



Perinton Historical Society HISTORIGRAM

18 Perrin Street
Fairport, NY 14450

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William M. Newman and His Fabulous Houses

One of the first successful businessmen in Fairport was William M. Newman. He founded several businesses and built some of the finest homes and business blocks in Fairport in the 19th century. William Newman is known to have built and remodeled two business blocks and six homes, in which he and his family lived, from 1856 to his death in 1902. Five homes and one business building are still standing today.

William Newman was born in Enfield in Tompkins County, NY, on September 19, 1826. After one term at Ithaca Academy, he moved to Byron, NY where he ran a mercantile business from 1851 to 1856. In 1856 his store burned to the ground. He moved to Fairport with his wife Permelia to a small house on the corner of South Main Street and Church Streets. They lived there only a short time. William started out by working as a bookkeeper for Daniel DeLand at the Fairport Chemical Works. He also became a deacon at the First Baptist Church and was the town clerk while living in this house.

William Newman had a tragic personal life in his first six years in Fairport. William and his wife Permelia had three children during this time. Ida was born in 1856, Willard in 1858 and Helene in 1860. Ida died in 1857 at the age of 1, Willard died

at the age of 5 and Helene, who lived to adulthood, lost her mother the same year she was born. By 1860 William was a single parent trying to raise two children. The following year, William Newman married Permelia's sister Susan Nelson. William and Susan had two children together: Albert born in 1863 and Mary born in 1865, both of whom lived a long life.

In the early 1860s Newman bought 10 acres of land from South Main Street on the east side of what is now called Cemetery Street and the top of the hill on the west side of the street. As part of the land deal, he acquired an old house at 155 South Main and had an Italianate style house built around it. Buying an older house and building a new one around the old structure became a familiar pattern. William went on to build around and live in two more older houses in the village.



The Newman House at 155 South Main Street

✧ Our Mission ✧

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

On September 1, 1864 the Mt. Pleasant Cemetery Company was formed which acquired 6 of the 10 acres bought previously by William Newman on the top of the hill. The cemetery was created for the soldiers and sailors from Fairport who had died in the Civil War. It was also a personal project for William Newman, who had seen his wife and two children die several years earlier and who had a family plot established in a prominent part of the cemetery. Newman was to become the secretary of the Company, a position he held right up to his death in 1902.

Soon after establishing the cemetery, William and his second wife Susan moved to a house at 112 West Ave. in the village. The house was a Queen Anne style house which was later occupied by Hector Johnson, a grocer who owned a shop in the Duncan Block in the village, and after that by Fairport village mayor James Cotter.



The Newman House at 112 West Avenue

While living in this house, William Newman was in the lumber business with Lewis Jones beginning in 1869. The lumber company was called Jones, Newman and Company and buildings were erected on the Erie Canal a block from Newman's house near what is now Roselawn Ave. Later the business was sold to Green and McAuliffe.

While part owner of the lumber business, William acquired the former Peter Ripley House, built around 1810 at 137 North Main Street, and built another house around it.

This house and extensive property were later



The Newman House at 137 North Main Street

sold to Yale Parce. The grounds behind the house were known as the Parce & Solly Nursery. They were owned by Yale Parce until he moved to Deland, Florida, in the 1890s.

Around 1872 ,William, his wife Susan, and their three children moved to a federal style house on 26 acres at 810 West Whitney Road just outside of the village.

In 1874, while living in this house, Newman purchased the W.J. Ayers Spice and Baking Powder Company which was located on east side of North Main Street between the railroad tracks. He changed the name to Newman and Son occupying



The Newman House at 810 West Whitney Road

four buildings on the site and began to manufacture Pure Gold Baking Powder and Saleratus. Newman and Son shared the main building with a perfumery. In 1883 the French Brothers moved into part of the building and established the Palmer & French Co., which also made spices. Two years later in 1885 the building burned to the ground after an explosion. At that time the Palmer & French Co. moved to Rochester and continued to manufacture spices. Later they came to be known as the R.T. French Company, manufacturers of mustard and spices. William Newman built a new factory on the foundation of the old one. The name of the company was changed to the Monroe County Chemical Company. This building is still standing today at 62 North Main Street. It is quite different today from the original appearance. The original building was three stories tall. A fire in the 1980s, when it was known as Apton's Antiques, destroyed the third floor. The owners removed the third floor, put on a gabled roof and sided the entire building in vinyl.

In 1893 William Newman acquired another old house built in 1836 at what is now 11 West Church Street.

He hired his son Arthur B. Newman to design a Queen Anne style house around the original structure. This was William's last house and perhaps his most beautiful. Newman spared no ex-



The Newman House at 11 West Church Street

pense and hired some of the best craftsmen from around western New York to build his house. After William died, the house was bought by George Cobb who once managed the Cobb Preserving Company and was part owner of the Sanitary Can Company. Recently it has been lovingly restored by Barbara Dean, daughter of Dr. Dean who bought the house in the 1940's and had turned part of the building into rooms for patients.

William Newman was a loyal member of the Prohibition Party. While living at his Church Street house, he ran on the Prohibition ticket for Police Justice in 1894 but lost to Orlando Simmons 108 votes to 213. One of his many investments was the First National Oil Company of Rochester which had oil fields in Pennsylvania. Newman was president of the company during this time. William Newman died in 1902. He was laid out at his home on Church Street and was buried in Mt. Pleasant Cemetery next to his first wife and two children. Susan Nelson Newman, William's second wife, died April 7, 1904 and is also buried at Mt. Pleasant.

Contractors who built William Newman's last house at 11 West Church Street

- * Arthur B. Newman—architect and William's son from Fairport
- * H.J. Lovejoy—builder from Fairport
- * Losey Brothers—slater from Elmira, NY
- * Fred Stacey—plasterer from Fairport
- * E. Jordon—stone work from Fairport
- * M.J. Breen—painter and decorator from Fairport
- * Phelps & Lydon—sash, doors and interior woodwork from Rochester
- * James Barry—mantles and grates from Rochester
- * Barr Brothers—plumbers from Rochester
- * Kelsey Furnace Company—heating from Syracuse

Recent Contributions

The Society thanks a recent donation by Mr. & Mrs. Richard Minster in recognition of Carol Saum's Birthday.

May House Tour Details Announced

The 2011 PHS Annual House Tour will feature the "community" of Forest Hills, Perinton on Sunday, May 15, 2011 from 1 to 5 p.m. Presently the House Tour Committee is finalizing the actual houses that the public will have the opportunity to visit, but are excited to announce this special tour and the date. Mark your calendars!

This is a unique opportunity to take a walking tour of the Forest Hills community (see the gardens as well as the homes) and to tour the inside of a number of very special homes.

The following information is taken from and gathered by Kenneth Dodgson (a resident at 13 Regency Drive):

"The earliest known plans for the development of the area known as Forest Hills are penciled "overlays" superimposed on a site survey done for Harold P. Dygert by John Abner Stuart and completed in December 17, 1927. The architect of seventy-five designed homes of the 1930s occupy a contiguous area within Forest Hills was Harold P. Dygert. During his lifetime, beginning in the 1920s and through the 1960s, Harold claimed to have designed and built over 600 homes -

mostly in the East Rochester area - but also in Brighton, Pittsford and the City of Rochester. Forest Hills became his first major project and apparently remained his favorite, due primarily to the harmonious variety of architectural styles that was accomplished. A third of these are Tudor Revival, with an equal number of English Cottage and French Eclectic design, the later characterized by round tower entrances and referred to by Dygert as "Norman style." Approximately 20% of the homes fall into the category of Colonial Revival done in wood, brick and stone. Harold Dygert personally did the architectural design work in collaboration with each original resident, which accounts for the one-of-a-kind nature of Forest Hills homes."

The Committee Chairperson Deb Mabry, is looking for volunteers to help PHS as "house docents" on that Sunday. Your commitment will also include a 1 hour meeting with the homeowners during the week prior to the tour to gather information to share during the tour. Please contact Deb by April 15 if you can help. You may email her at djwm1@rochester.rr.com or call her cell at 738-7866.

Invented in Fairport: Abram E. Crane, Inventor of a Harvester for Cabbage and Similar Plants

Patent Number 1,241,198 issued 9-25-1917

Abram E. Crane was born in Waterloo, New York, on September 16, 1849. His early life was in the Hornell area. Abram married Eva Jewett of Penfield in 1882. The couple moved to Brighton after being married in the Congregational Church. They soon moved and spent 12 years in Penfield, 6 years in Illinois and another 6 years in Greece, NY. When in Penfield and Greece, Abram Crane worked as a farmer on his own land. He also supplemented his income as a painter and paper hanger. Abram and Eva Crane moved to Fairport in 1916 and bought a house at 11 Woodlawn Ave.

As a farmer, Abram Crane was familiar with the growing of cabbages. The cabbage has a short stem about an inch or inch and a half in diameter. The stem is topped by a large leafy ball or head. The traditional way to harvest the plant is to cradle the head under your left arm and then cut the stem with a shape knife from underneath the head with your right hand. Abram Crane's harvester made the picking of the plants a single operation untouched by human hands.

Crane's harvester was a short handled tool with a fork attached at a 45 degree angle at the bottom. The fork was V shaped and sharpened on the inside of the V. To harvest a cabbage with this device, a farmer would slide the end of the tool under the cabbage severing the stem with the sharpened V fork. There was an open sided basket between the base of the fork and the base of the handle that would cradle the head of the cabbage so as not to damage it. A single cabbage could be harvested in one short movement and deposited in a wagon or box saving both time and effort.

Abram Crane invented the cabbage harvester in 1917 at the age of 65 when his days of farming were over. He had moved to the village in 1916 with his semi-invalid wife in the hopes of caring for her in her last days. Eva Crane died in 1920 leaving her husband, one daughter and three sons. After her death Abram Crane moved to 7 Beardsley St. in Fairport until his death from a heart attack 1/22/1925 at the age of 74.

The President's Letter

by Catherine Angevine

PHS had a busy winter and a busier spring is coming up. In early February, myself, our Museum Curator, the Town Historian and our Civil War soldiers cemetery historian were invited to participate with the High School Drama group to prepare for an upcoming production at the school. The drama is to be based on historical characters from the past and we were invited to assist the students with historical insight and accuracy. Some of the students met with Bill Keeler at the Museum one evening and then all of us met with the whole group during two morning classes. The adults enjoyed their time with these budding dramatists. We hope we were helpful.

If you enjoyed the February presentation of *Landmarks of Fairport* presented by our own Bill Poray, you should know that the PHS website has begun a site dedicated to highlighting examples of architectural styles within the Village. And, all of the properties that Bill spoke about are on the website too. You can find the information under 'History' then 'Preservation' and 'Architectural Styles'. And don't miss the upcoming Program on **April 19 at 7:30 p.m.** in the museum with Warren King speaking about *Inventors in Rochester*.

Save these dates!

As a member of the Fairport Perinton Merchants Association, member organizations help out by volunteering with activities that benefit us all. I volunteered the PHS membership for Spring Sweep, the annual Village clean up drive on Saturday **April 16**. Please join us for this critical Village activity, get to meet other members and residents and do a good deed at the same time.

The Village will be celebrating the opening of the Canal and the Farmer's Market on **May 7** and we will participate in the festivities. PHS will lead walking tours in the Village, and at the Museum we will showcase the Annual PHS House Tour at Forest Hills coming up on **May 15**. Come out and help us usher in the new season in the Village!

As you know, our Museum Director/Curator

has mounted an exhibit at the Museum about John Rochester Thomas, a nationally prominent architect who designed several buildings in Fairport and many in Rochester. This promises to be an exciting and interesting display and one you won't want to miss.

I mentioned to you earlier that I was interested in developing an audio tour for the Museum collections. I have been in contact with a vendor and the price is reasonable, \$850 startup. I would like to obtain a sponsor to take up these project costs. If you are interested or know someone that could help fund this project please contact us at info@perintonhistoricalsociety.org or leave a message at the Museum. The sponsor would be featured on the audio and in any related documentation.

We are still looking for volunteers for the Canal Days booth, the Historigram and the annual Picnic. If we can't staff these activities we won't be able to continue them. The House Tour Committee is also looking for volunteers - see the article in this issue announcing the 2011 Annual House Tour.

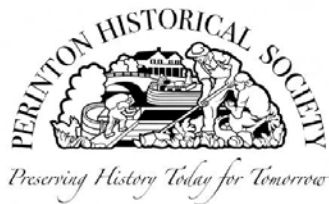
I hope to see all of you soon!

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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.

Visit our website:
www.perintonhistoricalsociety.org

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