

HISTORIC PITTSFORD

FALL 2014 NEWSLETTER

A HIDDEN LANDMARK

by Audrey Johnson

Almost completely hidden behind century old trees, about 50 feet from one of the busiest intersections in the community, surrounded by a white picket fence that frames an award winning garden, sits unobtrusively a lovely old home that may have been built around 1815, with a deed showing one time ownership of Glover Perrin for whom Perinton was named.

Since her birth in the house in 1921, 84 South Main Street has been lovingly maintained by Connie Koegler Wilson. Connie's parents, Olive and Conrad Koegler purchased the home and acreage from Julia Minnebeck whose name was attributed to a subdivision containing 4-5 lots along what is now East Jefferson Road. At one time the property extended southward to the creek near Rand Place and the village line.

Conrad, better known as Duke, had been captain of the U of R's football team, and his right tackle and best friend was Herbert Ward of Bushnell's Basin. Together they built the white house at the corner of East Jefferson when that road was just a nameless dirt path to the east. That space had once housed a blacksmith shop. Before the cellar could be dug, the lot had to be cleared of a whole crop of potatoes. Connie remembers the racket made from pounding nails to create the frame for the house that seemed to be so close to her bedroom!

Duke died in 1926, leaving his widow and two children. In order to survive, Olive decided to open a tea room. It was called the Garden Gate Tea House and it served dinners and light lunches only to patrons who had made prior reservations. It was then that the picket fence, which included a gate, was built by that dear friend of Duke's. The gate opened into the garden and a path that led to the porch and the south entrance. When guests came, Connie and her brother were "shooed" upstairs to their bedrooms until such time as the guests left and clean-up began.



Koegler House - present day

The children attended the school on Lincoln Avenue – walking to school, home for lunch, back to school and then home at the end of the day. No lunches were served to the students and there was no

cafeteria in which to eat.

Connie developed a love of gardening and became very knowledgeable in which vegetation thrived in the soil and the southern exposure. There are still plants and trees living and thriving from ones that

were planted in the 1930's. A beautiful wisteria tree and Deutzia bush still put forth beautiful and fragrant blossoms.

After graduating from high school, Connie attended Alfred University, matriculating in fine arts. After finishing there, she and a friend moved to New York City and tried their hands at creating and selling ceramic objects. When WWII began, Connie was encouraged to return home and engage in something to aid the war effort. She found work at Strong Memorial Hospital and while there she met Bob and soon became Mrs. Connie Wilson.

The young couple lived in Rochester for a short time until returning to 84 South Main to be company for her mother. Bob became chief of health and safety at U of R. For many years he was president of the zoo society and he and Connie came to be known as the "snake people". They had dry aquariums and tended snakes and other reptiles that had become too big for people's homes or needed nursing back to health. Connie led many classes to school children explaining reptiles and their habits and helping children understand them better, perhaps becoming more comfortable with those creatures

There is a quaint red barn on the property that once belonged to a Mr. Osgoodby who owned the land that became Eastview Terrace. A fine crop of hops was grown on that hill and some are still living in the Wilson's back garden. Originally the barn had a special place for a carriage and two stalls for the horses that pulled it.

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Koegler House - circa 1926

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Connie is an artist and she has embarked on a new venture. She uses some of the leaves of her plants, arranges them artistically on archivally correct paper, and prints them. They become a natural depiction and tasteful image of a leaf or branch to be framed and displayed. She plans to make them available for sale. What a forward thinking woman!

The interior of the house at 84 South Main has been carefully maintained and documented by Ms. Wilson. Any restorations or additions have been chronicled and photographed. The artifacts and decorations have been carefully chosen and each item has its special place in the home. This building is not just a house – it is an historic treasure to the owner, who has acted as a faithful and loving steward for all of her life.

REVITALIZED GARDENS AT THE LITTLE HOUSE

by Deborah Resch, Chair Little House Committee

Historic Pittsford was recently awarded a grant from the Junior League Garden Club to refurbish the gardens that surround the Little House on Monroe Avenue.

The Little House Committee of Historic Pittsford took on the task of renewing the gardens with perennials that might have been growing in the area during the early 1820s. Most of the existing plantings were removed except for the lilac tree and the quince.

After much pruning, digging and weeding to ready the beds for planting, a design was formulated, and the perennials were placed in their new home. Some of the plants that visitors will enjoy include: a David Austin Rose, lavender, variegated sage, yarrow, phlox, Shasta daisies, bachelor buttons and wooly thyme. Daffodils have been planted to bloom in mid spring and there are also plans to add trillium,

jack-in-the-pulpit and leopards bane as soon as the seasons allow.

The Little House Committee also purchased two planters for the front porch of the house. These were planted with various colorful annuals during the summer season.



Thank you to the Junior League Garden Club and to the Little House Committee for helping with the gardens. Visitors should delight in the colorful blooms from mid spring thru the fall for years to come.

PITTSFORD PERSONALITIES

Pittsford Town Historian, Audrey Johnson, has a new show on Pittsford's cable channel 12 entitled "Pittsford Personalities". Audrey is interviewing long time Pittsford residents who have made an impact on Pittsford either directly or through their ancestors. So far, Audrey has interviewed Jack Holzwarth, George Mathews, Eloise Crump Terho, John Hopkins and Mark Greene.

A schedule for the showing of these interviews can be found on the Town's website at www.townofpittsford.org.

Historic Pittsford Achievement Awards

Historic Pittsford annually recognizes individuals and/or organizations who have made an outstanding contribution to the preservation of the history and character of the village and/or Town of Pittsford. Eligible candidates include individuals, groups, organizations, businesses, students, scouts, government bodies, etc. Nomination forms are available on our website at www.historicpittsford.com and should be sent to the Little House, 18 Monroe Avenue, Pittsford 14534 by April 1. Individuals may make multiple submissions.

MARCH STORMS

By the time March rolls around, everyone is ready for spring. Instead, March is often the month for some of our worst storms. Such was the case in 1900...

On March 1900, the paper reported that a large portion of the freight house of the New York Central railroad had collapsed under the weight of snow.

Henrietta had received three feet of snow and the storm was still raging.

On March 3, the paper reported that the storm which had started Wednesday was still continuing, almost unabated. Farmers had to go into town on horseback. Men and boys were out shoveling sidewalks and roofs. The first mail to arrive since Thursday morning came about 3pm on Saturday. School was suspended.

On March 7, it was reported there had been a thaw and then another snowfall. No trains were coming from the west and the ones from the east were 24 hours late. The thaw and freeze made it dangerous for the horses who would break through the crust into the deep snow.

43 ½ inches of snow fell in Rochester over a period of 63 hours.

(excerpt from Echoes of Pittsford 1899-1900)

ANNUAL MEETING

HP's annual meeting was held this past summer at the national landmark, Spring House, now known as Monroe's at 3001 Monroe Ave.

A meet and greet cash bar and a self-guided tour of the Spring House preceded the buffet dinner.

President Peggy Brizee gave a summary of HP's work and goals over the past year. Treasurer Maryjane Link reported that HP's finances had grown from \$41,261 in 2013 to \$62,705 in 2014 which included a generous bequest from the estate of Mary Menzie and grant money from the Junior League Garden Club.

The slate of officers was chosen for the 2014/15 year. Board members Peggy Brizee, Audrey Johnson, Maryjane Link and JoAnne Shannon had their terms

renewed for another 2 years. Steve Melnyk and Maria Rudzinski were elected to their first two year term. With great regret, HP also accepted the resignations of Jean France, Joe Maxey, Rusty Likely and Peter Webster from the board. Their long service to Historic Pittsford is greatly appreciated and their absence on the board is keenly felt. (Since the



annual meeting, Steve Melnyk, Bob Corby and Vicki Profitt have regretfully resigned from the Board).

Guest speaker Mayor Bob Corby updated attendees on 75 Monroe Ave., announced that the entire village will be on the National Registry next year, acknowledged Alysa Plummer's hard work – especially on the new village Farmer's Market,

mentioned a new pavilion on the canal that will be dedicated to preservationists and announced twenty-two acres adjacent to Town barns will remain natural open space for the Town.

Guest speaker, Supervisor Bill Smith, spoke about improved attitude toward preservation in the Town government, restoration of Lock 62, rehabilitation of the Spiegel center, preservation of historical papers belonging to the Town

and Audrey Johnson's new endeavor on Channel 12. Speakers Audrey Johnson and David Minor closed the evening with historical anecdotes on the history of the Spring House and a short history of the canal.

Many thanks to Katherine Mott for hosting Historic Pittsford.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER - Preservation Matters

As 2014 draws to a close and looking back over this past year, Historic Pittsford has continued to support initiatives that contribute to preservation throughout our community. We strive to draw attention to the advantages that a mindfulness of preservation brings to any property or project. Some initiatives come easy and some do not. Whatever the subject or issue, we strive to articulate why thoughtful consideration of historic preservation is important.

In a very recent court proceedings, the judge referred to Historic Pittsford as a 'pressure group' - a rather negative term that tends to perpetuate the misconception that preservationists are alarmist and obstructive. A much better term for our mission is as an 'advocacy group' - connoting support, encouragement and thoughtful deliberation upon public and private actions that affect irreplaceable historic structures, districts and landscapes.

We have but to glance around our community to understand what this 'pressure group' has been instrumental in accomplishing: an historic district called Pittsford Village; the permanent preservation of five active century's-old family farms, one of which is on

the National Register of Historic Places; the resulting open space collectively called the "Greenprint"; and the creation of the former town Historic Preservation Commission which designated dozens of homes as local historic landmarks and created the historic district known as Mile Post, (where the old Pittsford Cemetery, the one room school house and the Lusk homestead meet at South Main and Stone Road).

Looking ahead, the year 2015 will mark the 50th anniversary of Historic Pittsford. Planning for the rollout of a year-long celebration, your Board of Directors invites your ideas, participation and support as we commemorate accomplishments in historic preservation and define opportunities yet to be achieved. In our advocacy role, we will continue to strive to define why the core value of historic preservation actually matters.

Wishing for you a happy and healthy holiday season and new year...

Best,
Margaret Caraberis Brizee, President Historic Pittsford

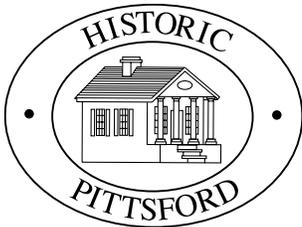
MURDER AND MAYHEM IN HONEOYE FALLS

“Like” us on Facebook!



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

Mendon Town Historian Diane Ham and Honeoye Falls Village historian Lynn Menz sign copies of their book “Murder and Mayhem in Mendon and Honeoye Falls” on October 22. If you missed this wonderful program, signed copies of their book are available at the Little House.



18 MONROE AVENUE
PITTSFORD, NY 14534

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Margaret Caraberis Brizee
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