

Dock Master's Office Has a Long History

Bill Poray, Perinton Town Historian

Perched on a small rise above boats large and small docked along the south bank of the Erie Canal in Fairport is a reminder of transportation from a century ago. From 1906 to 1931, the Rochester, Syracuse and Eastern (R.S. & E.) inter-urban trolley was an important component of our local transportation system. The trolley provided residents with an inexpensive, fast and relatively reliable transportation to Rochester and other nearby communities.



After restoration was completed, the former R. S. & E. waiting station was transported on July 22, 1992 to its new home.

Along with the village's former trolley station at 23 North Main Street, now a real estate office, the R.S. & E. installed nine small neighborhood waiting stations along the trolley route through Perinton, and in other towns all along the route. Each was of a similar design, with eight sides, and large brackets supporting a steeply pitched roof.

The former trolley waiting station received a new wood-shake roof and other restored components in 2019.



Over thirty years ago, while on a history tour, Bill and Helen Matthews discovered the deteriorating remains of an R.S. &E. waiting station, known as Stop 22, along the former trolley route just east of Perinton. Used by the property owner as a shed, Bill Matthews successfully negotiated a deal with the property owner to replace the old station with a newly built shed. With the experience of his family business, Matthews House Moving Company, Matthews arranged to have the little building moved to the West Church Street yard of local historian Matson Ewell. With a place to work, and with the help of Ewell, Matthews proceeded to restore the former station, replacing damaged and rotted components.

After restoration was complete, in July of 1992 the former trolley waiting station was on the move once again. The trip from Matson Ewell's yard to its new home on the Erie Canal was about one mile. Soon after, a dedication ceremony was held, coinciding with the 125th anniversary celebration of the village of Fairport. Mayor Clark King represented the village in thanking both Bill Matthews and Matson Ewell for their efforts.



With a newly enhanced enthusiasm for local history, Bill Matthews became active in the Perinton Historical Society and Museum at 18 Perrin Street, and ultimately served as its president until his death in 2003. The trolley station obtained and restored by Matthews has been a beautiful and useful asset along the Erie Canal, located between the Parker Street and Main Street bridges. A familiar part of the landscape for almost thirty years, the former Stop 22 received a new roof and other restored components in 2019, helping to assure it will remain a part of the community for years to come.

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