



# Perinton Historical Society HISTORIGRAM

18 Perrin Street  
Fairport, NY 14450

Vol. XLII • No. 6

March 2010  
585-223-3989

## The Panic of 1907 and the Sanitary Can Company Part 2 of 2

### The Formation of the American Can Co. and the Demise of Sanitary Can

The early 20th century saw a great deal of business take overs, monopolies and trusts. The Sherman Anti Trust Act was passed in 1890 but was used in the early years to break up labor unions with Congress largely ignoring acquisitions by large companies whose buying up of smaller firms put a restraint on trade. A decision by the Supreme Court in 1897 ruled that a monopoly in production was not necessarily a monopoly in sale and distribution of products opening the way for large trusts.

The creation of American Can begins with the American Sheet and Tin Plate Company. The company was the third largest steel consolidation and made 90% of all the tin plate used in manufacturing tin cans. In 1901 this company was sold to U.S. Steel after a brief downturn in the stock market. Edwin S. Norton was brought in to organize a Tin Can Trust. Norton began to acquire options to buy can manufacturing companies. By 1901 he had acquired options on 95 companies in the United States including the newly formed American Can Co. The National Lithographing Company of Camden, New Jersey created the American Can Company but the acquisition by American Sheet and Tin Plate Company occurred so soon after the formation of the company that not a single can was made by this company. Essentially, American Sheet and Tin

Plate Co. paid \$10,000 for the name of their new conglomerate. This new tin plate trust was formed in 1901 and contained 123 canning plants. In the first years 84 of these plants were closed because of high costs and old equipment.

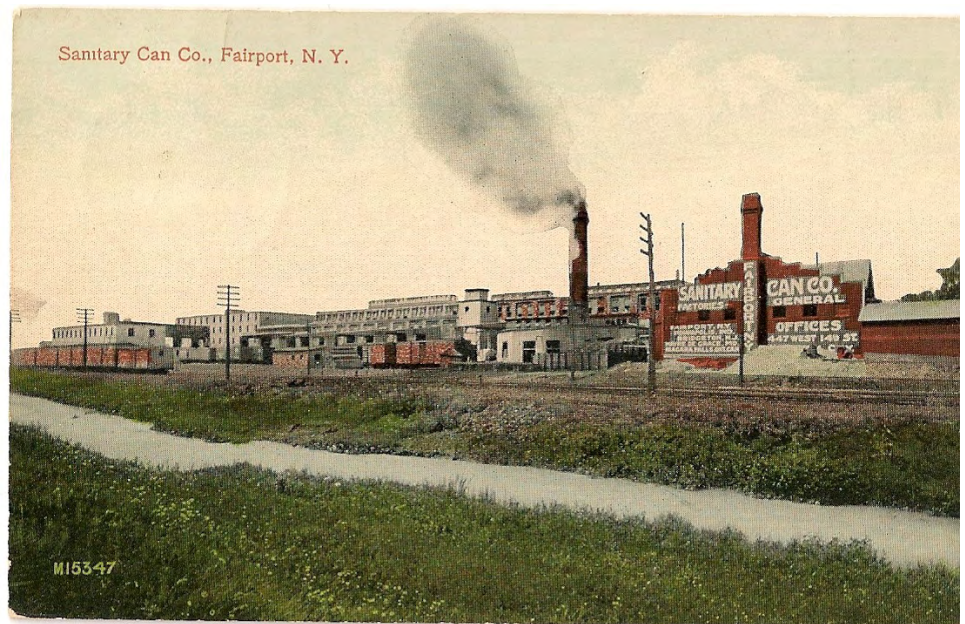
In March of 1908 the Sanitary Can Company was \$263,958.33 in debt. \$137,514.34 was owed to banks and \$104,435.38 was owed to the American Sheet and Tin Plate Company. The company had an income of \$198,439.01 but \$15,992.93 was in form of notes or IOUs. The Sanitary Can Company was desperately seeking an investor or a buyer to continue operations. William Bogle, the president of the company, had an interview with T.A. Gessler, the assistant sales manager of American Sheet and Tin Plate Company who expressed an interest in his firm acquiring the company. In the next few weeks another interview this time with W.T. Graham, the president of American Can Company, was arranged. Details were worked out and the Sanitary Can Company was sold to American Can Company for \$150 a share on March 3, 1908. The take over freed up money for improvements in the facility and the acquisition of knowledge, and experts within the American Can Conglomerate were brought in to help the Sanitary Can Co. improve its machines and automate them in the future. Sanitary Can survived because it manufactured a unique can and possessed technology that the owners of American Can felt could be used to go in a new direction in manufacturing of tin cans.

Several years after the panic of 1907, the U.S. Government caught up with the intent of the Sherman Anti Trust Act and began to investigate

#### ≡ Our Mission ≡

*"The Mission of the Perinton Historical Society is to promote interest in preserving and sharing local history."*

monopolies and trusts in the United States. A hearing was held in 1913 to see if the American Can Company, which had cornered 85% of the can making market, had acted illegally in acquiring other smaller can making companies in restraint of trade and should be broken up. George Cobb testified in Baltimore for the defense during the hearings. The company survived the hearings and remained the largest producer of tin cans in the United States. In 1986 Triangle Industries of New York acquired American Can for 570 million dollars. Two years later it was sold to Pechiney S.A., a French metal conglomerate.



**Founders - Sanitary Can Company** circa 1907. Picture from the Perinton Historical Society Collection.

For more information about the Panic of 1907 read the book "The Panic of 1907: Lessons Learned for the Market's Perfect Storm" by Robert F. Bruner and Sean D. Carr published by John Wiley and Sons, Inc. Details in this article concerning the Sanitary Can Company and American Can Company comes from two manuscripts "American Can History Chapter 1" author unknown, and a court document entitled "George W. Cobb, Direct Examination" from the 1913 U.S. District Court suit to dissolve American Can Company.

## Cookbook in Planning

Members of the Perinton Historical Society are going to be publishing a cookbook. Selected members of the society will be contacted by May Thomson and will be asked to contribute their favorite recipes. The cookbook is a society fund raiser and will be completed and for sale hopefully by Christmas.

## Happenings at the Society

For more information visit our website at [www.perintonhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.perintonhistoricalsociety.org) or call the museum at 223-3989.

- ~ **March 16**, Tuesday 7:30 p.m. at the Fairport Museum.. Speaker will be photographer and author Keith Boas. He will be talking about the pictures in his newly released calendar for the Village Partnership on the front porches of Fairport.
- ~ **April 25**, Sunday 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. Perinton Historical Society House Tour. Projected for the hamlet of Bushnell's Basin.
- ~ **May**. Perinton Historical Society Annual Meeting and picnic.

Thanks go to **Mary O. Ewell** for her donation to the Society in honor of Matson and Ruth Ewell.

**Ann Castle** is looking for people and new ideas to help the Historical Society celebrate the Fourth of July. Last year's parade float was a good time so join the fun Call Ann Castle at 385-1268 or e-mail her at [haranncas@aol.com](mailto:haranncas@aol.com) to volunteer.



## New Commemorative Stamps Honor Two Fairport Women



Fairport has been the home of many strong and independent women who have added much to our community. Two prominent Fairport women from the 20<sup>th</sup> century have been chosen for commemorative stamps now on sale in our museum gift shop. The two women are Minerva Lewis DeLand and Marjorie Snow Merriman. They were chosen because of their influence as educators to the citizens of our community. Both women came from prominent families in Fairport; Minerva Lewis DeLand, teacher, is the namesake of Minerva Parce DeLand wife of Daniel DeLand founder of the Fairport Chemical Works. The second selection Marjorie Snow Merriman, historian, is the daughter of businessman Edward C. Snow who ran Fairport's first department store on South Main St. called E.C. Snow & Company.

Minerva Lewis DeLand was born August 4, 1876 the second child of Levi and Mary Lewis DeLand. Her father was the last owner of the DeLand Chemical Company and the son of the founder of the company Daniel DeLand. Minerva graduated from the Fairport Classical Union School in 1894. She went on to attend Vassar and then on to Albany Normal School to be trained as a teacher. In 1900 she returned to Fairport and taught Latin at the Union School on West Church Street. When the new high school was built on West Avenue in 1924, Minerva was made principal of the school. She always had a great interest in her students and her love of teaching influenced generations of students in the Fairport schools. After 35 years of teaching, Minerva DeLand retired in 1935. The new High School built on Hulbert Ave. in 1956 was named in honor of her many years of service to Fairport students. Minerva DeLand died at the age of 76 and is buried in the family plot in Mount Pleasant Cemetery.

Marjorie Snow Merriman, historian, was the daughter of Edward and Lelia Maring Snow. She was born in her uncle Henry DeLand's house known today as the Green Lantern Inn in 1886. Marjorie

graduated from Fairport High School in 1904 and attended Cornell University. In 1906 Marjorie married Paul R. Merriman and moved to Richmond, VA where Paul was a professor at the University of Richmond. The couple returned to Fairport in 1925 and built a home at 722 Ayrault Road. Marjorie Snow Merriman was one of the 12 founders of the Perinton Historical Society in 1935 and was the Society's first president. She resigned as president the next year to begin her research on the history of the town of Perinton. For the next thirty years Marjorie assembled one of the most comprehensive histories of any town in western New York. She collected oral histories, genealogical records of pioneer families, title searches for all properties in Perinton from 1812 to 1850, recorded inscriptions on headstones in local cemeteries, photographed old homes and wrote a history of the town of Perinton which was published in the Fairport Herald in 1965. The majority of her research materials were donated to the archives of the Perinton Historical Society. They remain the cornerstone of our research documents and have helped generations of researchers learn about our community. Marjorie Snow Merriman died in Fairport on June 10, 1966 at the age of 80 after a long illness.

The stamps are genuine United States postage stamps and can be used on first class mail. The price for a sheet of twenty 44 cent stamps is \$20.00 and includes a brief biography of either Minerva DeLand or Marjorie Snow Merriman. The last batch of stamps we had made were very popular and sold fast. So if you are a Fairportophile, philatelist, or just want to show civic pride on your next correspondence, come check out our newest addition to the museum gift shop. The gift shop is open on Tuesdays and Sundays from 2 p.m. To 4 p.m. and Thursday evenings from 7 p.m. To 9 p.m.

# Crime in Fairport 1874

When we read the newspaper, whether it is an historic newspaper or one just published this morning, we always come across some article about a crime recently committed. The most spectacular instances may make the front page, but most petty crimes are found in the back pages of the newspaper. Crimes committed in days gone by are surprisingly similar to the ones committed today. Looking at the police blotters from today and the past, you will find arrests for intoxication, theft, failure to pay child support, and assault among many others.

There is an obscure index in the Fairport museum which has recently been copied into a data base. There are several hundred 3"x5" cards that record affidavits, arrests and details about crimes that occurred in 1874 and were brought before the Justice of the Peace in Perinton. Most of the cases appeared before Justice Marcellus and many involved the arresting officer Constable William Barringer. Of the 675 entries recorded in the index there were 34 arrests for intoxication, 18 cases of assault, 3 summons for non-payment of rent, 17 cases of larceny, 5 cases of being a public nuisance, 4 instances of unlawful sale of liquor, 3 arrests for refusing to support the family, 1 arrest for driving horses carelessly, 1 arrest for unlawful assembly, 1 arrest for disorderly conduct, 3 search warrants, 1 arrest for profane language and 1 arrest for violation of a village ordinance.

The index of criminal cases has now been copied and is available for researchers in our vertical files under crime, or you can still access the card file located across from the reception desk.

## A Sample of Crimes Committed in Fairport in 1874

Only first names are used in order to protect the innocent.

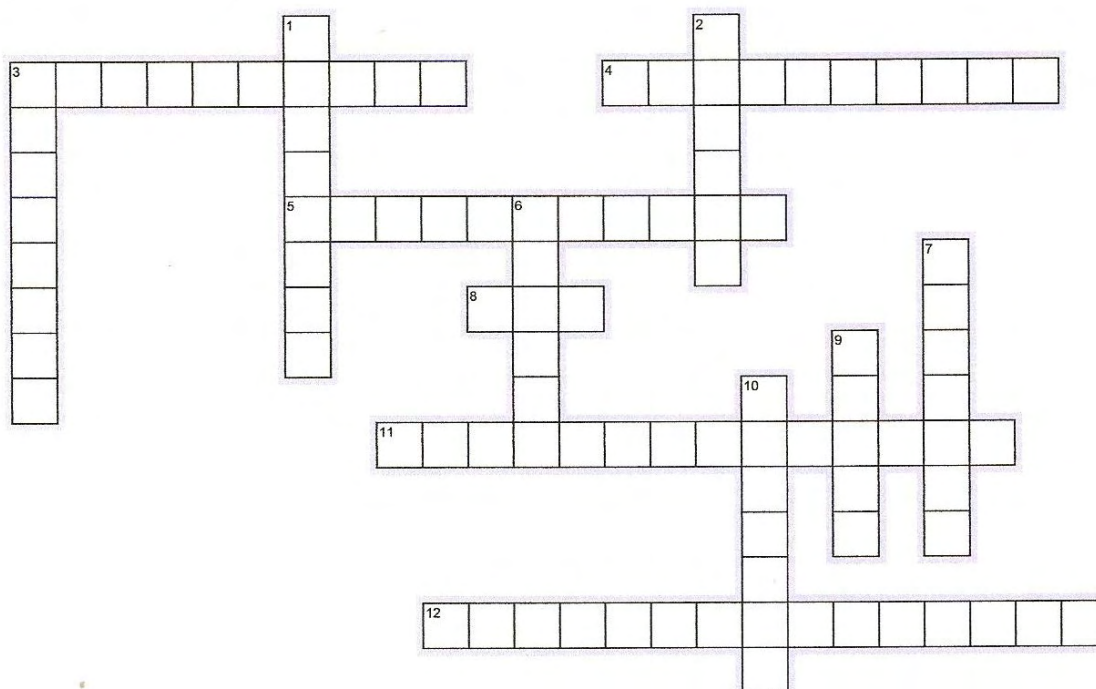
- Barney assaulted William, the Constable, while he was arresting Patrick for intoxication.
- Constable arrested a man who was driving horses carelessly and who beat the Constable with a horse whip.
- An affidavit was filed for a warrant against Charles for taking a boat on the canal.
- Hiram complained to the judge that Charles used profane language in a public place.
- Lucy made a complaint against Thomas for throwing stones against her house.
- Rowe and John shot and killed a dog and frightened the wife of William.
- Cyrus deserted wife Diana and children.
- William, son of Archibald, sentenced to Monroe County Penitentiary for intoxication.



## Try Your Hand at the Historigram Crossword Puzzle

Some people can't finish their day until they have successfully completed the daily crossword puzzle. Whether it is at breakfast, waiting in line at the store or in bed just before going to sleep, many people enjoy filling out these puzzles in their leisure time. These word games are found in most newspapers and they can also be found for sale in most book stores. The most famous puzzle is the New York Times Crossword Puzzle.

On this page is the Perinton Historical Society's very own Historigram Crossword Puzzle. All the words and clues come from this year's issues of the Historigram Volume XLII Numbers 1 thru 5. If you are a member and have faithfully read and kept all the Historigrams this year, you should be able to complete this puzzle with ease. If you can't remember reading the articles or have thrown out your copies you can still see back issues of the Historigram online on our web site [www.perintonhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.perintonhistoricalsociety.org). The answers to the crossword will be published in the May issue of the Historigram. For those who can't wait, answer sheets can be picked up at the Fairport Museum during our open hours.



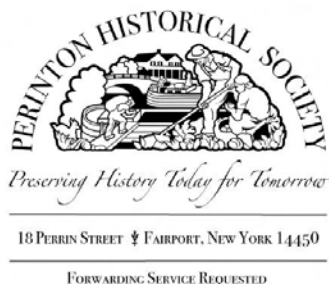
EclipseCrossword.com

### Across

3. Member of the 40th Congress of the United States from New York under President Andrew Johnson from 1867 to 1869.
4. The name of the packet boat that landed in a tree during the Oxbow break of 1871.
5. What Ezra Griffith had a passion for.
8. What Mr. Strong lost the second time when the canal broke and flooded his farm.
11. The name of the Green Lantern Inn in 1923.
12. Architectural style of the Fairport Museum.

### Down

1. To improve oneself through good morals, character, and life long learning so that he or she can be a better citizen.
2. Common name for Ligustrum Amurensis plants.
3. One of the ingredients in Dr. Robinson's Improved Medical Compound for Summer Complaints
6. What tool did laborers working on the canal break keep secure so that it would not be stolen?
7. What animal is the chief cause of canal breaks in the Erie Canal?
9. Place on the Erie Canal where the Fairport canal riot occurred.
10. A chemical that can be taken to get high.



Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
Permit #149  
Fairport, NY 14450



---

## FAIRPORT HISTORICAL MUSEUM

18 PERRIN STREET, FAIRPORT, NY 14450

### **REGULAR HOURS**

Sunday	2 p.m. - 4 p.m.
Tuesday	2 p.m. - 4 p.m.
Thursday	7 p.m. - 9 p.m.

The first two Mondays of every month the Archives open for Researchers only.

Visit our website:  
[www.perintonhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.perintonhistoricalsociety.org)

*Group tours, presentations and special projects by appointment.  
Call 223-3989 and leave a message.*