



# HISTORIC PITTSFORD

spring, 2009

NEWSLETTER

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Edited by Karen Hultz

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## *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.*

## **HYLLGARTH: THE GARDEN ON THE HILL**

*By Audrey Johnson*

Hyllgarth, now known as 48 Sutherland Street, once was 61 South Main Street and was owned by Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Satterlee. When it was built, between 1902 & 1907, it was said to be the grandest house in Monroe County. Only Sonnenberg in Canandaigua, Ontario County, was equal. (The George Eastman House and the Strong Mansion were not yet constructed.)

The Satterlees had acquired the property in 1895 and had erected a small cabin to be used as a weekend retreat. When Mr. Satterlee accumulated more wealth as the senior partner in the law firm of Satterlee, Yeoman, & Taylor, (a pre-runner of Nixon, Hargrave, et al.) the couple began enlarging the "cottage" to become a primary residence. The house grew into a 40 room mansion and the outbuildings included a carriage house, a peg barn for pigeons, a cow barn, an indoor pool and indoor bowling, an ice-house, and tennis courts. The house has changed hands often and has been "downsized" by successive owners with several wings being removed.

The landscaping was extensive with two of every species planted. The property contained the reported oldest and largest copper beech tree in town. That tree is now on adjacent property that was separated during the partitioning of the original parcel. Many of those trees are still lining the drive that has become Stonegate Lane.

The two-room summer cottage was located amidst large potato fields. The walls were pushed out, new walls added, and wagon-loads of stone were trucked in for the exterior of the house and the walls surrounding the estate. The imposing and grand South Main street gate and walls were constructed by village resident and stonemason, Eugene Minnamon with help from a young Howard Little. The long wall on



Sutherland Street was built by Fred Miller and his son, George, also Pittsford residents.

It has been said that Mr. Satterlee supervised every minute detail of the reconstruction. In that way, he was, perhaps, a little like George Eastman when building his mansion and gardens on East Avenue.

The home was as important to Pittsford as the "cottages" of the rich and famous in Newport, R.I. Who else had an upstairs and downstairs maid, a cook, a chauffeur, and gardeners? Who else but Ellwanger and Barry had such elaborate landscaping turning an ordinary potato field into a veritable bower of trees, shrubs, and flowers?

Eugene Satterlee, as stated previously, was an attorney associated with the law firm of Satterlee, Yeoman, and Taylor that was established in 1875. Mr. Satterlee was a graduate of the University of Rochester and a member of the Phi Beta Kappa fraternity. He earned his law degree at Albany Law School and taught modern language at Albany Academy. He also had taught at Middlebury Academy. Perhaps this was all before he passed the bar examination. After two years of practice, he joined with Mr. Yeoman to form the partnership. I don't know exactly who Mr. Taylor was or when he became involved in the firm.

Mr. Satterlee was president of the Rochester German Insurance Co. from 1906 to 1910. He was vice president of the German American Bank which was a predecessor to the Lincoln Rochester Trust Co. From 1908 to 1910 he was the president of the Lincoln National Bank.

Satterlee was one of the 1st businessmen to establish a home in Pittsford. He remained in the law profession until his death in 1910.

According to a former historian, Isabella Hicks Hart, both Mr. and Mrs. Satterlee were loving and indulgent parents to their children, Hugh and Mildred. Isabella told of wonderful birthday parties she attended and always there was a May pole and dance on the lawn on May Day. She remembered it fondly and it involved many of the youngest children in the community who would come dressed in their very best clothes, dance around the May pole and then gorge on wonderful, tempting treats.

Dorothy Satterlee Wetmore inherited the property. She may have lived in it for awhile but it was sold to Irving Steele in 1929 who owned it until he had financial reversals and the bank foreclosed upon the estate. The property was divided and the house and outbuildings were acquired by Mr. and Mrs. Armon Baltzer in 1945. The Baltzers did extensive remodeling. The servants quarters and the master wing were removed. The carriage house was moved and remodeled into a home, which is currently 13 Stonegate Lane and the ice-house became the garage.

The bowling alley, the pool and the tennis courts were abandoned. The property changed hands again in 1950 when the Gaylord Whittaker family became the owners. In 1963 the Robert Lawless family assumed ownership and I must confess that I do not know the current owners!

Mr. Satterlee employed many people while building his mansion. Some of those families lived in homes on West Jefferson Road near the intersection of Sutherland Street. It has been said that the three houses nearest the east corner of Heatherhurst were all built about 1904-5 when Mrs. Satterlee bought the Cady farm and erected these homes as tenant homes for her chauffeur, and gardeners.

About 1940, homes were built along what was then the driveway of the estate. The first home was built in 1937 at #10 as the home of Mr. and Mrs. Warren Allen. They converted a carriage house at the beginning of Stonegate Lane as their unique and charming home. Eventually many other homes were built and occupied along the drive which has become Stonegate Lane. Now the history is connected to the name Hyllgarth that is engraved on the stone entrance gates off South Main Street.

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## EMAIL ADDRESSES

Historic Pittsford would like to start building a database of member email addresses, so that we can improve our methods of communication. When you renew your mem-

bership, please note your email address at the bottom of the renewal card. This information will be used solely by Historic Pittsford.

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## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

I know that almost everybody who reads this newsletter is a member of Historic Pittsford and I thank you again for your support, but wouldn't it be great for membership and revenue if we could get an additional 300 members? We could! -if each of you talked one person into joining Historic Pittsford. In the village alone (an entire Historic District), there are about 800 homeowners, who are not yet members of Historic Pittsford. Most of their houses are in excess of one hundred years old. These homes still maintain their original good looks and character, "the feel of Pittsford". We do not monitor or set codes, but we do influence the Zoning and Architectural Review Boards. We promote the purity and ambiance of our village and town.

It's not by accident that you enjoy this enviable position. Diligent effort of lots of members over several years have made this possible. And I, like the Energizer Bunny, want to keep it "going and going".

After you have read this newsletter and renewed your membership, pass this newsletter on to a neighbor or family member. I hope your copy is read several times before recycling. We are targeting younger homeowners, perhaps your children. Do they belong? We are looking for some fresh ideas and even new Board members.

Perhaps, if you are concerned about the continuance, as I am, of our worthwhile Historic Pittsford organization, you might mention to your attorney or financial planner the idea of including Historic Pittsford in your gifting program either now or in your will. More later.

Please come to our programs. We work hard to bring you interesting and informative presentations. Join me in our fun!

Rusty Likly, **President**  
Historic Pittsford

## A CLOSER LOOK AT THE BARN

In the fall of 2008, Historic Pittsford produced a poster called the “Barns of Pittsford”. In the next few issues of the HP newsletter, we will take a closer look at the barns depicted on this poster. Copies of the Barns poster are still available at the Little House for \$15.00.

**3571 Clover Street:** (formerly mismarked and called West Bloomfield Rd.) This barn was for many years known as the Young Farm barn. It is a large Dutch gambrel styled barn and was built in the mid 1800s.

The first record we have is that of William Cook owning the farm in 1858. It is unknown whether he built the barn or if it was there when he became owner. The next owner was F.G. Reeve. Perhaps he was the one who added the smaller gabled shed that was later incorporated into the larger barn. In 1822, the farm became the property of Jacob Young whose family owned it until 2006 when it was sold to a developer.

According to Frank Young, son of Jacob, the farm was “given” to him when he was 16 years of age and that was in 1877. For many years there were deer antlers nailed to the front of the smaller barn denoting, I believe, how successful a hunter was Frank Young.

At the present time (2009), the barn is still standing and looking pretty good! Let’s hope it remains so! (on the poster, this barn is located 2nd row from the top, far right box)

### **Barker Barns @ 219 & 230 Mendon Center Road**

These two barns were part of the Barker ownership period and are, in fact, still owned by members of the same family. They are both basement gable barns – the one at 219, the larger of the group, was a horse barn built in 1884 by William Henry Barker, using timbers and beams from the old house that was on the property and demolished. The present large home was built around 1883-5. Other barns on that side of the road served other uses. The one to the west was a grain barn with its interior ground floor wide open so that horses could be hitched to the threshing machine right inside the barn. This one was raised by Mr. Barker to accommodate his cows on the lower level.

The barn on the other side of the road at #230 was built in 1888. Mr. Frank Barker lived on that property and pastured horses that were then stabled in the barn.

All of these yellow barns are well maintained by the current owners and continue to be landmarks in the town and speak of the agrarian beginnings of this community. (On the poster, #219 is located 3rd row from the top, far left box. #230 is located 1st row on top, middle box).



3571 Clover Street



Barker Barns @ 219 & 230 Mendon Center Road



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

# PROGRAM RECAP: "DOUBLE-CROSSING NEW YORK: ERIE CANAL TRAVELS

by Karen Hultz

On a very cold February night, members and friends of Historic Pittsford gathered to hear David Minor, board member of Historic Pittsford and the Canal Society of New York State, give a talk about some historic Erie Canal travels.

David gave us snapshots of four different trips along the path of the Erie Canal.

The first trip was in 1810 as commissioners of New York State gathered to scout out a possible route for the Erie Canal. They traveled by wagon and by boat as they passed through Montezuma Village, Geneva, Seneca Falls, the Genesee River and Lewistown. Their diaries talk of reedy, unhealthy, foggy swamps and taverns with less than desirable food and sleeping arrangements. There are also numerous mentions of mosquitoes, which seemed to be everywhere.

The second excursion occurs 15 years later. It is 1825 and DeWitt Clinton's flotilla is celebrating the opening of the Erie Canal. An unfortunate event mars the festivities as a cannon used in the celebrations, accidentally blows up, killing two people.

The third trip occurs the following year as a group of students from Rensselaer College travel across the state via the canal. One student's diary describes a strange illness among



their group, which temporarily causes their professor to appear insane. They reach Rochester, which now has a population of 7,000 and make note of the nine sawmills and six churches as they tie up at the downtown aqueduct. The professor does not view Rochester very favorably, as he refers to the town as "a mushroom destined to rot away."

The fourth trip consists more of legend than fact and dates back to the days of Leif Ericson. As Leif was preparing for his journeys, his mother made sure he had jars of pickles for his journey. As the jars were being packed, salamanders slipped into the jars. Once these jars were opened at sea, the salamanders, affected by the pickle juice, slipped out into the sea. Many years later, one salamander made it to Scotland and became known as "Nessie". Another, lesser known salamander, ended up making the long journey to Clinton's ditch and made its home near Richardson's Canal House Inn where a green, slimy creature, nicknamed the "Lock Moss Nester" is often seen.

## FREE ARCHITECTURAL CONSULTATION SERVICE

If you are experiencing basic structural problems or contemplating exterior architectural changes to your home, consider asking for the services of Historic Pittsford's Architectural Consultation program.

This program offers on-site consultation and a follow up report by preservation architect John Bero. Any property located in Pittsford Village, regardless of age, or any town property built prior to 1902 or listed on the Town's list of buildings worthy of historic designation qualifies. To request this service, contact Mary Menzie at 381-3799.

## PRESERVATION ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Historic Pittsford is once again accepting nominations for its Preservation Achievement Award. HP encourages both its members and non-members from throughout the community to nominate those whose outstanding contributions to the preservation of the history and character of the Village and/or Town of Pittsford are worthy of recognition. Eligible candidates include individual groups, organizations, businesses, students, scouts, public and governmental bodies, etc. If you know of anyone worthy of this award, please contact John Parker at 586-1439.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

May is Preservation month! Look for special events throughout the month.

**May 2, 2009**

Landmark Society's Annual Regional Preservation Conference: "Maintaining Hometown Character in the 21st Century". For more information, go to [www.landmarksociety.org](http://www.landmarksociety.org)

**May 9, 2009**

"A Walk in Hopkins Wood" Details to follow.

**May 20, 2009 - 7pm**

"How to Ruin an Old House" Pittsford Library

Also, watch for more information on these events: a tour of the renovated grain silo on Schoen Place (June) and the Annual Historic Pittsford meeting (July).