

DeLand Fire Sparked Establishment of Village Water Works - Conclusion

By Bill Poray, Perinton Town Historian

After a devastating fire in February of 1893, Fairport established a municipal water system as a means to combat future blazes, and to provide water to properties throughout the village. In the previous column, I shared details regarding the first water tower on Summit Street, called a standpipe. Built in 1893 of cast iron, the original 300,000-gallon standpipe was removed by January of 1931. A Rochester company paid \$25.00 for the privilege of demolishing it for the value of the scrap metal.

Plans were developed for a significantly larger 750,000-gallon standpipe to be built on the same site as the one recently removed. The Petroleum Iron Works Company of Sharon, Pennsylvania was hired for the project. The old cast iron structure was replaced with a riveted steel design. The concrete foundation of the old standpipe was enlarged to accommodate the greater diameter of the new vessel.



1940s aerial view looking northwest, with Summit Street in the lower left corner. The 105-foot standpipe towers over nearby houses and Mount Pleasant cemetery.

Early on the morning of April 7th, 1931, Municipal Commission Superintendent Staniland Scarth and a crew of eleven men began adding to the circumference of the existing foundation of the old standpipe. A concrete mixer owned by local mason Claude Lumbar of Dewey Avenue was put to good use, as the additional foundation required eleven tons of crushed stone, twenty yards of sand, and 398 sacks of cement. 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.



The standpipe on Summit Street (upper left corner) could be seen from vantage points all around the community. This photo was taken from the roof of the Box Factory building.

High atop 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 stood on the site from 1931 to June of 2016.

The second standpipe on Summit Street served its purpose from 1931 to 2004, when the Monroe County Water Authority began to operate Fairport's water system. The 85-year-old water tower was made obsolete, and was recently dismantled. In total, the two standpipes stood on the Summit Street location for 123 years, from 1893 to 2016.