

## The Parce Brothers and Their Greatest Achievement

*By Bill Poray*

*Fairport's Walter Parce (1858-1930) has long been considered the driving force in the creation of Despatch, a brand new industrial and residential community dedicated in 1897, and soon after renamed East Rochester. While Walter deserves much of the credit, it was his little brother, William Parce (1861-1940), a landscape architect, who played a major role in the design of the planned community.*

William Parce learned his craft from the best, including Frederick Law Olmsted, considered the father of American landscape architecture. Mr. Parce partnered for a time with Stephen Ailing DeForest, and together they designed much of Rochester's Riverside Cemetery, as well as the grounds of many sophisticated and luxurious homes along Rochester's iconic East Avenue.

The planned development was the offspring of the Vanderbilt Improvement Company, incorporated in January of 1897. Walter Parce negotiated the purchase of land from farmers and lured established manufacturing operations to relocate to the new community. First and foremost was the Merchant Despatch Transportation Company, long after referred to as "the car shops," where thousands of railroad box cars were built and rebuilt. It was from this company that

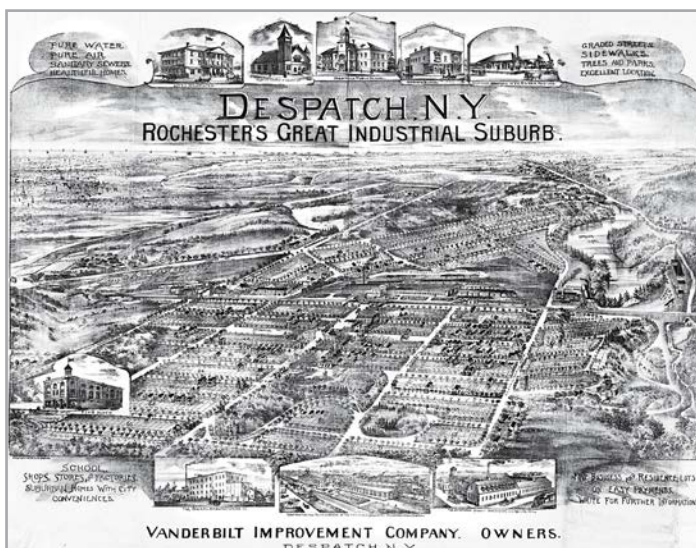
the innovative village took its name, until rechristened East Rochester in 1906.

**INSULT** not nature with absurd expense,  
Nor spoil her simple charms by vain pretense.  
Weigh well the subject, be with caution bold,  
Profuse of genius, not profuse of gold.  
**W. W. PARCE, Landscape Engineer,**  
44 Meigs St., Rochester, N. Y..

## The Parce-DeLand Connection

Fairport industrialists and brothers, Daniel and Henry DeLand, married two sisters, daughters of Justus and Betty Parce. The two families played an essential role in the success and development of early Fairport. Henry traveled to Florida in 1876, and became enchanted with the prospects of developing a new city, based on agriculture and tourism. He bought land, founded the town, and gave it his name—DeLand.

The wealthy hat producer John B. Stetson of Philadelphia invested heavily in the new Florida city, and hired William Parce, Henry DeLand's nephew, to create lavish landscape plans for his extensive winter resort. Soon after, Parce attracted the attention of Kansas governor Edmund N. Morrill, who had visited Rochester in 1895, and admired the landscape architect's work. The governor promptly hired Parce to create plans to update the grounds of the Kansas Statehouse. Some of the locals were skeptical, as reflected in an item in a Topeka newspaper, which reported that the governor "imported" the New Yorker to "fix up the grounds," and added with derision, that Parce "calls himself a landscape architect."





## Greetings from your President

I am writing this on February 14th, and I hope you all are staying safe and healthy. We wish you a Happy Valentine's Day from Cocoa, Florida.

I googled Valentine's Day and it took me to the website of the Hindustan Times newspaper, which provided the following

~ **Bob Hunt** ~

information: Valentine's Day was named after Saint Valentine, a priest who was believed to have secretly helped Christian couples to get married who were in love. This was a move against the Roman Emperor Claudius II because the emperor believed single men were better soldiers and thus did not allow young men to marry. Saint Valentine did not agree with this ideology and facilitated marriages. Due to this he was beheaded by the emperor.

Before the beheading was done and while in prison, Saint Valentine cared for the prisoners, as well as the jailor's daughter, who was blind. Legend has it that he cured the girl's blindness and that his final act before his execution was to write the daughter a love letter signed, from your Valentine. Shortly after, he was executed, on February 14th, 270 AD.

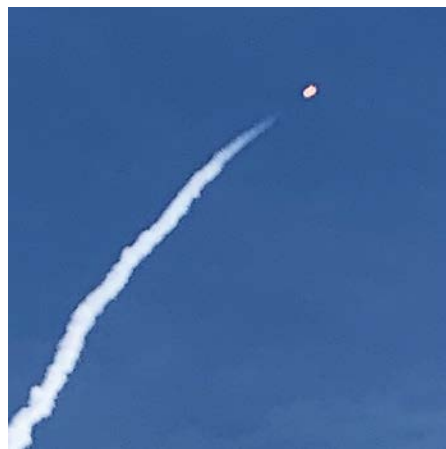
It wasn't until 200 years later that February 14th was proclaimed Saint Valentine's Day. By this time Rome had become Christian, and the Catholic Church was determined to stamp out any remaining paganism. A pagan fertility ritual was held in February each year. The festival was abolished, and February 14th was proclaimed Saint Valentine's Day, thus establishing this feast day on the Catholic Calendar of Saints.

The poet Geoffrey Chaucer (1340s-1400), author of "The Canterbury Tales," was the first to link Saint Valentine with romantic love. This was the beginning of the tradition of courtly love, a ritual of expressing love and admiration, usually in secret. The older practice of sending love messages gradually developed into people sending special cards expressing their affection. These cards were beautiful creations, hand-made by the sender, and individually designed to show how much they loved the recipient.

Now, back to Cocoa, Florida: We have been taking many day trips, exploring about a 50-mile radius from our home base in Cocoa. We also have witnessed a couple of launches by SpaceX, utilizing the Falcon 9 retrievable booster rocket to launch satellites into orbit. One Sunday launch put 143 satellites into orbit aboard the launch and retrieved the booster, by landing it on a ship in the ocean near Miami. The booster will be returned to the launch pad to be used again.



Above:  
American white pelicans at the Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge



Left:  
SpaceX launch at Cape Canaveral, Florida

*Photos by Bob Hunt*

We have ridden our bicycles a little over 100 miles so far, using the Rails to Trails app to locate other trails nearby. One big difference from our bike-riding at home is that there are not many hills in Florida. We spent one day at the 140,000-acre Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge, about 20 miles away. There are many varieties of birds, both local and migratory, including bald eagles. Also many alligators and turtles.

I mentioned last month that the pavilion has been reserved at Perinton Park for our annual meeting and picnic. However, since the reservation was made the town has issued a directive limiting the occupancy to fifty percent, or 30 people. This will not meet our needs as we usually have about 60 in attendance. We are looking at alternatives, including the canal tour boat, the Colonial Belle. We will keep you posted. Thanks and we will chat again next month.

Bob Hunt, President  
Rhunt356.rh@gmail.com 585-415-7053

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## Upcoming Programs & Events

**Saturday, March 6 from 9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.**

The museum reopens for the season and resumes regular hours of:

Sunday & Tuesday 2:00–4:00 p.m.

Saturday 9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

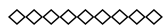
**Tuesday, March 16 at 7:00pm  
VIRTUAL PRESENTATION**

Program: Born Criminal: Matilda Joslyn Gage,  
Radical Suffragist

Presenter: Angelica Shirley Carpenter

Registration required through the Fairport Public Library  
—fairportlibrary.org

Please note that there will be no in-person Tuesday presentations at the museum for the 2020–2021 program season due to the pandemic. We are partnering with the Fairport Public Library to offer virtual presentations instead. Please see each event listing for information about registration, which is required for all virtual events.

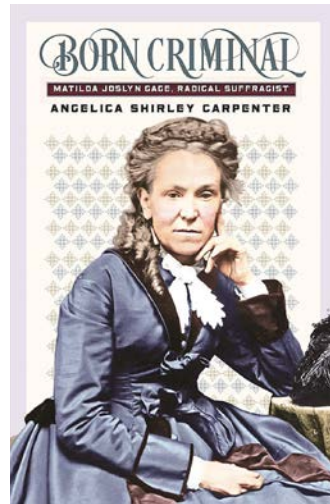


## Your Support is Appreciated

Thanks to all who have renewed your memberships. In this challenging year, each membership, donation and gift shop sale helps to alleviate the financial hardships from canceling both the 2020 house tour and the Yuletide Traditions silent auctions fundraiser.

There are many ways to support the PHS:

- PHS memberships make great gifts for loved ones.
- Puzzles, autographed books, playing cards and games can be purchased from the museum gift shop for entertainment during long winter months. The gift shop is open during regular museum hours of Sundays & Tuesdays 2–4pm and Saturdays 9am–1pm beginning March 6, 2021. Cash and checks are accepted.
- Do you purchase items from Amazon.com? AmazonSmile is a simple way for you to support the PHS every time you shop, at no cost to you. AmazonSmile is available at smile.amazon.com on your web browser and can be activated in the Amazon Shopping app for iOS and Android phones. When you shop AmazonSmile, you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added benefit that AmazonSmile will donate 0.5% of your eligible purchases to the Perinton Historical Society.
- Planned Giving – speak to your accountant or financial advisor about ways you can contribute to PHS or email PHS with questions at [info@PerintonHistoricalSociety.org](mailto:info@PerintonHistoricalSociety.org).



## Born Criminal Matilda Joslyn Gage, Radical Suffragist

*Tuesday  
March 16th  
7:00 p.m.*

*A Virtual  
Presentation*

Matilda Joslyn Gage, an early leader in the women's movement, planned conventions, organized state political parties, spoke at Congressional hearings and the White House, and wrote books that are still being studied today. In 1876 she risked arrest by disrupting the nation's Fourth of July centennial celebration to present a declaration of women's rights. In 1886 she demonstrated at the dedication of the Statue of Liberty, saying women had no liberty in this country. In 1893 she was arrested for registering to vote. She worked closely with Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, but these so-called friends betrayed her late in life and wrote her out of history. This program is especially suitable for Women's History Month, International Women's Day, and for events celebrating the centennial in 2020 of women's suffrage in the United States.

ANGELICA SHIRLEY CARPENTER, Curator Emerita of the Arne Nixon Center for the Study of Children's Literature at California State University, Fresno, published four middle-grade biographies, Frances Hodgson Burnett, L. Frank Baum, Robert Louis Stevenson, and Lewis Carroll (all from Lerner Publications); In the Garden: Essays in Honor of Frances Hodgson Burnett (Scarecrow); a biography, Born Criminal: Matilda Joslyn Gage, Radical Suffragist; and a picture book, The Voice of Liberty, illustrated by Edwin Fotheringham, the last two published by the South Dakota Historical Society Press. A past president of the International Wizard of Oz Club, Angelica is an advisory board member for the Lewis Carroll Society of North America and a member of the American Library Association, the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators, the Authors Guild, and the League of Women Voters. Her website is [www.angelicacarpenter.com](http://www.angelicacarpenter.com).

This event is free and open to the public. It is co-sponsored by the Perinton Historical Society and Fairport Public Library. Registration is required through the library and is limited. To register, visit <https://fairportlibrary.libcal.com/event/7509692> or call the library at 585-223-9091.





Left:

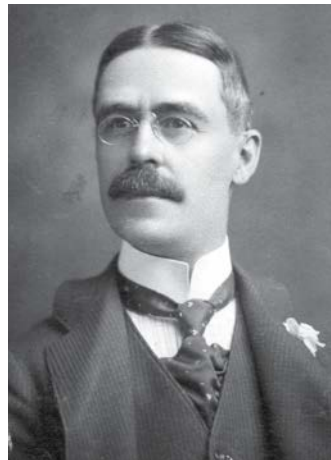
The construction and repair shops of the Merchants Despatch Transportation Company, from marketing materials for Despatch, "Rochester's Industrial Suburb"

Below:

Circa 1906 or slightly later view of Commercial Street. The three-story building is the Eyer Block, at the corner of Main Street. The tracks of the Rochester, Syracuse and Eastern trolley are visible in the street.

## Relocation of the MTDC Car Shops

The car shops of the Merchants Despatch Transportation Company had for decades been located in Rochester, when an agent for the company reached out to Walter Parce of Fairport. The company was seeking to relocate to a larger location. Parce, known as a keen innovator, immediately seized on the idea of creating a new town, carved out of a handful of farms bordering the New York Central Railroad between Rochester and Fairport. With the confidence of the company, Walter Parce negotiated options on several farms in the area, including some familiar names: Westerman, Lincoln, Worthing, and others. By January of 1897, the Vanderbilt Improvement Company was incorporated, with a half million dollars in capital. Among the directors were Walter Parce, and prominent Rochester businessmen Dean Alvord and Edmund Lyon. Attorney Walter S. Hubbell also played a key role in the creation of the new community. Hubbell was a vice president of Eastman Kodak, and in 1877 married Leora DeLand, daughter of Daniel and Minerva Parce DeLand.



Brothers Walter A. Parce (left) and William W. Parce

## A New Planned Community is Born

Plans for the new municipality, marketed as "Rochester's industrial suburb," were implemented with incredible speed. The foundation for it all was a detailed plan designed by William Parce, for the creation of industrial, commercial, and residential areas. Marketing materials boasted of the new community's attributes: "Seventy-five acres have been reserved for the location of manufacturing industries, which constitute the wealth and prosperity of the town. The founders of Despatch have also had an eye to the beautiful, as well as the practical. Over one hundred acres have been devoted to purely ornamental purposes. A pretty lake, a system of parks, with connecting boulevards, athletic grounds and other attractions are being laid out under the direction of a competent landscape architect."

Walter Parce died in June of 1930 in Reno, Nevada, at 72 years of age. He was survived by his wife of many years, Carrie Higbie Parce, one daughter, and two sons. After leaving Fairport, for many years Walter Parce had been successfully engaged in mining interests in Idaho and Nevada.

Despite his many accomplishments, the founding of Despatch was considered his crowning achievement.

Almost 11 years after his brother's death, William Parce, 79, died in Washington, D.C. He was survived by his wife, Josephine Anderson Parce, and a daughter and son. He spent his youth in Fairport and DeLand, Florida, and attended college in Indiana. While in DeLand as a young man, William Parce established the Simon Pure Fertilizer Works, eventually selling the company to E.O. Painter. He returned to Rochester in the early 1890s, where he became known for his skill in landscape design. Professional opportunities eventually took him to Colorado, and later, Baltimore, Annapolis, and Washington, DC. Many considered William Parce's role in the design of Despatch, at the time one of the very few planned communities in the United States, his greatest achievement. For the two brothers, it was a shared accomplishment.





# Special Recognition Level Memberships—As of February 16, 2021

## Business (\$100)

**Lucien A. Morin II, Partner, McConville Considine Cooman and Morin, Attorneys and Counselors at Law**  
100 Packetts Landing, Fairport, NY 14450  
Phone: 585-223-2170, Web: [lmorin@mccmlaw.com](mailto:lmorin@mccmlaw.com)

**Barranco's Clothing and Shoes**  
32 North Main Street, Fairport, NY 14450  
Phone: 585-388-1270

**Fairport Village Inn, Wayne and Patty Beckwith**  
103 North Main Street, Fairport, NY 14450  
Phone: 585-388-0112, Web: [thefvi.com](http://thefvi.com)

**Robert Ruhland (aka Mr. Perinton), Keller Williams Realty**  
2000 Winton Road S. Bldg. 1, Rochester, NY 14618  
Phone: 585-303-6607, Web: [bobruhland.yourkwagent.com](http://bobruhland.yourkwagent.com)

## DeLand (\$100-\$249)

Lisa Wemett

## Potter (\$250-\$499)

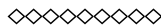
None this month

## Perrin (\$500 and above)

None this month

## Donation in Memory of

Rev. Lee N. Welkley by Warren and Pat Knapp



## Thanks to Matt Hegarty Superintendent, Fairport Electric

As visitors and volunteers arrive at the museum this season, they may notice that it seems brighter and lighter than before. That is all due to Superintendent of Fairport Electric Matt Hegarty and his staff, who spent time updating most of the lights in the museum to LED. This will save the PHS money on its electric bills and provide a more welcoming environment for visitors.

Thanks to Matt and his crew at Fairport Electric / Fairport Municipal Commission for this much-needed update!



## Perinton Historical Society

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

<i>President</i>	Bob Hunt
<i>Vice President</i>	Vicki Profitt
<i>Secretary</i>	Suzanne Lee
<i>Treasurer</i>	Linda Wiener
<i>Communications</i>	Jane DeMeis

### TRUSTEES

Keith Boas	Lucy McCormick
John Laurence	Bill Poray
Jim Unckless	David Wild

### MUSEUM

<i>Director</i>	Vicki Profitt
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## Museum Opening Soon!

The Museum is reopening on March 6, and we are looking forward to visitors!

See the bottom of page 8 for our hours of operation.

## Perinton Historical Society

## Mission

To promote interest in preserving and sharing local history through education and accessibility.

## ~The Lois McClure~ Has Visited Fairport Several Times

*By Keith Boas*



**The Lois McClure and her escort, the tiny tug Churchill.**

"Lois" is named in honor of a Vermont woman, who was a major contributor to the construction of the boat and many other community projects in and around Burlington.

The eye-catching canal schooner Lois McClure is an 88-foot full-scale replica of an 1862-class sailing canal boat, constructed by the Lake Champlain Transportation Company's shipyard in Burlington, Vermont.

Following the completion in September of 1823 of the Champlain (Northern) Canal that connected Lake Champlain to the Hudson River and new Erie Canal, boat builders on the lake introduced a style of watercraft new to North America—the sailing canal boat. Common canal boats lacked masts and sails, and had to depend on teams of mules or horses for power. As a relatively inexpensive alternative, the sailing canal boat made it possible to sail from ports on the lake to the canal using just the muscle of the wind. When entering the canal, sailors lowered the masts and raised the centerboard. These fairly simple, reversible modifications allowed such boats to enter the narrow canal system, where towlines and teams would then take over.

A replica of the historic canal schooners is the Lois McClure, first launched on July 3, 2004. Since then, she has passed through Fairport several times. Among brief stops here in 2007, 2010, 2017 and 2018, she welcomed hundreds of visitors aboard for educational tours.

On the right, there is the news article describing her visit to this area in the summer of 2017: *From the New York State Canal Corp., July 31, 2017.*



The Lois McClure, docked on the north side of the Erie Canal in Fairport

*Photos in 2017 by Keith Boas*

### **The Lois McClure: Authentic Replica of 1800s Canal Boat**

Residents of, and visitors to, the Rochester/ Finger Lakes region can step aboard an authentic replica of an 1800s Canal boat, and step back through time over the next two weeks as the Lois McClure – a replica of an 1862 sailing canal boat – docks in Fairport, Rochester, Spencerport and Holley as part of a season-long voyage along New York's historic canals.

The New York State Canal Corporation and the Department of Environmental Conservation have partnered with the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum to bring the Lois McClure to the canal corridor as part of a year-long celebration of the 200th anniversary of the start of construction for the Erie Canal, an occasion that has sparked a summer of celebrations statewide. The groundbreaking of the Erie Canal was held in Rome, N.Y. on July 4, 1817.

Sources:

New York State Canal Corp., Lake Champlain Maritime Museum and Wikipedia





# A life of Perseverance

## Perinton's English Annie Hallett

*By Bill Poray*

*Ann Slade Hallett, or English Annie as she was known, endured a challenging life, to say the least. She was a survivor, through the highs and lows of a long, colorful life.*

Known as a little woman with a big voice, much of her story comes to us from her great-great granddaughter. Lois Gilbert has spent much of her life in Bushnell's Basin, and has studied her family history extensively. She visited me a few years back, and we recently reconnected. It is from Lois Gilbert that we learn much of the story of English Annie, corroborated by census documents, town records, and newspaper clippings. Lois has also shared vintage photos of other Bushnell's Basin area families, including members of the Hallett, Gilbert, Austin, and McCoord clans.

Ann Slade was born in Somerset, England, early in the 19th century. She married James Hallett, with whom she had nine children. They signed their marriage license with an "X", for neither could read or write. The Halletts left England for America in about 1848, and after living two years in West Henrietta, moved to Perinton, where they purchased a modest farm on the Pittsford-Palmyra Road. So modest, in fact, that the 1855 census referred to their home as a "shanty" valued at twenty dollars.

From this humble start, the Halletts became significant landowners, primarily through the shrewd business instincts of English Annie. Land was bought and occasionally sold, usually with a mortgage attached. Eventually the shanty was replaced by a thirteen room home with large barns and an even larger mortgage\*.

Annie had many irons in the fire. She ran a grocery store on the canal near the oxbow, serving those traveling and working on the canal. For a time she also operated a thriving coal yard. She did all this while raising children and working on the farm.

English Annie continued to run the farm quite productively after the death of her husband, with limited help from William, her son. Documents from 1880 valued the property at \$12,000, and recorded the sale of 3,600 bushels of potatoes, 950 bushels of apples, and 1,000 pounds of butter.

But there were problems. Her properties were heavily mortgaged, and William was drunk more than he was sober. With his diminishing health, and her advancing age, Annie could no longer maintain her financial interests. Courts ordered the sale of her properties, and the homestead was sold



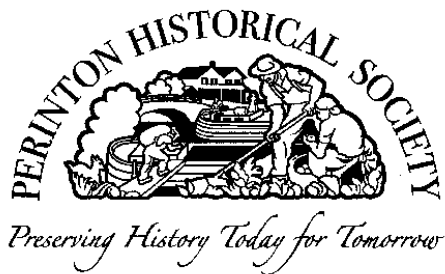
"English Annie" Hallett

at auction. By 1885, she and William were living along the canal bank, in what had years earlier, been familiar surroundings—a shanty.

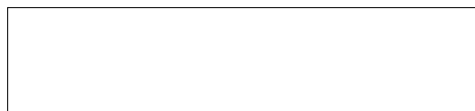
Somehow, English Annie continued to survive. When William died in 1893, the newspapers barely mentioned the event, referring to him only as "the son of English Ann, a well known character living in the south part of town." By December of 1898, she was taken to the county poor house, and from there, to the Rochester State Hospital, where she resided until her death in 1905.

English Annie outlived her husband and most of her children, and left a colorful legacy for her town and ancestors, including her great-great granddaughter, Lois Gilbert.

\* See page 8 for a photograph of the home of English Annie Hallett



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Fairport, NY 14450



Early but undated view of the large farm home of "English Annie" Hallett, sold at auction in 1885. The lovely home continues to maintain its stately presence on Pittsford Palmyra Road, near the corner of Kreag Road.

**Fairport Historical Museum, 18 Perrin Street, Fairport, NY 14450**

The museum will re-open to the public on March 6th. Hours will be Saturdays from 9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m. and Sundays and Tuesdays from 2:00–4:00 p.m. Free admission. Group tours, presentations and special projects are by appointment. Please call and leave a message at **585-223-3989**. **[www.PerintonHistoricalSociety.org](http://www.PerintonHistoricalSociety.org)**