



# HISTORIC PITTSFORD

spring, 2007

NEWSLETTER

## In this issue

**COVER STORY**  
*Historic Markers*

**President's  
Corner...**  
*Letter from  
Joe T. Maxey*

**Membership  
Renewal**

**Historic  
Property  
Inventory  
Underway**

**Free Service  
Architectural  
Consultation**

**Historic Pittsford  
Publications**

**Save the date**  
*Annual Regional  
Preservation  
Conference*

## HISTORIC MARKERS

by Audrey Johnson

*Do you ever pay attention to those blue and yellow markers that you may see along the highways and byways of New York State? Do you ever wonder about them? Well, perhaps I can shed some light on them.*

Back in 1939, New York State mandated that each municipality should have an officially appointed historian and it was that same year that it was decided that a capsulated history lesson be established. It was planned that those lessons could be read from a car going by on the highway. (Not speeding by as happens nowadays.) At that time, New York State was the Empire State and had sufficient funds to underwrite such a project. The logo of the state was located on the top of each marker. Some years later the state left the payment up to the counties and the logo at the top indicated Monroe County (in our case.) Now, however, when a marker is installed and unveiled, the logo can depict whatever philanthropic organization has agreed to pay the substantial fee associated with those cast iron markers.

In the Town and Village of Pittsford, there are (or should be) twelve such markers.

The first markers were placed on October 7, 1939 during the sesqui-centennial event held in Pittsford. The first one was located at District #1 at the Milepost; the second was on State



Street commemorating the first house; the third was placed in front of the small farmhouse on Mendon Center Road where the first library had been. That one has just reappeared since the remodeling of the elementary school on that site has been completed.

The marker on Monroe Avenue at the Spring House was damaged and removed when a very strong wind took both the marker and the very large tree that had stood for many, many years in front of that historic landmark. I have been in touch with the management of the Northfield Food and Drink and they have the marker and are looking forward to its repair and replacement.

There has not been a new marker since 1994, even though there are quite a few buildings and locations that could qualify. The last one to be installed was at the Masonic Temple on Church Street in front of that lovely cobblestone structure that was once District #6.

In Pittsford's bicentennial year of 1989, a small booklet was compiled illustrating these markers and describing their background. It is still available at Town Hall at the Town Clerk's desk. There is a great deal of history in this little booklet as well as on the markers themselves, if you slow down to read it when you see one along side of the road. ■

## President's Corner...

I extend a "welcome" to our new members and a "thank you" to those who have renewed their membership. Dues from annual memberships are the primary source of Historic Pittsford's operating budget. These funds enable us to maintain the Little House, provide free architectural consultation to residents of Pittsford, and to sponsor educational programs throughout the year.

An area that seems to have caused confusion among many of us is the use of terms to describe what has happened or is about to happen to an old structure. I'm sure we have all heard reference to work being done on a house as being "restored". That may or may not have been the case according to accepted architectural terminology. So, in an effort to clarify a perceived confusion in the technical terms, I will share with you a brief glossary taken from an information sheet provided by the National Trust's Resource Center.

**Preserve** – to maintain a structure's existing form through careful maintenance and repair.

**Restore** – to return a building to its form and condition as represented by a specified period of time using materials that are as similar as possible to the original materials.

**Rehabilitate** – to repair a structure and make it usable again while preserving those portions or features of the property that are historically and culturally significant. For example, rehabilitation might include an updated kitchen while retaining the historic stairwell and fireplaces. This is a most common approach for private houses.

**Remodel** – to change a building without regard to its distinctive features or style. Often involves changing the appearance of a structure by removing or covering original details and substituting new materials and forms.

**Renovate** – to repair a structure and make it usable again, without attempting to restore its historic appearance or duplicate original construction methods or material.

**Stabilize** – to protect a building from deterioration by making it structurally secure, while maintaining its current form.

It is my hope that the above terms may help us all describe what we do and see with a greater degree of accuracy. I look forward to seeing you at the upcoming events scheduled for this spring and summer.

Joe Maxey, President

## MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

As we approach the time for membership renewal in Historic Pittsford, the Board of Directors thought it would be helpful to share with you some of the expenditures we incur doing business. We are restructuring the membership dues and considering the establishment of an endowment that would allow Historic Pittsford to do some of the things we currently only dream about. The routine expenditures that we have year to year include the following:

- Underwriting free architectural consultations to Pittsford residents
- Fees for program rental space
- Printing of fliers and newsletters
- Postage for each mailing
- Rental of tables/chairs at the Annual meeting
- Refreshments at sponsored programs
- Annual achievement awards
- The Little House utilities
- The Little House maintenance
- Publishing historic literature

In 1965, Historic Pittsford was established by a small dedicated group of residents concerned about the future of Pittsford. During the first twenty-two years of its existence, Historic Pittsford had no dues. Increasing expenses and an expanding outreach effort resulted in the initiation of a \$10 membership fee in 1987. Dues were increased to \$15 in 1989 and to \$20 in 1996. I need not tell you that the cost of living has increased over the past decade. Therefore, the Board has redesigned the annual and life membership dues. The revised structure for 2007 is:

- Individual/Family membership: \$25.00
- Patron: \$100.00
- Lifetime membership: \$300.00
- Business/Professional: \$100.00

On behalf of the Board, I hope that you will continue your support and enjoy the benefits of being a member of Historic Pittsford.

Thank you.

Joe Maxey, President  
Historic Pittsford

# HISTORIC PROPERTY INVENTORY UNDERWAY

by Jennifer Latshaw

More than thirty years ago, every building and residence in the Village of Pittsford was inventoried in preparation for listing on the *National Register of Historic Sites* by members of Historic Pittsford. Each house and building was photographed and a questionnaire was filled out about the style of the house, age, changes, original owner information and more. All of this information was then inserted into binders by street address and serves as a wonderful inventory of all Village of Pittsford structures. These are kept at the Village Hall and referred to on many occasions for meetings of the Architectural Preservation Review Board and for homeowners who may be curious as to the original design of their home.

Recently, the Village of Pittsford was awarded a grant through the *Certified Local Government Program* to re-inventory all of these properties and make them more up to date. The Village was eligible for this grant due to meeting the standards set forth by the Preservation Commission. Remegia Mitchell, Village Archivist and Chair of the Planning and Zoning Board along with Mayor Bob Corby are currently in charge of the new inventory. They will be taking the inventory that already exists and incorporating it with updated photos of each residence and structure. This new inventory will also include any approvals or denials granted by the APRB and the Planning Board as well as any original photos of the structures not previously included. The original written information will



be edited and written into a format that better fits the Standards set forth by the Preservation Commission. All of this information will also be linked with the Town of Pittsford with their GIS (Geographic Information System) which links geographic information with maps.

Homeowners can get involved with this process by stopping by the Village Hall with any original photos of your home taken before the 1970's when the original inventory was completed. Any written history or interesting items such as original deeds, photos, etc. can be brought to the Village Hall to be included with the file for each house. These items can be digitally scanned and returned immediately to the homeowner. If you have questions about this process, call the Village Hall at 586-4332. ■

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## FREE Architectural Consultation Service

by Mary Menzie

If, with the arrival of Spring, your thoughts turn to fixing your home's peeling paint or adding an addition, why not consider Historic Pittsford's Architectural Consultation Program, started in 1984 and still going strong!

There is one full file drawer at the Little House dedicated to this ongoing program made possible through the generous gift years ago of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Miller. The file contains 187 different Pittsford properties whose owners applied to Historic Pittsford for the consultation services of preservation architect John Bero. Mr. Bero's

services involve on-site consultation and a follow up written report. We are very proud of this award winning program and fortunate to have this working relationship with Mr. Bero, whose reports are highly respected by the Village and Town Boards responsible for approving changes to historic properties.

Should you be interested in Mr. Bero's help involving basic structural problems or exterior changes, please contact Mary Menzie at 381-3799. To qualify, the property must be located in Pittsford Village, regardless of year built. Town properties must have been built prior to 1902, or listed on the Town's list of buildings worthy of historic designation. ■

## Historic Pittsford Publications

Paul Spiegel's latest addition to his series of books entitled *ECHOES OF PITTSFORD* is hot off the press. Volume 1893-1894 is now available at the Little House for \$7.

Starting with 1879 – 1880, each volume of *Echoes of Pittsford* covers two years in the daily life of the residents of Pittsford. Snippets of newspaper articles, excerpts from diaries and old photos bring 19th century Pittsford alive.

Historic Pittsford also offers these other publications for sale:

**Architecture Worth Saving in Pittsford, Elegant Village**

\$8.00 members / \$12.00 non-members

**Pittsford Scrapbook: stories of Early Pittsford**

\$15.00 members / \$18.00 non-members

Our publications are always available at the Little House. We would also like to thank our favorite vendors who carry and promote our publications:

**Pittsford Town Hall**

**Port of Pittsford**

**Borders – Marketplace and Victor**

**Barnes & Noble – Pittsford Plaza**

**Simply D'Vine – Bushnell's Basin**

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## Board Members

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## Save the Date!

Saturday, May 5, 2007  
is the date for this year's...

**ANNUAL REGIONAL  
PRESERVATION CONFERENCE**  
hosted by the *Landmark Society*.

Workshop topics include upper floors on Main Street, historic cemeteries, opera houses and historic homes. The conference concludes with a tour and reception at the LeRoy House and Jell-O museum.

For more information, visit the Landmark Society's website at [www.landmarksociety.org](http://www.landmarksociety.org)

## Invite a Friend!

Do you have a friend or neighbor who is interested in history and/or preservation? Invite them to attend one of our upcoming programs or better yet, invite them to become a member of *Historic Pittsford*.

## 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 Pittsford today.



### *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](http://www.historicpittsford.com)**