

1893 DeLand Fire Sparked Establishment of Waterworks

By Bill Poray

The fire whistle sounded at 8:00 p.m. on a miserable winter night in February of 1893. A barn on Summit Street was burning.

Fairport's Hook and Ladder and Protective companies answered the call, but there was little they could do. The firefighters made their way uphill to the blaze over icy streets, through howling west winds and frigid temperatures. Fairport had no municipal water system, and no fire hydrants. The barn was a total loss.

Just as the tired, cold men returned from the smoldering barn, the fire whistle again pierced the night. A bit west of the Main Street canal bridge on the south bank, the Chadwick warehouses were in flames. The temperature was near zero with gale-force winds, but the valiant firefighters fought with honor. Said the Fairport Herald,

"The warehouses were like a tinderbox, and almost at once the cinders and fire was pouring over the adjoining blocks and along the canal east for nearly half a mile, driven by the west blizzard, which every minute was getting colder."

Several commercial buildings near the canal were in jeopardy, and it appeared their loss was imminent, when the nearby DeLand factory came to the rescue, with its own private fire control apparatus. DeLand hoses were connected to hydrants at the factory, with additional water pumped from the semi-frozen canal.

By midnight the blazing inferno had been beaten back. Exhausted firefighters went wearily home, while the blizzard



In this image, firefighters attempt to pump water from the canal to fight the DeLand factory fire, the third blaze the men responded to over a period of twelve hours. By then, the hoses had frozen solid, and efforts to extinguish the fire were fruitless.

The DeLand factory was destroyed.

showed no signs of quitting.

Residents woke the next morning to the sound of yet another fire alarm. Workers at the DeLand factory discovered flames in the baking powder department. With temperatures still hovering near zero, the factory's fire hoses, used just hours earlier on the Chadwick warehouse fire, were frozen solid, as was the fire department's equipment. An urgent telegraph was transmitted to the fire department in Rochester, but their arrival, even by special train, came too late. By noon, the DeLand factory was in ruins.

Since the early 1850s, the growth and prosperity of Fairport had been in large measure tied to the success of the DeLand factory. Without it, politicians and citizens alike



From your President

March 17, 2022

Like so many others during the pandemic, I spent a lot of time outdoors in 2020 reflecting. My busy life with a husband, three kids and multiple jobs had never allowed me much time for yardwork. During the shutdown, I discovered I

actually enjoyed garden planning and weeding. Visits to the local nursery with my oldest daughter, Katie, became a special time where we could escape the tension of the pandemic and enjoy the smell of flowers and dirt.

~Vicki Profitt~



Last year, I created a garden in my side yard, which had previously been inhabited by weeds. It started with some flagstones gifted from a friend. The flagstones were placed around my beloved lilacs and I was content with that.

Then, while sitting on the deck overlooking the yard, I noticed the side yard was weedy. That took a day to clear out. The flagstones moved to the newly-cleared area and a café table and chairs were placed upon them.

The garden plan became more grandiose when I received a metal arbor from my Facebook Buy Nothing group that I painted hammered bronze. The next step was a trip to the landscaping store where my husband surprised me by purchasing gravel and a half pallet of large, and heavy, flagstone slabs. The garden took shape around the arbor and stone slabs. A bench, one of Mom's birdbaths and the

addition of butterfly bushes, lavender, Beardtongue, bee balm and many other beautiful plants now provide serenity and a place to breathe.

You may wonder what songs are conducive to garden planning. I highly recommend the music of the Bee Gees. They will get your toes tapping, your shoulders swaying and your brain flowing with ideas.



Perinton Historical Society

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MISSION

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

The HISTORIGRAM is published nine months per year by the Perinton Historical Society. The content of our newsletter is provided by PHS Board members and committee staff. Opinions expressed in any article in this newsletter are those of the author of the article alone and are not those of the PHS unless expressly stated otherwise.

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Lucy McCormick, Jean Whitney, Nancy Slaybaugh, Karen Smallman, Susan Angevine, Debby Vercant, Joyce Hawkinson, Karen Junker, and Donna Moore

A Merry Band of Volunteers!

By Lucy McCormick

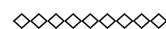
In the museum's Reference Library, eight sizeable notebooks teem with information about the canal, from documents on the need for this waterway to the many local celebrations on the canal. On an adjacent shelf, six notebooks highlight Fairport's celebrations, from Old Home Week in 1908 to Perinton's Bicentennial in 2012. Shelved above these, single notebooks elucidate many facets of Fairport's history, including *Fairport As She Is, 1888*; *The Fairport Urban Renewal Project, 1978*; and *Fairport Ghost Stories*.

Not long ago, much of this information was tucked away in files, mostly on the museum's second floor. But a diligent Thursday Crew has sorted through stacks of documents, photographs, and newspaper articles to create inviting, organized notebooks that tell the grand story of Fairport.

The crew has many more tasks to tackle. Little by little, it is making Fairport's history more accessible to PHS members and the community. An upcoming project includes moving the "People" files to the new file cabinets and integrating original photos from elsewhere in the museum. Many members of the crew have been on board for several years.

Another behind-the-scenes group working from home are three volunteers who have been proofreading the PHS website. Karen Allen, Kathy Cloonan, and Karen Junker have been carefully reading the hundreds of articles on the website and noting items that need attention, sharing that information with Web Manager Doris Davis-Fritsch.

PHS is fortunate to have many dedicated members!



Volunteer Gathering

On February 26th, more than 30 volunteers arrived at the museum for orientation. New volunteer coordinators John and Nancy Bowley planned a fun event, which included breakfast, a museum tour and special presentations. Jean Whitney discussed how to research houses and Sue Scheirer gave tips on using genealogical resources. Some of the newer volunteers had been trained just three weeks prior to the pandemic shutdown and hadn't been able to work many shifts. Others have been with us for many years. It was a great opportunity to socialize, get to know other volunteers and test out the new program room chairs. Many thanks to John and Nancy Bowley, Jean Whitney and Sue Scheirer.





Ruins of the DeLand factory fire in the cold February of 1893

were concerned for the future of the community. Village President E.J. Fisk held a public meeting at Shaw's Hall a few days after the fire, *"for the purpose of expressing sympathy for DeLand & Co., and employees in their great loss."* A resolution was approved, stating that *"every effort be made to induce Messrs. DeLand & Co. to rebuild here, in order that the prosperity of the village may be maintained."*

After three fires in little more than twelve hours, Fairport's residents knew it would take more than a hopeful resolution to convince DeLand to rebuild. The village needed fire protection that only a municipal waterworks system could provide.

A water commission was quickly elected, and engineer Walter F. Randle of Syracuse was hired. The commission directed Randle to design a system, both for fire protection and for the convenience of residents and business owners, who relied on basement cisterns fed by rain gutters or private wells for their water. The proposal required a vote of support from property owners, and of course, a large expenditure of tax dollars.

By June a plan had been hatched for Fairport's municipal water supply. A site would be selected for the construction of wells within or near the village. Costs were estimated for a pumping station, a standpipe, also referred to as a water tower, and a network of underground pipes and fire hydrants. Along with equipment purchases, excavation, and engineering costs, the total expense was estimated at under \$40,000. Residents voted at Shaw's Hall to decide the matter, and when the results were tallied, Fairport was one step closer to having a modern water supply system.

The firm of Burton & Crone of Honeoye Falls was hired to dig a test well on property owned by James Jennings on John Street, today's Lift Bridge Lane East.

Soon Jennings was bought out, and several wells were put in place. A barn, wagon shed and ice house were sold and removed. Today, 129 years later, the location of the Fairport Municipal Commission on Lift Bridge Lane East is the direct result of the decision in 1893 to dig the wells on the Jennings property.

The Continental Construction Company won the contract for installing the waterworks, including eight miles of pipe,



In this image from the early 1900s, the original 1893 water tower is visible on the hill behind this house at 155 South Main Street.

Photo kindly provided by Dale Davis

68 fire hydrants, and a standpipe with a capacity of 300,000 gallons. A lot was purchased from H.P. Wilbur at the top of Summit Street, chosen as the best location for the standpipe.

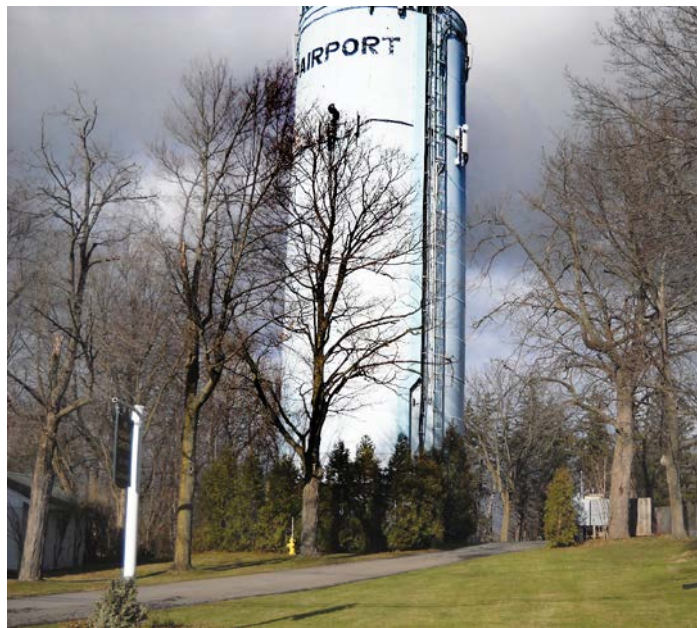
A massive, temporary amount of labor was required to excavate and install the system. On September 14th of 1893, the Monroe County Mail announced that—

“...three hundred Italians are expected Saturday and will be quartered on Parce Avenue. A car load of provisions for them has already arrived.”

The first pipes were laid on Main and Church Streets, with William Newman’s new house at 11 West Church reportedly the first to connect to the system. The water tower on Summit Street, 72 feet in height and made of iron, was constructed and painted by early November. The new system worked well, and provided gravity-induced pressure for both fire protection and property owners.



This 1940s aerial view looks northwest, with Summit Street in the lower left. The 105-foot water tower, constructed in 1931, stood tall over nearby houses, trees, and Mount Pleasant Cemetery.



The second standpipe served Fairport from 1931 to 2004. In 2016, the 85-year-old water tower was dismantled.

As the village population grew, the need for water did as well. The 300,000-gallon capacity of the original water tower no longer was sufficient. The 38-year-old cast iron water tower was removed by January of 1931, and a new 750,000-gallon water tower was built on the same site. A Rochester company paid \$25.00 for the privilege of demolishing the old water tower for the value of the scrap metal. The Petroleum Iron Works Company of Sharon, Pennsylvania installed the new, riveted steel tower. The small concrete foundation of the first water tower was enlarged to accommodate the greater diameter of the new vessel.

Early on the morning of April 7th, 1931, Municipal Commission Superintendent Staniland Scarth and a crew of eleven men began a project to add to the circumference of the existing foundation of the old standpipe.

The additional foundation required eleven tons of crushed stone, twenty yards of sand, and 398 sacks of cement. Claude Lumbar, a local mason, offered the use of his concrete mixer for the job.

Once the foundation was complete, contractors began the process of riveting sections of the standpipe together, one tier at a time, until it reached 105 feet in height. The new structure was painted, and by mid-June was filled with water for the first time.

High atop the Summit Street hill, the new standpipe was considered a menace to low flying airplanes at night. The Rochester Democrat and Chronicle reported the concern, and in July of 1931, the Fairport Municipal Commission installed “a large red electric light signal on top of the standpipe,” said to be “visible at night from a long distance in all directions from the village.”

We might consider the brightness of the beacon a bit dim by today’s standards, as the waterproof globe housed a standard 100-watt lightbulb.

The second standpipe on Summit Street served its purpose from 1931 to 2004, when the Monroe County Water Authority made Fairport’s water system obsolete.

Twelve years later, the 85-year-old water tower was dismantled. In total, the two water towers stood at the Summit Street location from 1893 to 2016, a total of 123 years.



Upcoming Programs & Events

Tuesday, April 19th at 7:00 p.m. on ZOOM

Program: Lost Architects of Rochester:

A Re-Discovered Heritage

Presenter: Cynthia Howk

Registration required through the Fairport Public Library—

fairportlibrary.libcal.com/event/8884073

Wednesday, April 27th: 7:00 p.m.

at the Fairport Public Library

Program: Encore presentation of Historic U.S. Route 20

Presenters: Rob and Carole Lillis

Registration required through Fairport Public Library—

Fairportlibrary.org

Saturday, May 7th from 9:00–12 p.m.

at the museum

Event: Greenbrier Garden Club Annual Plant Sale

Tuesday, May 17th at 7:00 p.m. at the museum

Program: Cemetery tour

Sunday, May 29th at 2:30 p.m. at the museum

Program: Underground Railroad

Presenter: Wendy Murray

Tuesday, June 21st from 6:00–8:00 p.m.

at the museum

Event: PHS Members Only Open House

(in lieu of annual meeting & picnic)

Saturday, July 16th from 2:30–5:30 p.m.

Event: Colonial Belle Cruise

Additional information is forthcoming

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How You can Support the Perinton Historical Society

- Become a PHS member / give a gift membership.
- Volunteer your time as a museum volunteer or on a committee.
- Donate artifacts to the museum that pertain to Fairport and Perinton.
- Purchase unique gifts from the Fairport Historical Museum gift shop.
- Donate gift cards and gift baskets for Yuletide Traditions silent auctions.
- Donate to the PHS through estate bequests, planned giving, IRA charitable giving, memorial and honor gifts, employer matching contributions, AmazonSmile, ROC the Day.

Lost Architects of Rochester A Re-Discovered Heritage

While many might know the name of renowned architect Frank Lloyd Wright, how many know the names of any of the other architects whose talents have created the rich architectural heritage in the greater Rochester area over the past two centuries? FLW designed one building—while architects, such as A.J. Warner, James Gould Cutler, John Rochester Thomas, Claude Bragdon and the Dryers (father-and-son) designed hundreds! Touted as “the most prolific designer of public buildings in America” at the height of his career, Thomas’ Fairport designs include the First Baptist Church and two mansions for the DeLand family, one for decades known as the Green Lantern Inn. We also have Annie Graham Rockfellow, raised in Rochester and the first woman to graduate from MIT’s School of Architecture, with an impressive career spanning the 1880s to the 1930s. Come discover these and other creative designers whose architectural legacy—comprising thousands of buildings—defines our community today.

Rochester native Cynthia Howk, recently retired Architectural Research Coordinator at the Landmark Society of Western New York, has lectured extensively on architects, architectural history and historic preservation during her four-decade career. A graduate of Mary Washington College of the University of Virginia, she continues to be active in preservation planning, educational outreach and special research projects.

Registration required through the Fairport Library—

<https://fairportlibrary.libcal.com/event/8884073>.

Or call the library at 585-223-9091.



Thomas’ Fairport designs include the First Baptist Church and two mansions for the DeLand family. Pictured here is one of the mansions, still commonly referred to as the Green Lantern Inn.



Encore Presentation **Historic U.S. Route 20**

Most people in the Rochester/Finger Lakes area call it “5 and 20” because US20 and New York Route 5 are combined, but only from Auburn to Avon. Route 20 is actually the longest road in the United States and the seventh longest road in the world. It runs 3,365 miles (nearly 1,000 miles longer than famous Route 66) through 12 states and through big cities, small towns, farmland, deserts, and mountains.

Parts of Route 20 follow the Oregon Trail, the California Trail, and the Mormon Trail. Freeport, Illinois, on Route 20, is the site of the famous debate between Abraham Lincoln and Canandaigua Academy alumnus Stephen A. Douglas. Closer to home, Route 20 passes through Seneca Falls, home of the Women’s Rights National Historical Park on the site of the first Women’s Rights Convention held in 1848.

In 2013, Canandaigua residents Rob and Carole Lillis drove their vintage MG roadster the entire length of US20 from Boston to Newport, Oregon. Along the way they visited historic sites and met incredible people with wonderful stories. Rob and Carole will share their adventures and the trip through history they experienced on the trip.

Rob Lillis provides planning, research, and evaluation consulting to school and community-based youth development programs through Evalumetrics Research. Carole recently retired from Keuka College where she taught English and writing for 25 years. They are avid vintage British car enthusiasts and have participated in numerous rallies and historic tours.

Registration required through the Fairport Library—
<https://fairportlibrary.libcal.com/event/8884995>.
Or call the library at 585-223-9091.

2021–2022 **Special Recognition Level** **Memberships**

As of March 15, 2022

Business (\$100)

Fulkerson Services, Inc.

111 Parce Avenue, Fairport, NY 14450
Phone: 585-223-2541, Website: fulkersonservices.net

Lift Bridge Yarns

24 High Street, Suite 1, Fairport, NY 14450
Dawn Verdugo & Jessie McNaughton
Phone: 585-364-0521, Email: Dawn@LiftBridgeYarns.com

Frank N. Pittinaro, C.P.A.

William Webb & Associates, LLC
404 East Atlantic Boulevard, Pompano Beach, Florida 33060
Phone: 954-943-1650, Email: Frank@webbcpa.com

Canandaigua National Bank & Trust

72 South Main Street, Canandaigua, NY 14424
Phone: 585-394-4260, Website: cnbank.com

Lucien A. Morin II, Partner

McConville Considine Cooman and Morin, P.C.
300 Meridian Centre Blvd., Suite 110, Rochester, NY 14618
Phone: 585-546-2500, Email: lmorin@mccmlaw.com

Barranco’s Clothing and Shoes

32 North Main Street, Fairport, NY 14450
Phone: 585-388-1270, Email: BarrancosClothing@gmail.com

Fairport Village Inn

Wayne and Patty Beckwith
103 North Main Street, Fairport, NY 14550
Phone: 585-388-0112, Website: thefvi.com

Salle d’Escrime of Prescott, AZ **A Fencing Club**

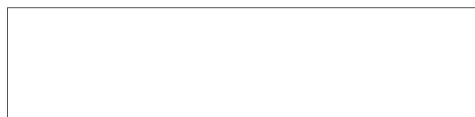
Patricia Dodge Waples, Owner

Perrin (\$500 and above)

Kathleen Cloonan & Barry Childs



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Thanks to a sizeable donation, we have recently purchased 88 new program room chairs from our PHS business member, Fulkerson Services, Inc. The chairs have wide seats, comfortable curved backs and no arms to catch on things. They have been used for three events thus far, and are a big hit!

Our next planned improvement will occur in a few months, when we replace the carpet in the program room with carpet tiles. We suspect the old carpet has been in place since 18 Perrin Street housed the library prior to 1978, so it is long overdue for replacement. Thanks to the PHS Board of Trustees for approving the purchases and to our generous donors.

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

The museum is open to the public on the following days and times: 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