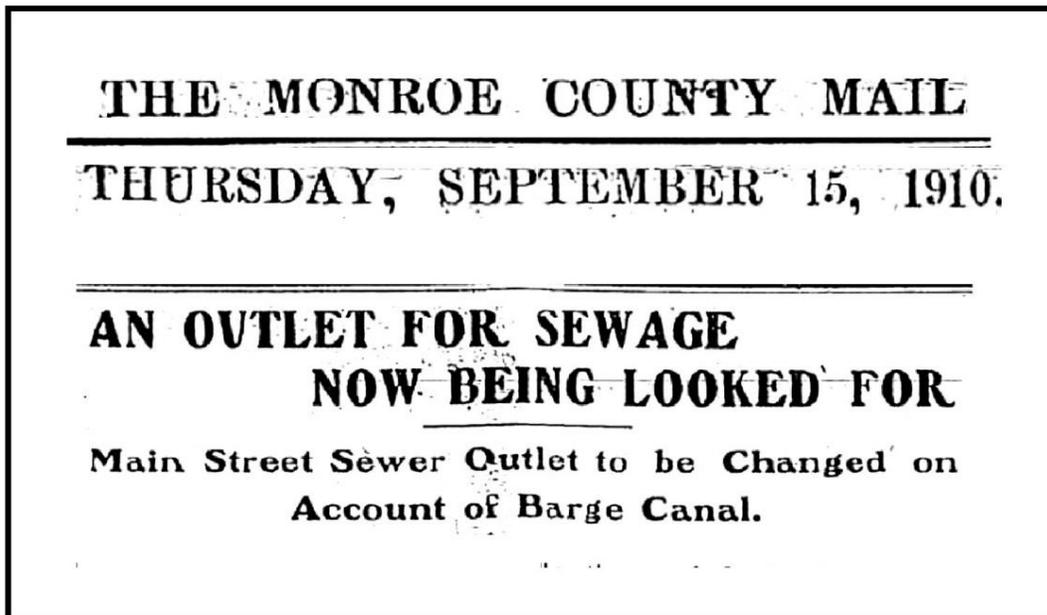


## State Skewers Stinky Sewers (Part 2 - conclusion)

By Bill Poray, Perinton Town Historian

Preparations by the Kerbaugh company in 1910 related to the construction of the enlarged Barge Canal brought to light the fact that Fairport sewers had dumped their contents into Thomas Creek and the canal for several years. After the state was notified by Kerbaugh, Fairport President Richard L. Saunders received a stern letter from Winslow M. Mead of the state's Department of Public Works. Mead confirmed that the practice was in "direct violation of the law", and advised the village to "take steps without delay to find some other outlet for these sewers." Mead closed his letter by saying that if the village did not quickly implement a solution, "It will be necessary to cut the sewers off arbitrarily and abruptly, and such steps might in a way be detrimental to your local public interests."



President Saunders assured the state that Fairport would implement a timely solution to the sewage problem, and the local newspaper urged citizens to support the expenditures necessary to build a modern sewer system, complete with the construction of a "disposal plant". But that didn't happen. Citizens voted down the first proposed expenditure of \$1,000 to hire an engineer to design the system. The urgency of implementing a sewage solution was given a reprieve when Kerbaugh's project to build the concrete walls was delayed, as was the replacement lift bridge.



*1913 view of the new concrete wall on the south side of the canal. Construction of the wall, part of the Barge Canal project, forced the village to cease dumping sewage into the canal.*

After two years of inactivity in which sewage continued to be dumped in the canal and Thomas Creek, village residents faced reality. Construction of the new canal walls and installation of the lift bridge was imminent, and delaying the inevitable was no longer an option. Village trustees worked with an engineer to hammer out a design for a new sewer system. They provided their plan at a public meeting held in March of 1913. The Monroe County Mail provided this summary: “To meet this condition and care for the sewage on both sides of the village, the village authorities and village engineer have perfected a plan providing for an intercepting sewer, taking the sewage from both the North and South Side trunk sewers and carrying it to a point in the western part of the village where a disposal plant will be located. This plan has the sanction of the State Commissioner (Eugene H.) Porter.”

The public came out in full support of the village plan, and construction of Fairport’s new sewer system was expedited, much to the relief of citizens and canal bathers alike.

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