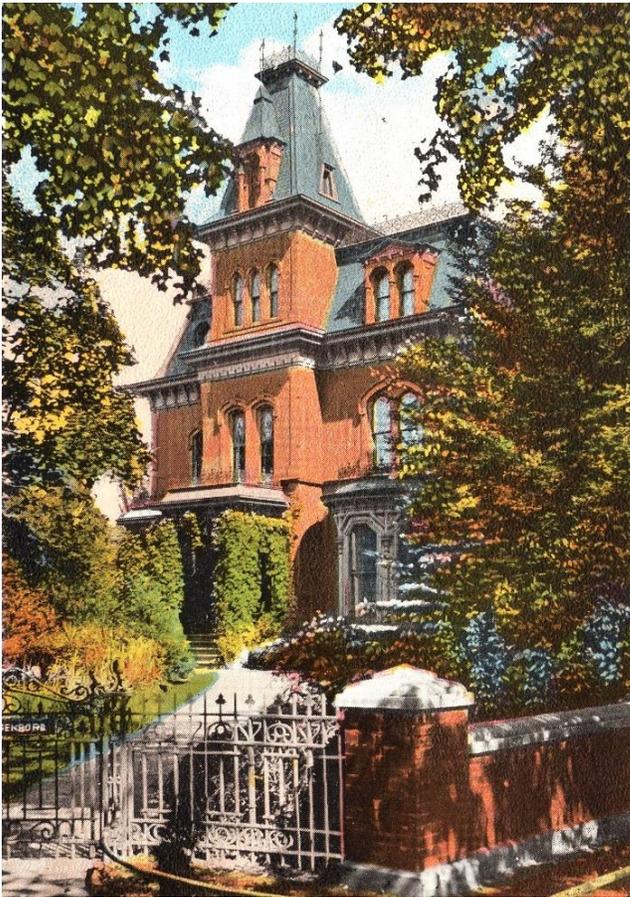


The Brief Residency of a Wealthy European

By Bill Poray, Perinton Town Historian

There was excitement in the air in the spring of 1910, as word spread that a fabulously wealthy industrialist from Denmark had purchased the DeLand mansion. Victor and Francellia Holmes arrived in the village in August, and immediately made substantial improvements to the former home of Henry and Sara Parce DeLand.



The DeLand mansion, named Villa Rosenborg by Victor and Francellia Holmes in 1910. During their ownership, they added the brick wall and iron gates, and stripped the exterior of paint.

The enormous house cost DeLand a fortune to build in 1874 and 1875, and incorporated the finest materials imported from Europe. However, after 35 years and several owners, the house was in a sad state of repair. Victor Holmes had the paint stripped from the exterior brick, added new plumbing and heating systems, and redecorated most of the thirty or so rooms.

Victor and Francellia brought a vast accumulation of art and fine furnishings to their new home, and named their showplace Villa Rosenborg, after an esteemed estate in Denmark. The mansion became the site of parties and celebrations for those in Fairport's elite social circle.

In the spring of 1911, Victor Holmes began clearing the area behind the mansion, for the installation of ornate gardens and a greenhouse. The gardens were considered to be among the finest in western New York, with a wide variety of roses, carnations, geraniums, and exotic orchids from around the world. An old barn on the property was dismantled, sold to a man who reused the lumber in a house he was building on West Church Street.



Postcard of the former DeLand mansion, known as Villa Rosenberg when owned by Victor and Francellia Holmes.

With winter setting in, the Holmes family set sail for Mediterranean ports aboard the White Star Line steamer, the *Adriatic*. Throughout their travels, postcards received by the Fairport newspapers gave updates on exotic locales visited by the family, including the Madeira Islands, Gibraltar, Algiers, Naples, and several stops in Italy and France. A card from January of 1912 stated, “We are now at the French Riviera enjoying the beautiful climate in charming surroundings, and send you and other Fairport friends our kindest remembrances.”

The family returned to Fairport in the spring of 1912, but their stay was brief, and once again were on their way to Europe. By autumn, they returned to their Fairport mansion, but by November 62-year-old Victor Holmes was deathly ill. A team of physicians failed to revive the wealthy industrialist, and Fairport bid farewell to Victor Holmes after his short but memorable residency in the village.

Victor Holmes was born in Denmark, and indeed made a fortune in Europe in his later years. However, mourning Fairport residents might have been surprised to learn that he spent much of his life in Jamestown, NY, where he toiled as a paint salesman and maker of signs.