

THE DELAND FAMILY

Part One

Minerva DeLand School, DeLand Acres, the DeLand Center, the DeLand Hose Company, DeLand Park A and B. . . Clearly the DeLand family had had a major impact on the village of Fairport.

Early DeLands were most likely Huguenots who fled persecution in the early 1600's, going to England, Holland, and areas in eastern Europe. Claude Charles DeLand, born in France, was probably the first DeLand to come to America, and he settled in Massachusetts in the mid 1600's with his family, including sons Benjamin, John, and Philip. Within three generations, the DeLand family had turned up in Candor, New York, where Joseph and Mary (Mercy) Lamb settled with their 13 children. Four of those children, Charles, Joel, Joseph, and Levi came to live, for varying periods of time, in the Fairport area. Charles served as the third pastor of Fairport's First Baptist Church before moving to Michigan. Joel moved to Fairport in 1829 and lived in a house on South Main Street. He owned property in town and worked as a carriage-maker and inventor. Joseph married his wife Sally Baker in Fairport, but he too soon moved on to Michigan. Levi moved near Fairport around 1851. He was married twice, first to Hannah Brown, with whom he had six children, and secondly to Electa Tracy Wilmarth, with whom he had nine children.

Levi's children and their descendants would have a significant impact on the community of Fairport. Sons Charles and William were involved with canal-related business, both at one time or another owning packet boats. Son Joel, following the family tradition of involvement in the Baptist Church, served as a missionary in the Black Hills, and subsequently settled in Michigan as had a number of other relatives.

Daniel, Levi's third son, went to sea on a whaling ship and then served as a packet boat captain on the Erie Canal. While plying the canal he met Minerva Parce, whose parents had a small "ashery" business in Norwich, New York. After marriage and a short sojourn in Wisconsin, Daniel and Minerva returned to Norwich, where Minerva's parents, Justus and Betsey Parce, taught them the business of manufacturing saleratus, or baking soda, from wood ashes. Early settlers were happy to sell ashes, of which they usually had an overabundance, often making more profit from them than from their crops. In 1852, after their apprenticeship at Norwich and two trips to Europe to study methods of saleratus production, Daniel and Minerva moved to Fairport. At first they manufactured saleratus in their kitchen from the ashes that Daniel collected from area farmers and brought home in his wagon. By 1854, the business had outgrown the house and moved to a group of buildings on Main Street just north of the canal on the east side. In 1856, the DeLands moved into a house they had built at 185 North Main Street, which they surrounded with gardens and trees, a windmill, a gazebo, and summerhouses. In addition to running his business, Daniel, known as Judge DeLand after his appointment to the bench of the local judiciary in Rochester, was also active in the Democratic party and the Baptist Church. After his untimely death in 1872 after falling down an elevator shaft at the factory, his brother Henry and his son Levi took over the business.

The DeLand Chemical Company put Fairport on the industrial map. Daniel's brother Henry proved to be a highly successful salesman for the business, traveling all over the country. Under his leadership after the death of his brother, the company became the largest manufacturer of saleratus and soda in the nation. Between 1853 and 1874, sales went from \$9,000 to \$500,000, and the company's "Cap Sheaf Soda" brand became a common household item. Unfortunately, the 1890's did not bring continued growth. A disastrous fire in 1893 leveled the factory, and although the company rebuilt, due to increased competition and rising costs, it was not able to sustain itself and closed in 1903.

Despite the closure of the business, the DeLand family continued to be a significant influence in Fairport.



Daniel B. DeLand



Minerva Parce DeLand