



HISTORIC PITTSFORD

fall, 2007

NEWSLETTER

In this issue

Cover Story

Pittsford Farms Dairy

President's Corner

Letter from

Joe T. Maxey

Annual Meeting

Volunteers Needed

Pittsford Flower Mill Program

Thank You!

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 FARMS DAIRY

by Bob Corby

Pittsford Farms Dairy traces its origins to 1814 when Samuel Hildreth built the main house on the property. The house retains a

post-and-beam frame and a cellar kitchen, and it is one of the village's oldest buildings. Hildreth was a prominent community figure. He operated a stage coach business and operated a tavern and store in the Burdett Building on South Main Street. A newspaper article reported that in 1821 he exhibited a pair of Bengal tigers on his front lawn.

The next prominent owner of the property was Jarvis Lord who bought the house and farm in the 1860s. Lord was a successful contractor who made a fortune rebuilding the Erie Canal in the 1850s. Lord was also a well-know politician and businessman and served as Pittsford Town supervisor and then state senator. For many years, Lord served as the chair of the Monroe County Democratic Party. Lord improved the property by adding barns, specimen trees, a circular driveway, statuary and a fountain. The house was enlarged and remodeled and is Pittsford's best example of Italianate style architecture. The farm became the first of many country estates established in Pittsford during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Lord eventually lost his fortune and was publicly discredited by financial scandal.

In 1888, businessman and entrepreneur Frank Hawley and his wife Estelle purchased Lord's farm. The Hawleys named their new 200-acre estate "Pittsford Farms" because it combined three farms into one larger operation. Frank Hawley invested over \$250,000 to add barns and breeding facilities for Jersey cattle, Shetland ponies, and other livestock. Numerous accounts of the farm were published



in period agricultural journals chronicling its use of new "scientific" husbandry techniques. The Jersey and Shetland pony herds gained national recognition.

In 1898, Frank Hawley mysteriously disappeared. Estelle had grown to prefer life on the farm in Pittsford to that of her native Brooklyn. With the loss of Frank's business income, Estelle was forced to restructure the farm operation to make it more profitable. She and farm manager Fred Cook started selling Shetland ponies that were bred on the property. The farm's breeding stock gained a national reputation and a sizable business was developed selling ponies for the children of east coast families. The farm's dairy operation was also changed. Instead of shipping the farm's Jersey cream and butter to restaurants in New York City, milk and other dairy products were delivered to local residents in returnable glass bottles. The business became so successful that processing operations were moved from the farm's former creamery to the farm office building that was more easily accessible to North Main Street. Eventually residential delivery to homes was replaced by the retail store still in operation today.

At about the time land speculators began buying up Pittsford farmland for development, the Zornow family purchased Pittsford Farms in 1947. While Theodore A. Zornow focused on the dairy herd, his son T.J. Zornow developed an outstanding herd of standard bred racing horses. T.J. Zornow's son-in-law, Charles Corby, took over operation of the dairy in 1960. Corby was joined in the

business by his son Charles T. Corby in 1992.

Despite development pressure, general consolidation of milk processing, and a barn fire in 1970, the dairy continued to operate through the end of the twentieth century. Economic changes forced the farm to discontinue its dairy herd in 1986 and milk is now purchased from other local dairy farms.

The dairy's continuation of the more expensive old-fashioned vat pasteurization process and use of glass bottles helped it to maintain a market niche in an increasingly competitive retail economy.

In the early 1990's the Town of Pittsford purchased the development rights for the farm's agricultural land to ensure this historic landscape will be preserved for future generations to enjoy. In 1996, the property was listed on the National Register of



Historic Places.

Today, Pittsford Farms is one of New York's few small independent dairies to survive into the twenty-first century.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

I am sometimes asked "Historic Pittsford? What's that?" Let me try to explain: Historic Pittsford is a not-for-profit volunteer organization concerned with protecting and maintaining the quality of life in Pittsford, both Town and Village. Andy Wolfe, the chief founder of our group, liked to call it "ambience", the feeling of a place centered in the architecture and the history of the village. Preservation of Pittsford combines a respect for the past with a concern for the future. We present lectures, tours, and social events that raise the community's consciousness of what we have and how to keep it.

Historic Pittsford is not the Pittsford Historic Society. That group went out of business at least 40 years ago. We are not the Historic Preservation Commission of the Town of Pittsford or the Historic Architecture Review Board of the Village. Both of these are branches of Town and Village government, with legal power to control changes in the historic fabric that would be damaging to the public trust. We agree with their efforts and applaud their

willingness to serve the community, but our job is different.

We need more members. Our current membership is fairly stable at just under 400. Many of those members have been loyal subscribers for decades and we appreciate them. What we need now are new members, members who are new to the community or residents who have just never got around to sending in that check. Reach out to those who have recently moved into your neighborhood. Invite them to join you at our next meeting. Give us your support for the future of Pittsford.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Jennifer Latshaw and Ken Morrow for their service on the Board of Directors and to welcome our newly elected members, Sally Chamberlin and David Minor.

My thanks to all of you who have supported Historic Pittsford.

Joe Maxey, **President**
Historic Pittsford

ANNUAL MEETING

Historic Pittsford's annual meeting was held Sunday, July 15, 2007 at the beautiful home of Catherine and Martin Gardner on Corby Road in Honeoye Falls. The Gardner's 200 year old farmstead has been in the Corby family for over 100 years and is listed on the National Historic Register.

Wine and snacks were served in the Gardner's newly renovated kitchen. Tours of their home gave people the feeling of stepping back in time. A hot dog cookout and pot luck dishes were served, followed by the business meeting.

The business meeting was opened by an informative history of the Corby homestead given by Bob Corby.

Two new board members, David Minor and Sally Chamberlin were elected to a two year term and officers of the Board were elected. The meeting concluded with the presentation of Historic Pittsford's Preservation Achievement Awards. This year, four awards were given out:

To Michael Newcomb and Alden Longwell for their private effort in saving and renovating the original Flour Mill.

To the Village of Pittsford Architectural Preservation Review Board for their leadership, creation of public policy and educational activities which have advanced, promoted and supported historic preservation in the Village of Pittsford.

To Pittsford Garden Club for their efforts over the past three decades in preserving and maintaining the many historic public properties and gardens throughout the Village and Town of Pittsford.

To St. Paul's Lutheran Church: special recognition is given to Reverend Jeffery Hedin and his devoted committee workers for their group effort in preserving an important local historic landmark in Pittsford. ■



PITTSFORD FLOUR MILL PROGRAM

On October 6, friends and members of Historic Pittsford gathered at the Village Hall for a short talk and walking tour of the Pittsford Flour Mill.

Mayor Bob Corby gave a brief history of the mill from its beginnings in 1882 as the Vought Steam Mill through to its last use as a sorting and storage complex for kidney beans.

Empty from 1996 to 2004, the flour mill received another chance at life when Al Longwell and Mike Newcomb teamed up to renovate the building for office space. The mill is now home to a new industry: the world of biotechnology.

After the mayor's introductory talk, a tour was given of the newly renovated flour mill, where special care was taken to leave the original oak structural pillars as a visible reminder of the building's past.



The tour ended inside the adjacent grain silo which is in the early stages of being converted into office space. It was a fascinating and informative program. ■

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The Board of Historic Pittsford is seeking volunteers from the membership to become involved with one of the following committees:

- *Architectural Consultation*
- *Website*
- *Newsletter*
- *Programs*
- *Public Relations*
- *Issues*

If one of these committees tweaks your interest, please contact Liz Jackson-Renner at 586-2793.

The Board is also looking for people who would be interested in helping to update a 30 year old survey of every building and residence in the Village of Pittsford. If you are interested, please leave a message at the Little House, 381-2941 and someone will get back to you.



Little House Office and Museum
18 Monroe Ave., Pittsford, NY 14534 / 381-2941
Open: Wednesday and Saturday 9am-12noon
Dorothy Meusburger, Secretary
www.historicpittsford.com

THANK YOU!

As overseer of the Treasury, I want to thank the generous patrons of **Historic Pittsford**:

<i>Ruth Balderston</i>	<i>Bill Webber</i>
<i>Elizabeth Jackson Renner</i>	<i>Mary Menzie</i>
<i>Jean France</i>	<i>Jeff and Liz Gabel</i>
<i>Ted and Joanne VanZandt</i>	<i>Elizabeth McDonald</i>
<i>Jerry and Judy Francis</i>	<i>Madeline Short</i>
<i>Jacob Subtelny</i>	<i>John and Frances Fadden</i>
<i>George and Phoebe Scholl</i>	<i>The Canal Lamp Inn</i>
<i>Bill and Suzanne Remley</i>	<i>The Village Coal Tower</i>

We try to provide interesting and informational programs which benefit our residents and build an ever stronger character of our village/town. The donations, over and above membership dues, do make a difference in the number and quality of these programs. Your support is greatly appreciated.

Thanks,

Rusty Likly

UPCOMING EVENTS

December 4, 2007

5-9pm: Candlelight Night in the Village of Pittsford. Be sure to visit the Little House!

February 14, 2008

"Rochester Celebrities of Yesterday" presented by Donovan Shilling. Details to follow.

April 10, 2008

"Landmarks of the Future: Preserving 20th Century Resources" presented by Katie Comeau Eggars. Details to follow.

May 2008

Tour of the Hopkins Farmstead and old-growth woods. Details to follow.



18 MONROE AVENUE
PITTSFORD, NY 14534

Non-Profit Org
US Postage
PAID
Pittsford NY
Permit No 21