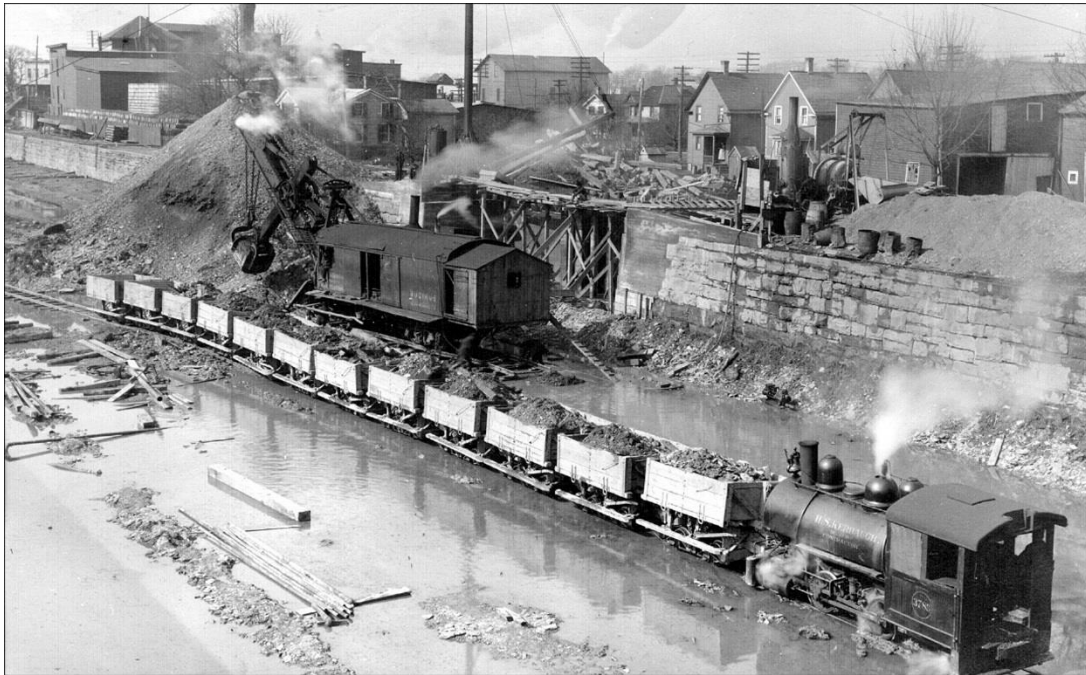


## Washout at the John Street Waste Weir

By Bill Poray, Perinton Town Historian

In May of 2014 heavy rains caused the Erie Canal to overwhelm the waste weir located on the north bank of the canal, just west of the Parker Street bridge. The waste weir has manually operated valves used to regulate the flow of water from the canal through a channel that leads to Thomas Creek. The 2014 flood caused Lift Bridge Lane to be covered in water for a while, and area basements flooded. Area restaurants suffered some damage, but were soon back in business.



*Barge Canal construction including rebuilding the waste weir (center of image just above steam shovel) on the north bank of the canal in Fairport. The backs of home on John Street, later called State Street, now Lift Bridge Lane, are visible.*

The flooding of 2014 was not the first for the Fairport waste weir. Another, in January of 1913, occurred when construction of the Barge Canal project was underway. In order to allow work to proceed in the canal, a temporary dam had been built to the east of Fairport in the vicinity of the Lyndon Road bridge. The dam held back what little water was in the canal after it had been drained for the season. However, very heavy snows and rain caused the water to quickly rise and it soon overwhelmed the temporary dam, resulting in a fast-moving wall of water headed westward toward Fairport. According to a report in the Monroe County Mail, "...the dam gave out entirely and the pent up waters rushed westward toward this village with a roar that could be heard for half a mile."



*Image from January 9<sup>th</sup>, 1913 of the washed out north wall of the canal at the waste weir, just west of the Parker Street bridge. The same location was the site of flooding in 2014.*

The miniature tidal wave arrived the village and continued westward. At Fullamtown, where Perinton Park is today, a temporary berm had been built across the canal as workers dismantled the old canal bridge and were installing its replacement. The berm had the effect of stopping the flow of the water, which quickly began to rise. Deterred by the Fullamtown berm, the frigid water backed up to the village.



*Men examine damage at the bridge at John Street caused by the flood of January 6<sup>th</sup>, 1913. Rochester, Syracuse & Eastern trolley tracks can be seen running down John Street.*

A night watchman was on patrol by the steam shovel excavating just west of the Main Street bridge, and it was said he nearly drowned in the rush of icy water before being rescued. The waste weir on the north bank, whose gates had been dismantled during the construction, was suddenly overcome with a rush. The water raced north, covered John Street, now Lift Bridge Lane, and the tracks of the Rochester, Syracuse and Eastern trolley, and joined forces with Thomas Creek. John Street basements filled with water, but the flooding soon subsided. Just as it did 101 years later, in the flood of 2014.

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