

## Heroics on the Canal at Fullamtown

*By Bill Poray, Perinton Town Historian*

Entered into the record of the New York State Assembly 120 years ago is the name of a young woman from Fairport, recognized for heroism in her role in saving the lives of her sisters and a cousin. She also happened to be a member of one of Fairport's most prominent families. Her name was Mary "Maime" DeLand.



*Mary Lewis "Mamie" DeLand,  
daughter of Levi and Mary  
DeLand (1878-1967).*

It all started with a carriage ride from the opulent family home of Levi and Mary DeLand and their many children, situated on a six-hundred acre estate. Built in 1888, the massive home on the northeast corner of Main Street and Whitney Road was reportedly built with almost fifty rooms and thirty-five fireplaces. It was here that twenty-year old Mary "Mamie" DeLand gathered four of her sisters, ranging in age from two to seventeen years, and with eighteen-year-old cousin Anna Hubbell at the reins, set off on a horse-drawn carriage ride through the streets of Fairport.

*The home of Levi and Mary DeLand and their many children. After his death in 1904, it became the Fairport Baptist Home. What at one time was considered one of Monroe County's most impressive homes was torn down in 1971, to make room for an expansion of the Fairport Baptist Home.*



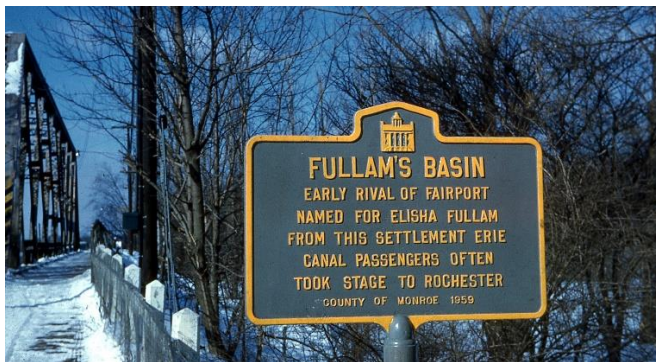
The trouble started when the carriage and six occupants reached the canal bridge at West Church Street, known as Fullamtown at the time. While crossing the bridge, something spooked the horse, causing it to reverse its path. The rear of the wagon broke through the guardrail, and tumbled down the embankment to the canal, along with the horse. Mabel and Mamie, holding baby Ruth,

were able to jump from the carriage before it fell to the canal below. However, Anna Hubbell, along with five-year-old Stella and Oneita, sixteen, fell with the horse and carriage into the canal. Mamie helped guide Anna and Oneita as they reached safety on the shore, but young Stella was helpless, floundering in the water.



*A view looking to the east, of the canal bridge in use at Fullamtown from 1886 until its replacement in 1903.*

A proficient swimmer, Mamie DeLand dove into the murky canal, swam to her struggling sister and brought the little girl to shore, saving her life. Soon after, John Culhane and Starr Northrop happened to pass by, and escorted the exhausted group to nearby homes on West Church Street. Members of the Worthing and Burnham families cared for them, until a carriage arrived to retrieve them, sent by their grandmother, Mrs. Daniel B. DeLand.



*Historic marker at Fullamtown, at the point where the west end of West Church Street crosses over the Erie Canal. At the far-left in this photo is a portion of a Barge Canal-era bridge, installed in 1913 and replaced in 1974.*

Several months later, Mamie DeLand received recognition for her heroism by the Volunteer Life Savings Corps of New York Inland Waters. She was awarded a specially engraved medal to commemorate the event, and a congratulatory letter from New York State Senator and former Rochester Mayor Cornelius R. Parsons, for her “daring and successful act on that memorable day of October last, when you saved from drowning three of your younger sisters.”