

### From Fullam's Basin to Perinton Park (Part 1)

The recent rerouting of O'Connor Road adjacent to Perinton Park to align with Jefferson Avenue at Fairport Road provides a good opportunity to dig into the history of this area of Perinton. There have been many changes to the parcel of land where Perinton Park now resides, once part of the early canal hamlet known as Fullam's Basin. Neither Fairport nor Perinton had a public park at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Private property was used for public recreation, such as Schummer's lot, located along the canal where residents of Packet Boat Drive reside today. Another private park was owned by the Deland family, later developed into streets with the names Deland Park A and Deland Park B.

Plans to widen and deepen the canal in the early 1900s resulted in slightly rerouting the waterway just west of the village of Fairport. Prior to the Barge Canal project, the old canal bridge at Fairport Road, what had been the heart of Fullam's Basin, was a bit further west than the current bridge. Until 1913, the canal crossed through the center of the land which is occupied by Perinton Park today. Village maps from 1902 and 1924 show the changes in the canal's route.



Photo from December of 1912 shows a lift bridge at Fairport Road. The detail in the upper right corner reveals the trolley underpass, still visible today in the railroad bank behind the CVS store.

In the 1920s, the state land which had been occupied by the canal became neglected. What would later become a beautiful municipal park was an informal dump for nearby residents, and an overgrown, soggy jungle of undesirable vegetation. The railroad tracks of the Rochester, Syracuse and Eastern bordered the abandoned canal land, and Stop 12 brought trolley passengers within a stone's throw of the discarded mattresses, automobiles and other junk where previously the canal had flowed. Today the path of O'Connor Road by Perinton Park approximates the route taken by the trolley. A remnant of the trolley's infrastructure still exists in the woods behind the new CVS store at the corner of O'Connor and Fairport Roads. The masonry outline of an underpass can be clearly seen, the passageway blocked off before most of us were born. The underpass allowed trolley cars to travel under the tracks of the elevated West Shore Railroad. Cast into the stone at the top of the structure is the year 1907.

Next: A depression-era park is created and lost

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