

## **Best News in Fifty Years**

### **Rochester Manufacturing Company Chooses Fairport**

By Bill Poray, Perinton Town Historian

The headline in Fairport's local newspaper in March of 1957 announced a story so important, so big, it was proclaimed the best news in fifty years. After months of negotiations, a major manufacturer announced plans for the opening of a new factory in Perinton. Rochester Manufacturing Company (RMC), established in 1916, revealed plans to move its operations from Rockwood Street in Rochester to a new location in Fairport. A manufacturer of gauges for many industries, the company was planning for projected growth, which would result in as many as 600 jobs at the new Fairport factory.



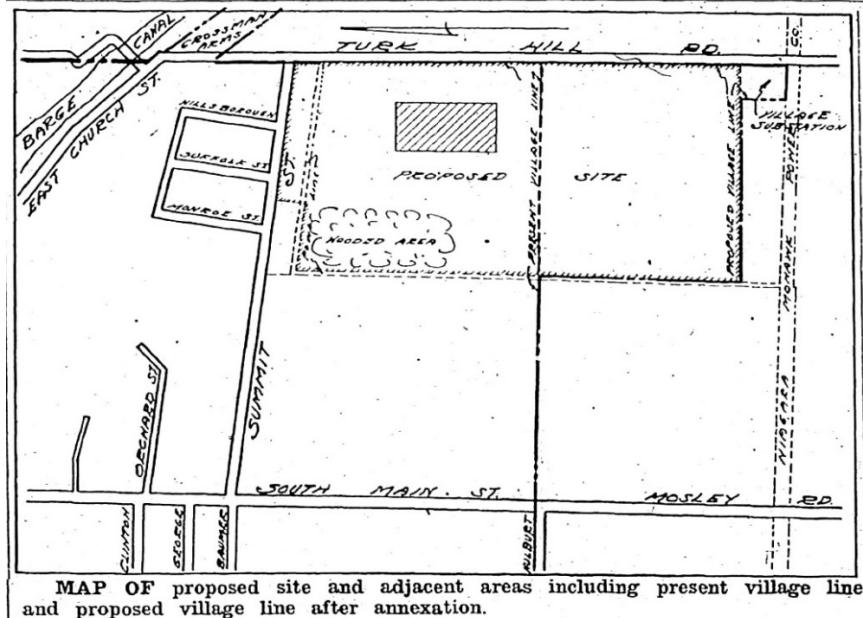
The land for the planned factory had been the farm of Charles Plumb, and was later owned by the Donk family. Most of the property was outside of the village, and municipal representatives worked with the company to annex the entire parcel into the village, primarily so that it would be included in plans for a new sewer system.

Not long after the announcement of the new factory, an ill-timed recession swept across the United States and other countries. The economic downturn was short, but had an impact on plans for the new factory. In May of 1958, Rochester Manufacturing Company stated that the company's plans were being perfected by architects and plant designers. However, financing problems had cropped up, and future plans were contingent upon an anticipated improved business climate. A company spokesperson stated at the time that RMC "suffered like most" in the recession of 1958, and said "It was a period of readjustment and realignment."

Soon rumors began to spread that the “best news in fifty years” might never materialize. RMC maintained the company line, and said groundbreaking at the Fairport site would occur “as soon as certain projections materialize.” When asked if their plans were to utilize the entire 67-acre site, a company spokesman replied, “If a proper and compatible industry elected to choose the area they would be inclined to provide land for them. After all, our blueprints call for the utilization of a maximum of 25 acres at present.”

THE HERALD-MAIL, FAIRPORT, N. Y.

March 21, 1957



*Map of the proposed site of the RMC factory, published in the Fairport Herald-Mail on March 21, 1957.*



*A recent satellite image of the 67-acre Summit Heights subdivision.*



*The Plumb farmhouse was destroyed by fire in April of 1942. The home was located where Winding Brook Drive and Turk Hill Road intersect today.*

Thirty months after the announcement was made regarding the new factory in Fairport, the Rochester Manufacturing Company was absorbed by American Radiator & Sanitary Corporation. It was soon apparent that the plan for a new Fairport factory had disappeared. In August of 1962, the 67-acre parcel was re-zoned residential, and construction of homes began on the former farmland, where for a few short years, a factory and 600 jobs had been planned. Over the next thirty years, approximately 160 houses were built on the old Plumb farm, where hundreds of village residents live today.

*Published October 12, 2017 in the Monroe County Post*