

ELISHA FULLAM & FULLAM'S BASIN

In the early 19th century, the area around the Fairport Road bridge and Perinton Park was known as Fullam's Basin. The first Elisha Fullam was born in 1789, probably in Harvard, Massachusetts. Grandfather Elisha had served in the Revolutionary War as had father Elisha. Elisha Jr. married Mary Willard in 1774. They and their six children moved to Walpole, New Hampshire, and Cooperstown, New York, before settling in the area of Northfield that would become Penfield. Son Elisha purchased 56 acres of land there from Daniel Penfield.

Elisha III married Elizabeth Butler, daughter of Stephen Butler and granddaughter of Zebulon Butler, Revolutionary War veteran in 1811. In 1812, father Elisha deeded 28 acres of his Penfield property to his son for \$310. Elisha and Betsy must have lived in Penfield for a time because they don't appear in Perinton until 1822. In 1821 they sold part of the land to Henry Wood and by 1829 they had sold all their Penfield holdings.

In 1825, Elisha and Betsy built a hotel and warehouse just west of the Erie Canal on the Fairport-Rochester Road; hence the name "Fullam's Basin." Apparently there was already a structure in the area since the first Perinton post office opened in Fullam's Basin in 1822 with John Hartwell, soon followed by Elisha Fullam, as postmasters. It was an excellent site for business. At the time, travelers often found it more convenient and faster to disembark from canal boats at "Fullam's Basin" and take the stagecoach into the city of Rochester.

Business in Fullam's Basin prospered only for a short time; as the village of Fairport gradually won out as the center of commercial activity. The village had a north-south road which allowed farmers to bring in wagon loads of goods to ship out on the canal and the railroad was looking at routes through the village of Fairport. In addition, after the completion of the Great Embankment between Bushnell's Basin and Pittsford, which then opened the entire canal, passengers no longer disembarked in Fullam's Basin to travel into Rochester. And in 1829 the post office moved into the village of Fairport. Consequently, by the 1830's Fullam began selling off pieces of his land.

Elisha and his family are listed in the 1830 Perinton census and are on the 1836 tax list as having 162 acres of land worth \$2788 in lots 52 and 53, in the vicinity of the Canal and Fairport Road. Elisha is listed as an overseer of highways in 1824, and as a parent of four children in school district #2 in 1831. The Fullams had ten children, eight of whom reached adulthood and two of whom remained in Perinton. Otis and Lemuel are both listed in the 1850 census; Lemuel also appears in the 1855 and 1865 census lists. Elisha Fullam died at the age of 52 in 1841 (or possibly 1846). Betsy, Elisha's widow, is listed in the 1850 census as living with son Lemuel. Betsy died in 1861 and both are buried in Oakwood Cemetery in Penfield.

By 1850 the house/store by the canal had been moved into the village of Fairport to 10 East Church Street and was home to a number of families and a series of renters until being bought and refurbished by the present owners. A state historic marker commemorates the history of the building. Another marker just to the east of the Fairport Road bridge remembers Elisha Fullam. It reads:

Fullam's Basin
Early rival of Fairport
Named for Elisha Fullam
From this settlement Erie
Canal Passengers often
Took the stage to Rochester