

Perinton Historical Society Hisorigram

18 Perrin Street
Fairport, NY 14450

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The Amazing Life and Times of Oliver Mead Tomlinson

By Bill Poray

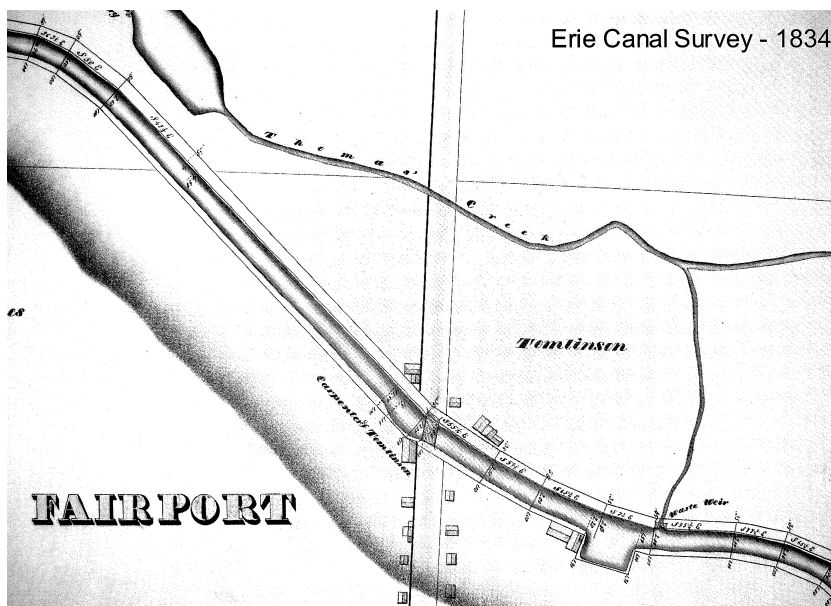
O.M. Tomlinson accomplished a great deal in his 73 years. He was twice a pioneer, a businessman, inventor, and political activist. And some considered him to be an eccentric character, to put it mildly.

Oliver M. Tomlinson, or “O.M.” as he signed his name, was born in Connecticut in 1796, and arrived in this area in about 1819. He purchased 45 acres of land east of Main Street and north of Church Street. The property included what may have been the first frame structure in Fairport, built in 1817. The house was later moved to allow for the construction of Henry Deland’s new home, later known as the Green Lantern Inn. Also on the property was a log cabin, which Tomlinson promptly sold for \$25 and a gold watch.

In the spring of 1825, Mr. Tomlinson married Ann Staples, daughter of Olney and Susannah Staples, the proprietors of Staples Tavern in Egypt. The Tomlinsons had three children, Ann Eliza, born in 1828, a son, Victory, born in 1830, and a second daughter, Statira, born in 1834. Not long after the birth of Statira, her father’s business pursuits took him to Albany, and later, to the western frontier.

Today we might say that O.M. Tomlinson “wore a lot of hats”. He was a farmer and an early merchant in Perinton. His 1820s storefront was along the towpath, in the location of today’s Box Factory building. From this location, he was well positioned for the role of a “forwarder” on the canal, arranging transportation for freight and passengers.

As the canal’s influence in Perinton continued to swell, Tomlinson’s land ownership in what would become the heart of Fairport likely provided an ideal location for an inn. Records show that O.M. was granted an annual license from 1826 through 1829 for this purpose. In addition, he operated a mill in North Bloomfield in the late 1820s, while still main-



A portion of the Holmes Hutchinson map of 1834 shows some of the land owned by Oliver Tomlinson

*From the Archives of the
Perinton Historical Society*

taining his operations along the canal in Perinton. Later in his life he would employ his skills as a miller again, 2,600 miles to the west.

O.M. Tomlinson was a civic-minded citizen. He provided the land for Greenvale Cemetery on East Church Street in 1825, and in 1833 donated land on the north side of East Church Street for the construction of the Universalist Church. The Fairport Fire Department is located on the site today.

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Structures Committee Adds to PHS Website Content

The Historic Structures Committee has added a new page to the PHS website, to present the barns we have visited, along with their stories. We send a big thank you to the homeowners who so graciously allowed us to visit. Readers, watch this webpage. As more barns are added, we will post their stories here. To view the new page:

www.perintonhistoricalsociety.org/about/structure-committee.html

In addition, the Structures Committee has completed the *Architectural Styles Guide* up to and including Victorian homes. Now that the weather is improving, take a stroll through the village and see how many of these architectural styles you can find. We have them all! Watch this webpage, too, as more styles are to come:

<http://www.perintonhistoricalsociety.org/history/architectural-styles.html>



Illuminated History

Cemetery Tour Tuesday, June 19, 7:00 p.m.

History comes alive at the South Perinton Cemetery, 291 Wilkinson Road, as we hold our annual Perinton Historical Society cemetery tour. Hear the stories of Civil War soldiers and other residents of our community through the voices of the

actors portraying them.

The tour concludes at the grave of Civil War nurse Mary Jewett Telford, where a ceremony will be held to dedicate her Woman's Relief Corps flag holder.



Mary Jewett Telford
Photo courtesy of
Floris A. Lent



HISTORIGRAM

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Annual Meeting and Picnic Scheduled for May 15

The annual Perinton Historical Society picnic and meeting will be held rain or shine in the shelter at Perinton Park on Fairport Road, near the canal at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 15. Hot dogs, hamburgers and veggie burgers, decaf coffee and lemonade will be provided by the Society. Members coming to the picnic are requested to bring a dish to pass, and their own plates and silverware. Please make reservations with the form below, or by calling the museum at 223-3989 and leaving a message. Please indicate:

- ◆ How many people will be coming
- ◆ Whether you would like a hot dog, hamburger, or veggie burger
- ◆ Dish you would like to pass (salad, hot or cold dish, dessert)

At the meeting there will be a few words from our President, and then the members will vote on the nominations for officers for the Society.

This is always a good time to renew friendships, meet new people, and partake in some excellent food. Please join us for a pleasant evening in the park.

Annual Meeting and Picnic, May 15

Name _____

Number of people attending _____

I would like (indicate number)

Hot dogs _____

Hamburgers _____

Veggie burgers _____

I will bring (circle one)

Salad Hot dish Cold dish Dessert

Deliver this form to the mail slot at the Fairport Museum no later than May 14, or mail it to the Perinton Historical Society, 18 Perrin Street, Fairport, NY 14450.

Ten Years in Albany

Mr. Tomlinson recognized the canal's commercial opportunities, and by 1835 had relocated his family to the fourth ward in Albany, where he took ownership in a number of canal and Great Lakes navigation companies, most notably the Western Navigation Company. As co-proprietor, Tomlinson ran the Albany operations, with other stops in New York City, Rochester, and Buffalo, the latter run by Ansel R. Cobb, later to become the son-in-law of Mr. Tomlinson. The company's packet boats plied the canal waters, while a fleet of steamboats carried passengers and freight to Great Lakes ports. The Fairport Museum is home to several leather-bound account books related to Tomlinson's navigation companies, dating from 1835 to 1844.

While in Albany, the interests of O.M. Tomlinson turned to politics. A cousin, Theodore Tomlinson, was a prominent New York City lawyer and politician. Like his cousin, Oliver was drawn to the philosophies of the Whigs, a political party prominent from the 1830s to the mid 1850s. Whigs believed that Congress should have more power than the President, and were strong defenders of the Constitution. O.M. Tomlinson was vocal in his support, as evidenced by his practice of purchasing space in the local newspaper for his pro-Whig stance, as this post-election day example shows:

Albany Evening Journal – November 17, 1838

By O.M. Tomlinson. The Whig Democracy sustained triumphantly with the aid of the true Democratic Conservatives; united may they ever remain, and sustain the constitution and free institutions of their country.

From New York City to Buffalo

O.M. Tomlinson was always looking for a new challenge. In 1846, he tried his hand in a new role, as co-proprietor and treasurer at the New Greenwich Theatre, at the corner of Varick and Charleston Streets in New York. Tickets to an evening of shows ranged from 12 ½ cents in the "pit" to \$5.00 for a private box. One evening, someone with an "axe to grind" attempted to burn the theatre to the ground. Shortly thereafter, with the viability of the theatre in question, Mr. Tomlinson moved out of his residence at 21 Hamilton Street in Albany and on to other business ventures.

By 1849, Ann Eliza, the oldest child of Oliver and Ann Tomlinson, married Ansel Cobb, her father's Buffalo business partner. Shortly thereafter, her mother, Ann, and younger sister, Statira, also moved to Buffalo. By 1851, free from his business commitments in Albany and New York, Oliver joined his wife and daughters in Buffalo, taking residence on Swan Street. For the rest of his life, O.M. Tomlinson would consider Buffalo his hometown, although he didn't stick around long enough to familiarize himself with the place. After all, there was a gold rush out west!

Thirty Years Later, A Pioneer Again

Gold was first discovered in 1848, in what would become the state of California. The lure of riches and adventure brought O.M. Tomlinson and thousands of others west. The movement of dirt, gravel, and water, often to higher elevations, was imperative to successful mining. Familiarity with the technical aspects of the Erie Canal, and also with water-driven mills was a great asset to Tomlinson, and one that would help him make a name for himself. By 1852, he was living in Nevada City, California, and was president of the Coyote and Deer Creek Water Co.



Office of the Coyote and Deer Creek Water Company at Nevada City in 1851. O.M. Tomlinson was president of the company the following year.

Photo courtesy of the California History Room, California State Library, Sacramento

Oliver's wife stayed in Buffalo while daughter Statira completed her studies. Both would soon come to California, and in June of 1854, Statira married a transplanted New Yorker, William Maltman, who worked for her father. Oliver and Ann continued to live in Nevada City in the early 1860s, where he was one of the founders of the Trinity Episcopal Church. The Nevada County Historical Society refers to O.M. Tomlinson as "both ingenious and eccentric," and "an inventor who was probably ahead of his time." The history books of the area have documented his construction of an elevator used to transport water and dirt to his diggings. Tomlinson also designed methods for drainage of mine operations, creating an enormous pit, 82 feet in height, in which claims were sluiced by hydraulic power.

The life of a miner could be dangerous, as reported by the Sacramento Daily Union of March 16, 1857, which stated that Mr. Tomlinson barely escaped death while standing on the edge of a cut bank on his mining property. A cave-in swept him down and away, a distance of over sixty feet. He was

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"Tomlinson" continued from page 3

quickly rescued with only minor injuries, not a moment too soon, as another slide quickly followed, which would have likely proved fatal to Tomlinson and his rescuers.

Politics, Patriotism and Parole

Mr. Tomlinson was strongly opposed to the prospect of a civil war, and to any expansion of slavery. He supported John Bell, put forth by the Constitutional Union Party, in the 1860 presidential election, and was greatly disappointed by Lincoln's victory. By the fall of 1864, Tomlinson was making speeches regarding his preferred candidate for president, John C. Fremont. Buffalo's Daily Courier reported on one such event:

Oliver M. Tomlinson, from California, will speak for himself and country on the Terrace, in front of N. Boaserg's clothing store, Wednesday evening, Sept. 21st, and Thursday evening, Sept. 22^d, in reference to the qualifications of Abraham Lincoln, John C. Fremont, and Geo. B. McClellan for President of the United States.

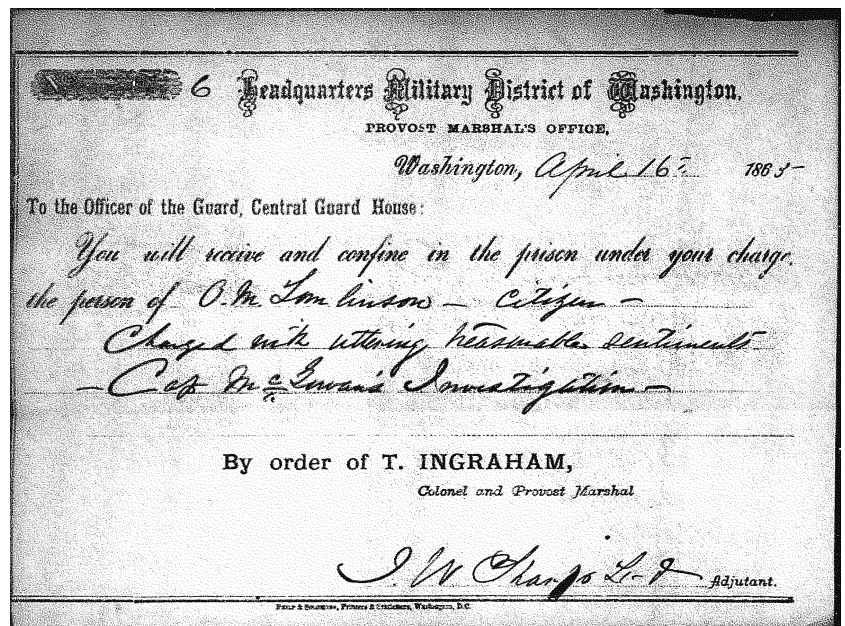
Tomlinson stood with the "Radical Republicans," hard-line abolitionists who railed against Lincoln's positions on slavery and reconciliation with the southern states. Ironically, Fremont terminated his campaign within days of Tomlinson's stump speech in Buffalo. Two months later, Lincoln was reelected, only to meet his death at the hand of John Wilkes Booth on April 14th, 1865. Although Booth and co-conspirators were still at large on April 16th, an unrelated arrest was made in New York City:

New-York Times: April 16

Intense Feelings of Sorrow

There is intense feeling in all parts of the city, and any man showing the least disrespect to the memory of the universally lamented dead, is sure to find rough treatment. One of the long-haired wandering preachers, named TOMLINSON, and hailing from Buffalo, while speaking at a soldier's camp, this afternoon, indulged in the remark that if the new President pursued Mr. Lincoln's policy he would meet Mr. Lincoln's fate in two weeks. He was immediately set upon by the soldiers, and only escaped severe bodily harm because he was at once arrested.

It is not known how long O.M. Tomlinson was held in custody by the Provost Marshal's Office in Washington, for "uttering heresable sentiments." Without a doubt, he hit the ground running when released. By March of 1866, his efforts were focused on changing the political structure of the nation through the creation of the "National Union People's Constitutional Party." Meetings were held in the Buffalo area,



Confinement orders related to the arrest of O.M. Tomlinson for "uttering heresable sentiments"

Provost Marshal's Office Records, 1865

envisioned as the national headquarters for the organization. Tomlinson spoke of "the necessity of a party which should rise above all political distinctions and unite upon the great fundamental principles of constitutional liberty for the preservation of the whole country." Mr. Tomlinson commissioned the publication of a booklet in Buffalo, also dated 1866, which detailed the principles of his new political party. A rare copy is located in the Historic Books Collection of the Buffalo Public Library. The "eccentric genius" Oliver M. Tomlinson died near Buffalo in 1867.

Fairport Historical Museum

18 Perrin Street, Fairport, NY 14450

The museum is open to the public on Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays--on the hours listed below. If you want to do research or have other needs at the museum on other days and/or times, you may make an appointment. Please call and leave a message at 223-3989.

HOURS

Sunday 2 pm - 4 pm
Tuesday 2 pm - 4 pm
Thursday 7 pm - 9 pm

Group tours, presentations and special projects are by appointment.

www.PerintonHistoricalSociety.org

Tomlinson's Celebration

*Reprinted with permission of the Nevada County
Historical Society – Volume 57, No. 4
October, 2003*

During the exciting Presidential campaign of 1860, Bell and Everett had no more enthusiastic supporter than O.M. Tomlinson, of Nevada City. Tomlinson was an eccentric genius who owned some water power near Sugar Loaf, that he had used in elevating and washing dirt. When his claim was exhausted he commenced the erection of a flour mill.

As the fourth of July began to draw nigh the idea of a celebration suggested itself to Tomlinson. He wrote four verses of a campaign song, and each noon drilled his workmen in its execution. Schmidt Schneider, a violinist, was engaged to play the air for the men, while saloonkeeper A.W. Potter acted as leader of the choir. The untuneful voices of the workmen grated so harshly upon the musician's ear that he would add his German imprecations to the general discord. At last came the long expected fourth and crowd of people. Judge Colburn read the Declaration of Independence, and then Tomlinson marshaled his host, before whom stood Potter with his baton and Schneider with his fiddle, for the crowning effort of the day. With many dexterous flourishes Schneider executed the well known air "Oh! Willie We Have Missed You," after which was sung with majestic wavings of the baton and ear-piercing discords of the choir four verses, of which the following is the only one tradition has preserved:

To Union True we will be brave, brave
to wave;

Here on the land of the free and our gift
from the brave

Why did you stray from home? I will tell you,
they "Pearced"* me away,

Till tears of fear had never come; they
"Bucked"* me hard to stay,

Till roaring came on the swell, with sound
cheerful, cheering, that,

For chosen choice was John Bell and
Edward Everett.

**References to the 14th and 15th Presidents, Franklin
Pearce and James Buchanan*



In this early 1930s photo, James Barranco proudly stands outside his store at 32 North Main Street in Fairport. His son, Charles, continues to operate the store today and kindly provided the Perinton Historical Society with a digital copy of the photo.

Looking for Old Photos

Do you have old photos of people or places in Perinton or Fairport? The Perinton Historical Society is always on the lookout for vintage photos of houses and other buildings, street scenes and people in our community. If you would be interested in sharing your photos, please contact me. I will digitally scan your photos and return the original prints to you, unless you prefer to simply donate the originals.

Contact me, Bill Poray, at 585.746.5905, or email me at wporay@rochester.rr.com.



Thank you

A big THANK YOU goes to Fairport High School, for donating a large number of FHS yearbooks from the early 1990s and later. PHS volunteer Gail Black noted that our extensive collection of local yearbooks lacked many recent issues, so Fairport High School stepped up to the plate with the donation!

~ Our Mission ~

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

Reverend Dr. John Peddie: Big City Minister and Founder of Peddie Springs

By William Keeler, Curator of the Fairport Museum

In the 1880s and 1890s people suffering from medical ailments would sometimes go and “take in the waters” at such well known spas as Saratoga Springs just north of Albany and Richmond Springs near Syracuse. These healthful and sometimes smelly waters would be available in bucolic locations and taken by the glassful or in baths in which patients would immerse themselves in these healing waters. Hotels were built to house patients, and several communities were founded around these springs. In the late 1880s John Peddie, a reverend from Philadelphia, had plans to develop a hotel and spa right here in Fairport, just west of the village around a spring next to Irondequoit Creek.

John Peddie was born May 24, 1838 in Ancaster, Ontario, Canada. He was of Scottish ancestry and grew up on a farm. At an early age, John Peddie was determined not to follow in his father’s footsteps. John was sent to Dundee Academy in Canada for an education. He received his religious calling at the academy when he heard a sermon from a Baptist preacher by the name of Reverend Hoyle. John was so affected by his sermon that he converted to the Baptist faith at the age of 17, much to the chagrin of his family who were not Baptists. John took religious studies at Madison College, later known as Colgate University, in Hamilton, New York. He graduated in 1862 at the age of 24. His first ministry was three years later in Watertown, New York where he was employed as a temporary pastor for the Watertown Baptist Church. His sermons made such an impression on the congregation that the church elders hired him as their new pastor several weeks later.

It was here in Watertown that he met his future wife Molly Wilson. They married in 1868. After their marriage he was called to be the pastor of the Baptist Church in Albany where he stayed for three years. His reputation as an excellent speaker spread, and he moved to the Fifth Baptist Church in Philadelphia where he stayed until 1878. Rev. Peddie served in Chicago from 1878 to 1880 and then moved to be the pastor of one of the largest Baptist Churches in the country, the First Church in New York City. In 1883 he returned to Philadelphia to head the Fifth Baptist Church there.

Reverend Peddie was an inspirational speaker. His sermons never sounded rehearsed and his message stressed the humanity of the Bible and its relationship to his congregation. Pastor Peddie so affected his audience with his sincerity and deep beliefs that he was known by his colleagues as a “Heart Preacher”. He gave at least two sermons a week and, in later



Molly Wilson Peddie and her husband John Peddie

*Photos from the archives
of the Perinton Historical Society*

life, committed them to memory. Besides his own ministry, he traveled frequently, giving sermons in neighboring cities and parishes in the northeast. He gave the evening sermon at the dedication of the Fairport Baptist Church in 1876 and frequently spoke in Fairport while on vacation. He believed in temperance and made sermons in support of that movement.

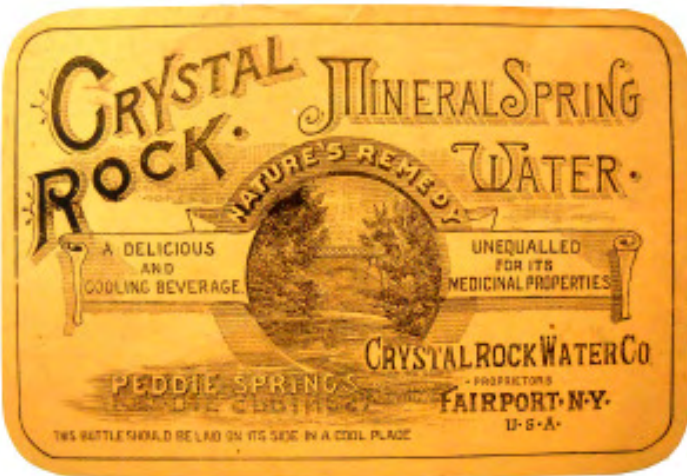
By the 1880s John Peddie’s health began to fail. He was stricken with catarrh, which affected his throat and bronchial passages. He and his family would take extended vacations in the summer in Cape Cod, northern New York and later Fairport. At the time of John’s health problems, Molly’s parents, George and Matilda Wilson, moved to Fairport. George is listed in the directories of the time as a soap manufacturer. The Wilson family had a house at 113 West Church Street and the Peddies became boarders there for the summer. The census of 1880 shows nine people living in this small house. Dr. Peddie commissioned architect John Rochester Thomas to design an addition to the house in 1887 to give the Wilsons and the Peddies more room. Later the old section of the house was removed and a new structure added on.

While walking in the woods in Perinton in 1885, John came across a hunter who told of a spring next to Irondequoit Creek which was known for its unusual qualities. It was used by animals as a salt lick and local people knew of its curative powers. Dr. Peddie investigated the spring, which was found on the Worthing Farm on Fairport-Rochester Road, just west of

Continued on page 7



Horse drawn wagon used in Fairport to deliver the "King of Table Waters"



This Crystal Rock label includes an image of the train trestle, eventually replaced by the stone arch bridge on Sunset Trail just south of Fairport Road

Photograph and label both from the Fairport Museum archives

the village. There, beside the creek, was a free-flowing spring bubbling out of the ground. John put a barrel around the spring to keep the ground water from contaminating water flowing up. After sampling the spring water, he felt invigorated, and upon further investigation of the area, found five more springs on the property. John decided to try to buy one of the mineral springs and develop it into a business for an investment and as a source of relief for his own health issues.

Being a minister, even in a big city, John Peddie was not a wealthy man. He needed a group of investors to acquire the rights to the spring. One member of Reverend Peddie's congregation in Philadelphia was John Stetson, manufacturer of the famous Stetson hat. Through John Stetson, he met Henry DeLand, who had investment dealings with Stetson in

DeLand, Florida. Through that contact, John became friends with Henry's nephew and fellow Baptist Levi DeLand, who was one of the richest men in Fairport and owner of the DeLand Chemical Works. Levi, along with several Fairport and Philadelphia investors, set up the Crystal Rock Water Company. The company began to sell shares for \$100 each. Through the sale of stock, the company was able to buy 17 acres of land bordering both sides of Irondequoit Creek from the Worthing brothers.

Levi ordered the first tests of the water by sending samples to Dr. Lattimore of the University of Rochester and more samples to Washington D.C. The results showed one spring having a high concentration of minerals in the water and the other four were labeled "iron springs". The water from the mineral spring was advertised to aid in digestion, relieve headaches, regulate the bowels, strengthen the kidneys, quiet the nerves and tone the system. By 1889 Peddie Spring Water was being sold by the barrel and bottle. A pavilion and bath house were being built and the idea of a hotel and special transportation accommodations were being considered with the hope that Peddie Springs would someday become the Saratoga Springs of western New York.

Dr. Peddie's vision never came to pass. In January of 1890 John Peddie had a slight stroke. The following summer Rev. Peddie spent his vacation in Fairport and was improving with aid of the healthful water from his spring. On January 3rd, 1891 John Peddie died of paralysis at the age of 53. He was in New York City at the time and had just finished his second sermon for the next day. Then, after eating an orange, he suffered a heart attack and fell to the floor. He was discovered, still alive, by a family member several hours later. Reverend John Peddie was bed ridden for several days before finally passing on.

The Crystal Rock Spring Water Company continued on into the early 20th century. The company sold its water by the barrel and in stone or glass bottles. The company used wagons for local deliveries. The property was developed into a park-like setting with boats on the creek, and a pavilion. Walter Parce ran the operation, and the stock continued to pay dividends into the early 1900s. Molly Peddie owned a single share of stock in memory of her dead husband.

A hotel and special transportation were never realized, as health spas and healing waters were being replaced by better medical practices. In 1907 the open trestle that carried the West Shore Railroad across the northern section of the property and Irondequoit Creek was filled in with dirt effectively cutting off access to the spring from Fairport Road. Today the property and spring are part of Perinton's Crystal Springs subdivision.





Preserving History Today for Tomorrow

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FAIRPORT Then and Now



James Barranco
in his store at 32 North Main Street,
probably early 1930s



Charles Barranco,
son of James, 80 years later.
Barranco's has been a fixture in Fairport
for almost 100 years.