, bakery, attorney's office, etc. Having stood on Monroe Avenue for these two hundred years, the Little House in Pittsford Village has been present for the Underground

Railroad, the construction of the Erie Canal, the Civil War, Reconstruction, Women Suffrage, Prohibition, the Depression...and the transformation of Pittsford from a quiet farming community to a busy suburban village and town.

Historic Pittsford recognizes the unique role it plays in historic preservation in our community. Preservation is not just about protecting unique architecture but about defining and memorializing those who lived within and around them. The iconic Little House is a symbol of the mission of Historic Pittsford. One might wonder where we would be now had the founders of our organization decided not to save the Little House those 50+ years ago. Moreover, where would Pittsford, especially Pittsford Village, be without a partner like Historic Pittsford?

Best,

Peggy Caraberis Brizee
President, Historic Pittsford
historicpittsford@gmail.com

PAT PLACE ARCHITECTURAL CONSULTANT SERVICE

Historic Pittsford continues to offer its architectural consultation program in partnership with Bero Architecture. This program makes expert advice available to homeowners wishing to maintain the architectural and historic integrity of their properties. The program provides a free consultation that most often involves exterior architectural changes and projects which should be addressed in the early stages. Basic structural problems can also be addressed. Homeowners receive an on-site consultation and follow up written report and are not obligated for any future services.

This program is available to owners of any property in the Village of Pittsford, properties in the Town of Pittsford that are designated as landmarks, inventoried as eligible for landmark status or built prior to 1902.

For additional information or to request an architectural consultation, please contact Bonnie Salem at 586-2764 or bsalem@rochester.rr.com.

SAVE THE DATE

Annual Meeting

Thursday, July 18: 5:30-8 pm
King's Bend Park: North Lodge
Invitation and details will follow.

For your Fall calendar:

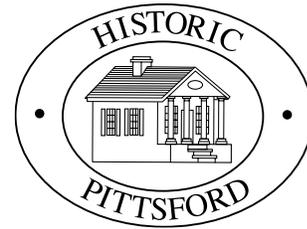
Preservation program by Wayne Goodman
Sunday, September 15: 2 pm
Pittsford Community Library
Details to follow.

Candlelight Night

Tuesday, December 3: 5-8:30 pm
Details to follow.

"Christmas in Colonial Williamsburg"

Sunday, December 15: 2 pm
Details to follow.



18 MONROE AVENUE
PITTSFORD, NY 14534

2019/2020

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Little House Office and Museum

18 Monroe Ave., Pittsford, NY 14534 / 381-2941

Open: Wednesday and Saturday 9am-12noon

www.HistoricPittsford.com

Dorothy Meusburger, Secretary



**Historic Pittsford wishes to recognize and say thank
you to our long- time business members:**

Ludwig Associates

Messner Carpets

O'Grady and Associates

Village Coal Tower Restaurant

HISTORIC HOUSE PLAQUES

Throughout the village and town, you may have noticed historic structures sporting a reddish-brown plaque showing the date the structure was built. If you own a home or business in Pittsford that is 50 years or older and you would like a plaque, they may be purchased through Historic Pittsford. Ordering information is available on our website at www.historicpittsford.com, click on the "Plaque" tab. Your purchase helps support HP's mission of education and advocacy for historic preservation in Pittsford.

