

A Surprise in the History of Henry DeLand's Home

By Bill Poray, Perinton Town Historian

One of the most recognizable landmarks in Fairport and Perinton is the Henry DeLand mansion, which for the past few years has been utilized as a restaurant called Dominic's on Main. The DeLand family established a very successful factory in Fairport on the bank of the Erie Canal, for the manufacture of baking powder and other products. The Henry DeLand mansion was built in 1874 of the finest materials and workmanship. Over the years some colorful claims have been made regarding the house. One widely circulated story said that an under-street tunnel was built between Deland's home and the First Baptist Church of Fairport. DeLand and his family provided a significant portion of the funding for the construction of the church and were prominent members of the congregation. But, no, there is, and never was a tunnel, and no evidence that one ever existed.

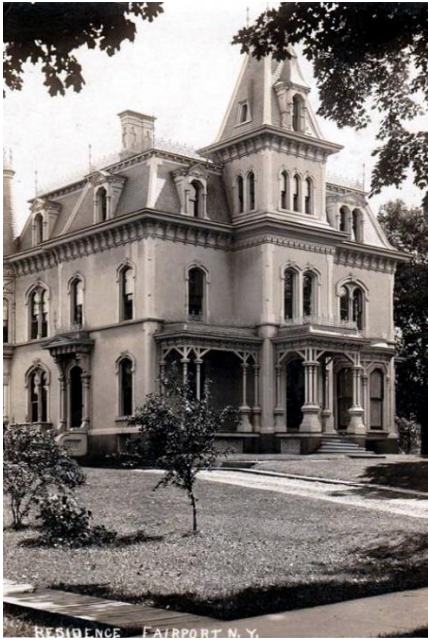


The Green Lantern Inn, as seen in this 1960s photograph

Another myth is that the DeLand home was a stop on the Underground Railroad, and provided a safe haven for runaway slaves on their way to Canada. The problem with this story is that DeLand's home was built several years after the conclusion of the Civil War. By then, the Underground Railroad was no longer in operation.

Several owners of the opulent DeLand mansion came and went in the early 20th century. Most struggled to maintain a home of such enormous size. As a result, alternative uses were being explored to utilize the showplace. By late 1924, Mrs. Florence Hafer of Rochester had purchased the grand mansion. After weeks of renovation, it was announced that the name of the new

establishment would be the Green Lantern Inn. The grand opening was held on New Year's Eve, December 31, 1924, featuring a turkey dinner and dancing in the third floor dance hall.



Early 1900s postcard view of the residence that would later become the Green Lantern Inn. The structure has been designated a Fairport landmark, and is also on the National Register of Historic Places.

But the Green Lantern Inn almost never came to be, and this is the surprise. In January of 1924 it was announced in the Monroe County Mail that the DeLand mansion would be “remodeled into a modern, up-to-date moving picture theater, fronting on the South Main Street side, plans for which have already been drawn. The seating capacity of the theater will be 1,600.”

An interior view of the Green Lantern Inn, circa 1984. Photo by Antonino Barbagallo.



Plans for the theatre soon fell through, paving the way for the Green Lantern Inn. Just as well, for refashioning it into a theater would have dramatically altered the building. The community still desired a new modern theater, and in 1927 the Temple Theater opened next door to the Green Lantern Inn. The former Temple Theatre has long been the home of the Fairport Masonic Lodge.