

## The Tenth Decade

### Overview

As Batavia approached the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, it solidified its development into an industrial community. Population growth continued, reaching a figure of 9,180 by 1900 (“Genesee County Information,” *Richmond Memorial Library*, online, accessed 3 January 2014). This represented an increase of 1,159 individuals since 1890. In general, the Village’s infrastructure appeared to keep pace with the expanding population. However, there was one glaring exception. The need for a modern public sewer system and treatment plant continued to go unaddressed.

As its second century drew near, Safford North provided a thumbnail sketch of Batavia that read as follows: “Several railroads pass through [the Village]; there are eight churches; [the Village has a] high grade union free school system with a high school; [there are] four banks; [there are] several hotels; [there is] the New York State Institution for the Blind; [there are] a library and an opera house; [there are] several important manufacturing concerns, two breweries, a malt house, and three steam laundries; [there are] two newspapers, one daily and one weekly; [there is] a business college, [there are] a Masonic lodge, two Odd Fellow lodges, and other secret societies; [there is] the Holland Land Office Museum; and [there are] an excellent system of water works and a fire department. (Safford E. North, *Our County and Its Peoples: A Descriptive and Biographical Record of Genesee County, New York* [Boston: Boston History Company, 1899])

### 1: Infrastructure

A consideration that might not occur to modern readers is that with dirt streets and horse-drawn vehicles, there can be a need for someone assigned to the duty of “cross walk cleaner.” In the 1890s, such a person was Henry Priester. *The Daily News* of May 1895 reported that the Village Trustees had provided Priester with a push cart having a garbage can suspended between the wheels and a frame with attachments for holding a hoe, broom, and sprinkling can. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 29 May 1895). The next year, the newspaper indicated that he had been provided with a new broom and hoe (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 April 1896). Unfortunately, there were occupational hazards connected to working in the streets. In 1899, Priester was knocked down by a passing horse while sweeping at Main and State streets. Fortunately, according to reports, he was uninjured. (“Mere Mention,” *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 14 November 1899)

Street names changed fairly often over the years. For example, in 1893, Church Street, no longer featuring a church, was renamed Jefferson Avenue after Village Trustees received a petition to that effect ( *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 19 October 1893). Considerable

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discussion occurred at one particular meeting of the Trustees in 1890 when one of the Trustees expressed the belief that there should be an immediate wholesale renaming of streets. For instance, he thought that Liberty and South Liberty streets should both be called Liberty Street; Hutchins Street and Lafayette Avenue simply Hutchins Street; and Maple and Bentley streets should both become Maple Street. (“To Extend Water Mains,” *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 24 May 1890)

We are used to having streets being illuminated during all the hours of darkness. However, that was not always the case. It wasn’t until 1891 that Village Trustees decided to leave street lights turned on throughout the night (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 September 1891).

Streets in Batavia wouldn’t be paved with a hard surface such as brick or asphalt until after the upcoming turn of the century. However, in this decade some streets received a coating of crushed stone. For example, in 1898, 2-1/2 miles of such a surface were laid down (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 3 October 1956).

Existing bridges required ongoing maintenance. For example, in 1898, the River Street bridge received new stringers and flooring (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 13 September 1898). A new bridge across the Tonawanda Creek was erected in 1900. Although connecting Law and Chestnut streets, it came to be known simply as “the Law Street bridge.” (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 September 1900)

Improvements were also made to the public water system. In May of 1891, the trustees voted to replace wood pipes with ones made of iron (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 7 May 1891). In June of that year, *The Daily News* reported that a freight car load of iron mains had arrived (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 16 June 1891).

Getting water of sufficient quality was not a simple matter. Recall in the previous chapter, a decision had been made to move the intake pipe for the water works further upstream to reduce the risk of drawing from polluted Creek water. In 1891, Alderman Swanson proposed building a dam in the old mill race at a point below where the water was now being drawn. He felt this would lead to cleaner water because it would increase the degree to which sediment would settle out before the water flowed to the pumps in the water works. (“After Cleaner Water,” *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 May 1891)

The effort to provide public water was driven by a number of factors. One of them was that drinking water from private wells was an “ever-present danger” where houses were located closely together and impurities were bound to find their way into the wells (“Sewerage in Batavia,” *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 19 May 1890). Another risk with private wells was the presence of natural gas. When Alderman Moynihan had a well at 4 Bank Street drilled through 25 ft. of rock to a depth of 55 ft., he encountered gas mixed with the water. Holding a match to a water faucet produced a flame several inches in length. (“Alderman Moynihan’s Well,” *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 February 1899) Some homeowners obtained water collected in basement cisterns fed by rain that fell on the roofs of their homes. But even here, there was

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risk. *The Daily News* of August 14, 1899 reported that Dr. Damon H. Palmer had been found dead in his basement cistern, an apparent victim of drowning (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 14 August 1899).

In the last chapter, it was noted that sewage often drained into open ditches and/or out onto the surrounding land. Sewage from the State School for the Blind ran out into a swamp to the north. Sewage from homes in the northeastern part of the Village drained into a ditch and out onto land owned by Hiram Swezey in the vicinity of present-day Eastown Plaza. Other homes north of Main Street discharged sewage into the “Big Ditch” that ran from the northeast area of the Village into Tonawanda Creek a little east of present-day South Lyon Street. Sewage was also running onto property owned by Trumbull Cary who, as a consequence, had sued the Village for \$20,000 in damages.

The State, to its credit, took measures to deal with sewage discharge from the State School for the Blind. In 1892, it hired Henry Homelius to develop plans for a sewage disposal plant on the campus. The plans provided for a structure 40 x 90 ft. in size and one story high. The side walls were to be 10 ft. above the foundation. A small portion of the front end of the building, facing south, was to be used as a storage room and sitting room for employees. The center portion of the building, under which were to be two sewage vats, was to be constructed with walls of solid masonry and 7-1/2 ft. below the main floor. An open floor was to be laid over the vats. The floor over the rear portion of the building, under which were to be valves and a small wheel, were to be 2-1/2 ft. above the center floor. According to the design, sewage was to enter the building under the front end and, after passing through screens and mixers, to be conveyed to the vats where it was to be chemically treated. The outlet was to be at the north end of the building. “Sewage Disposal Works,” *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 15 September 1892)

In 1893, the State Health Department asked the Village to stop pollution of the Creek (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 21 September 1893). It does not appear that any action resulted.

In 1895, the Batavia Board of Health condemned the “Big Ditch” and declared the section between Bank and Oak streets a nuisance with several cases of people becoming ill from the effluent. Village President Seacord and Health Officer LeSeur, while inspecting the ditch, found many places where private discharge pipes did not even extend clear to the ditch. As a temporary measure, the Sewer Commission was ordered to see that private pipes were fully extended. Meanwhile, Ellicott Avenue area residents demanded that the ditch be covered. (“Big Ditch a Nuisance,” *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 5 June 1895)

In May of 1900, Dr. Thomas A. Killip of the State Health Department visited Batavia and inspected the Village’s water and sewer facilities. Killip also visited the homes where there had been cases of diphtheria. At the conclusion of his inspections, he declared that it was damnable that a village like Batavia should allow such an entirely inadequate and wholly defective sewerage system to exist and expressed a wonder that there had not been much

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more sickness. Something must be done at once, he insisted. (“Sewerage in Batavia,” *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 May 1900).

Up to this time, another issue that had apparently been left pretty much to the individual property owner was the disposal of trash. The matter appears to have first been addressed in 1892 when someone referred to by the name of Expressman Trietly was chosen to haul away garbage twice each week. This action was taken in accordance with a resolution by the Board of Health. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 29 July 1892) The newspaper report noting this action did not indicate where the garbage was being taken, but judging from later accounts in following decades, the destination was likely somewhere on private land.

### 2: Transportation

The popularity of bicycles continued to soar during the 1890s. In 1894, two individuals, simply identified as “Russell and Palmer,” were reported to have the first tandem bicycle seen in Batavia (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 June 1894). They may have been businessmen selling bicycles. In the same year, the appeal of bicycles to both males and females was indicated by an observation in *The Daily News* that there were several “lady cyclists” to be seen riding in bloomers (“Mere Mention,” *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 29 August 1894). Bloomers were a form of clothing much more conducive to bicycling than traditional women’s apparel. By 1896, a local retailer, John Secord, was complaining that people were not buying carriages, but buying bicycles instead (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 11 November 1896). As the next century rolled around, the League of American Wheelmen was promoting the idea of a “side path” (what we would call a “bike path”) through Batavia from New York City to Chicago (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 4 April 1900).

The first automobile “to be seen” in Batavia was reportedly on May 23<sup>rd</sup> of 1899 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 May 1899). It was a “hydro-carbon carriage” manufactured by the Winton Motor Carriage Company of Cleveland, Ohio. On an excursion from Cleveland to New York City via Rochester, it rolled across the Walnut Street bridge at 11:45 a.m. and turned east on West Main Street. Dozens of Batavians had been standing along Main Street since early morning, waiting for the vehicle’s arrival. One wonders how many of them recognized that this latest invention would soon doom the popularity of bicycles. (Mark Graczyk, “Hidden History—Notable Batavia Firsts, 1899—1954,” *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 19 July 2014)

The next year, Ray Otis bought a gasoline-powered automobile in New York City and had it delivered to Batavia, presumably by rail. *The Daily News* reported its arrival in its edition of May 5<sup>th</sup>, 1900. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 12 April 1900; *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 5 May 1900)

During those earliest days of the automobile, local residents sometimes made an attempt to build their own. For example, in September of 1900, it was reported that Robert L. Cooley had nearly completed a homemade automobile that ran nicely and had proved to be a success. It

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had a gasoline engine and two gears forward, giving it a top speed of about 30 mph on smooth roads. There was also a reversing gear and a brake. Altogether, it weighed 700 pounds. A year later, Cooley and D. W. Tomlinson, Jr. built a steam-powered automobile. (Larry Barnes, *Bicycles Built by the Cooley Brothers* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published, 2011] p. 4)

Railroads continued to play their dominant role in travel of any significant distance. Safford North described the local rail lines as follows. In 1899, the railroads passing through Batavia included the main line of the New York Central and Hudson River Railroad and extended in general southwesterly and northeasterly through the central part of town. The Tonawanda branch of the same railroad extended east to west through the central part of town. The Canandaigua branch extended in a southeasterly direction from the Village. The Batavia and Attica branch extended in a southwesterly direction. The Erie Railroad entered town near the center of the southern boundary, ran parallel with the Attica branch of the New York Central and Hudson River Railroad to Batavia and then turned and ran eastward. (Safford E. North, *Our County and Its Peoples: A Descriptive and Biographical Record of Genesee County, New York* [Boston: Boston History Company, 1899]) Not mentioned by North was the Lehigh Valley Railroad which ran along the southern boundary of Batavia and came to the community in 1891 (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 20).

During this era, New York Central depots were landscaped with flowers. Flowers for the depots from Buffalo to Syracuse were grown in New York Central greenhouses located here in Batavia (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 24 March 1897).

### 3: Housing

The era for the construction of the more remarkable mansions, e.g., the Lay Mansion, the Richmond Mansion, the Cary Mansion, the Law Mansion, the Ellicott Mansion, the Alva Smith Mansion, and the Doty Mansion seems to have pretty much ended by this decade. However, really fine homes continued to be built in Batavia. Especially noteworthy among them were the structures designed and built by Henry Homelius. From 1891 through 1900, Homelius was responsible for 17 houses. (Jine Monachino, *Henry and Frank Homelius* [Batavia, N.Y.: Landmark Society of Genesee County, 2000] pp. 19-20)

Something that was enough of a novelty in this decade to warrant mention in the newspaper was the installation of hot and cold water systems in a house. For example, in 1893, *The Daily News* reported plumber Henry J. Volz had built such a system for a home on Ellicott Avenue (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 5 April 1893).

### 4: Energy sources

The Village Trustees became dissatisfied with the service of the Consolidated Gas and Electric Light Co. that had been providing electricity for the Village street lights. In 1893, a

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committee headed by Village President Willis Sanford, after visiting other communities, became convinced that Batavia should own its own power plant. The Trustees agreed and a public vote in June of 1893 authorized the construction of a Village-owned facility. A power station was added to the front of the water works. Equipment was in place in July of 1894 and on the 13<sup>th</sup>, the lights were turned on. The Village-owned power plant provided lighting for Batavia's streets until 1918. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] pp. 6 and 10)

Ice from the creek continued to be the means for cooling food. Harvesting of ice was typically reported in the newspaper. For example, such a news item appeared in *The Daily News* in its January 5, 1893 edition. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 5 January 1893) There was more than one ice company involved in the cutting and storage of ice. One such company was the Batavia Ice Co. located on the Tonawanda south of Law Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 28 September 1900).

By this time, oil had become part of the fuel options available to Batavians. In 1896, ground was broken for storage tanks belonging to Standard Oil located near the rail lines in central Batavia (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 1 October 1896).

### 5: Communication

In an era preceding radio communication, weather forecasts were transmitted by other means. For example, in Batavia Woodward and Weaver (no first names were provided in the account) communicated weather forecasts by displaying flags stretched across Main Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 9 July 1891). How long this practice was continued beyond its initiation in 1891 is unknown.

Woodward and Weaver also arranged to display weather maps each morning at the post office (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 19 July 1891). The post office at this time was located on Jackson Street.

Toward the end of the decade, another rather novel means of communicating weather forecasts was achieved by blowing the whistle at the Harvester plant. The whistle could be heard up to 15 miles away; and farmers reportedly stopped their work at 11:00 am each day to listen for the forecast. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 9 May 1900; *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 14 May 1900) A key for interpreting the whistle blasts was available at the office of *The Daily News* ("Mere Mention," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 12 November 1900).

Local businessmen and professionals continued to install telephones in their stores and offices. For example, in March of 1892, *The Daily News* reported that the pharmacy had a phone. Three years later in May of 1895, Dr. LeSeur went a step further by having long-distance service added to his phone (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 3 May 1895).

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In the early years of telephone service in Batavia, there was more than one company competing for customers. In July of 1894, there was the DeVeau Telephone Exchange (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 28 July 1894). In April of the next year, the Batavia Local Telephone Exchange, run by Herbert Smith, was in operation with 50 telephones on line and a promise of night service (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 April 1895). In December of 1896, Bell Telephone was operating with 26 phones in local service (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 December 1896). In August of 1897, to meet its growing number of customers, Bell announced that it would have three “lady” operators (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 11 August 1897).

### 6: County and village boundaries

There appear to have been no changes in County or Village boundaries.

### 7: Government/governing structure

There were no changes in government or governing structure. However, in June of 1894, the Village Trustees began meeting in new Council Chambers located in the new Municipal Building that had been built on the front of the water works (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 6). And, in June of 1900, it was announced that voting would henceforth be done on voting machines (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 26 June 1900).

### 8: Crime, crime control, and law enforcement

In an era where political affiliation was important even in presumably non-political positions, *The Daily News* took pains to note that the Batavia police force, now numbering four members, again, was equally divided with two Democrats and two Republicans (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 March 1891).

Over the years, misbehavior by juveniles periodically led to curfews being imposed in Batavia. One such example was in 1899. A whistle blew to signal an 8 pm curfew. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 February 1899)

Gambling was another issue that periodically led to efforts to curtail behavior. An example in this instance occurred in 1898 when Village President Sanford ordered slot machines to be removed (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 7 December 1898)

Motorists today are familiar with speed enforcement by local police. However, before automobiles came into existence, riders on horses and horse-drawn conveyances were targeted. Later, when bicycles became popular, they, too, were subjected to enforcement of speed limits. The first arrest for bicycle speeding occurred in 1896 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 29 June 1896). The actual speed limit at that time is unknown, but was probably no more

than 8 mph since this was reportedly the speed limit six years later (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 15 May 1902).

In the time period during which this chapter is being written, tattoos have become very popular. Not all may be to everyone's liking, but their legality has not been an issue. However, in the 1890s, the situation was different. For example, in 1891, a 17-year-old was judged to have an "offensive tattoo" described as a "bad" picture. This resulted in jail for the artist. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 8 August 1891)

Another behavior that in the current era would hardly be considered an issue is the matter of women dressing in male apparel. However, in 1891, "girls" were warned not to "parade in the street" in men's clothing (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 November 1891). Apparently the warning was not always heeded. As reported in an issue of *The Daily News* published the following year, one "young lady" was escorted home when she broke the law by wearing men's clothing. The incident occurred at the corner of Liberty and Main streets (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 1892).

### 9: Retail establishments/other commercial enterprises

It was noted in the last chapter that saloons were numerous in Batavia during the 1880s. Apparently, their great popularity continued into the 1890s. By 1893, there were 21 saloons in the Village (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 3 July 1900).

Unlike today when it is necessary to go out to a store to obtain milk, this was a time period when milk was delivered directly to the home of the consumer. In 1899, for the first time some milkmen began delivering the milk in glass bottles. Apparently such bottles were an attraction for the light-fingered and the bottles themselves became subject to theft, according to a report in an August 1899 issue of *The Daily News*. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 15 August 1899)

The great popularity of bicycles created a need for services for their riders. In 1900, two local businessmen, Russell and Palmer, met this need by installing a machine for inflating bicycle tires. The device began pumping air after a penny was inserted into a slot. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 3 July 1900) A penny then would be roughly equivalent to 27 cents, today ("Inflation Calculator," *DaveManuel.com*, online, accessed 13 June 2014).

A rather novel enterprise was the operation of Turkish baths located on Park Place. The baths operated in 1893 under the ownership of a Mr. Jones (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 8 December 1893). Two-and-a-half years later, an individual identified as W. H. Wilcox of Union City, Pennsylvania leased the baths and began refitting them in an unspecified manner (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 11 May 1896). However, less than a year after that, the baths were reported closed and being bought on foreclosure by a John Schleuker (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 13 February 1897). This appears to have been the end of Turkish baths in Batavia.

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There is no known description of the Turkish baths as they existed in Batavia, but it seems fairly safe to assume that they featured facilities generally characteristic of such places during the Victorian Era. According to one source, such baths were closely akin to saunas. They started with a “warm room” heated by a continuous flow of hot, dry air. Bathers then sometimes moved to a second room with even hotter air. After that, the bathers took a plunge into a pool of cold water. Next came a massage and then retiring to a “cooling room” for a period of relaxation. (“Turkish bath,” *Wikipedia.org*, online, accessed 12 June 2014)

### 10: Factories/industries

As the 20<sup>th</sup> century approached, there were numerous factories and industries in Batavia. According to North (Safford E. North, *Our County and Its Peoples: A Descriptive and Biographical Record of Genesee County, New York* [Boston: Boston History Company, 1899]), they included:

- Johnston Harvester Co.
- Wiard Plow Co.
- Batavia and New York Wood Working Co.
- Baker Gun and Forging Co.
- Batavia Carriage Wheel Co.
- Batavia Preserving Co.
- A shoe factory.
- A paper box factory.
- Two roller mills.
- A cold storage warehouse.
- Two breweries and a malt house.
- Three steam laundries.
- And several other operations.

The shoe factory mentioned by North would have been the Minor Shoe Co. It was brought to Batavia from Interlaken, New York in 1896 by Peter W. Minor. The company initially located in half of a relatively new three-story brick building on the corner of Ellicott and West Main streets. (This building had been built earlier in the decade by the D. Armstrong Shoe Co. which had come to Batavia from Rochester, but then returned to Rochester in 1895 after expressing dissatisfaction with Batavia’s labor force.) (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] pp. 176-178)

The paper box factory mentioned by North could have been that of W. T. Palmer, but more likely was that of E. N. Rowell. Recall from the last chapter that during the 1880s Rowell’s company was running out of space in its original location on Main Street. When, in the current decade, half of the former Armstrong building mentioned above became available, the E. N. Rowell Co. moved there in 1896. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y., Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 177)

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Two of the “several other operations” mentioned by North could have been the R. E. Chapin Manufacturing Works and the Bidwell Co. The Chapin firm started in Oakfield before moving to Batavia in 1896 where it located on Liberty Street. The company’s products at that time included kerosene cans and containers for other liquids. The sprayers for which the company became especially well known did not appear until after 1900. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] pp. 172-173)

The Bidwell Co., owned by Charles H. Bidwell, began in Albion in 1883. Then it moved to Medina before moving to Batavia in 1899. The company manufactured harvesting and threshing machines in a three-story plant located on Swan Street between the Erie and New York Central tracks. The factory had its own power plant adjoining the main building. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] pp. 175-176)

### 11: Banking/financial services

According to North (Safford E. North, *Our County and Its Peoples: A Descriptive and Biographical Record of Genesee County, New York* [Boston: Boston History Company, 1899]), in 1899 Batavia had four banks.

### 12: Education

Three public schools were erected in 1891, all designed by Henry Homelius. One was located on West Main Street near present-day South Lyon Street. The other was on East Main Street near Spruce Street. The third was on Williams Street. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 3 June 1891; *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 September 1941)

Beginning in 1892, Sarah Blount conducted the Blount Business School from which eventually about 600 local young people graduated into the business world before the school closed in 1927 (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 237). Areas of instruction included bookkeeping, spelling, penmanship, and arithmetic. Classes were held in Schafers Commercial Building on Main Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 7 January 1893)

Beginning in 1891, the Batavia Sewing School operated from Alva Smith’s former mansion on Park Place. It was organized for the purpose of teaching poor children how to sew and do other useful domestic work. As of 1897, the school was under the supervision of a Mrs. J. C. Baker. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 4 January 1897)

In 1899, a gymnasium was built at the State School for the Blind. It was said to have an appearance resembling a barn. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 17 January 1899)

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### 13: Religion

North (Safford E. North, *Our County and Its Peoples: A Descriptive and Biographical Record of Genesee County, New York* [Boston: Boston History Company, 1899]) identified eight churches in Batavia at the end of the decade: Presbyterian, Protestant Episcopal, Methodist Episcopal, Baptist, Freewill Baptist, Catholic, Evangelical Association, and United Evangelical. Not mentioned by North were the Universalists who had organized in 1894 (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 120). Perhaps they were omitted because they did not yet have their own building.

### 14: Libraries/archives/museums

The Holland Land Office building, erected in 1815, operated as a land office until the 1830s. Later, it served other functions including being a music school and a church. When, in 1894, the structure passed into the hands of someone who seemed likely to raze it, the Holland Purchase Historical Society was organized in an effort to save the building. Daniel W. Tomlinson temporarily purchased the Land Office building to protect it while money was raised from individuals who, by virtue of their subscriptions, became charter members of the Holland Purchase Historical Society. Once the purchase price of \$1,850 had been raised, ownership of the building was transferred to the Society. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p.162)

On January 12, 1894, Holland Purchase Historical Society members met at the Land Office building to incorporate. They elected Mary Richmond as their first President. The Society set as its goal “the discovery, procuring and preservation of whatever related to the Holland Purchase lands, and all lands that had been owned by Robert Morris in Western New York.” The Land Office was formally dedicated as a museum on October 12, 1894. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1992] p. 162)

### 15: Cemeteries

There appear not to have been any significant developments relevant to the cemeteries.

### 16: Firefighting

There appear not to have been any significant developments relevant to firefighting.

### 17: Healthcare

In 1892, the Trustees secured a “contagion house” in the southwest corner of the Village. This was to isolate victims of cholera in hopes of limiting the spread of the infection. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y. 6 September 1892) It is not known either the exact location of this place or how many individuals were housed there.

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In 1895, the Trustees authorized an emergency hospital to be located on River Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 11 January 1895). There is no evidence that it was ever established.

In 1898, concern over the spread of small pox led to disinfecting mail received from LeRoy. This protective measure was a response to an outbreak of the disease in LeRoy. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 31 December 1898)

Then, in 1900, Cora Wilford, a trained nurse, opened a private hospital. It was in the Ballard House on the corner of Maple and Jackson streets. Reportedly, Wilford had four rooms ready for use. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 21 July 1900)

### 18: Care of the handicapped, aged, poor, and young

There appear not to have been any significant developments in this area.

### 19: Disasters

Although not true disasters, there apparently were at least three really big snow storms in the tenth decade. One, in 1895, was described as a storm that “[would] be long remembered” (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 9 & 11 February 1895). Another February storm the next year was severe enough to stop trains (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 & 21 February 1896). Then in December of 1898, a storm left 3-ft. of snow (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 December 1898).

Recall a description in the last chapter of a steamboat accident that led to four people drowning in the Tonawanda. An accident occurred in 1892 that had the potential for a similar loss of life. Around 6 p.m. on July 19<sup>th</sup>, a steamboat owned by George Smith and John Henderson was returning from Whiskey Point to a dock near Chestnut Street. There were 18 people on board. Close to the dock, the steamboat collided with another small steamer and a steam pipe on Smith and Henderson’s craft broke, enveloping the boat and passengers in steam. Many of the passengers jumped overboard. However, unlike the location where the accident a decade earlier occurred, the water in this instance was shallow enough that everyone was able to wade to shore. The single casualty occurred to 12-year-old Walter May who was scalded by the steam. (“Blow Up On Creek,” *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 July 1892)

### 20: Entertainment and recreation

In the 1880s, 1890s, and for many years afterwards, boating on the Tonawanda was a popular form of recreation. As mentioned above, steamboats ran cruises up the Tonawanda Creek. At one point, exactly when is not clear, someone evidently took the time to record the other traffic on the Creek. According to his/her tally, there were 29 motor boats, 65 canoes,

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plus several rowboats. The Creek was said to be a “bright place nights and Sundays.” (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 March 1937)

In the previous chapter, mention was made of a merry-go-round on Jackson Street in 1890. In the tenth decade, there was one on Church Street (now Jefferson Avenue) operated by a Charles Whitaker (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 9 August 1892).

Bicycle racing drew large crowds. In 1892, an event at the Fairgrounds drew 2,000 spectators (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 17 & 18 August 1892). Four years later, riders and spectators alike turned out for a road race from Batavia to LeRoy and back, a distance of 20 miles. The starting and ending point was the intersection of Bank and Center streets. (“Past and Present,” *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 5 December 1914)

The locations at which bands might be heard expanded in 1895 when a bandstand at Ellicott Square (corner of Ellicott and Liberty streets) was constructed. *The Daily News* of July 28, 1895 reported that 20 men were at work on the project. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 28 July 1895)

An apparently new activity in the mid-1890s was bowling. As interest grew, bowling clubs formed (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 January 1896). Reportedly, the first bowling alley in Batavia was a place called “Arlington Alley” (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 24 November 1897).

Another form of recreation that apparently hadn’t existed before locally was golf. Then, in 1899, a golf course was set up behind the State School for the Blind (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 25 September 1899). The next year, there was one at the Fairgrounds (“Past and Present,” *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 1 May 1900).

The Dellinger Opera House was, for a while, a popular place for dances. The seats would be temporarily removed for that purpose. However, in 1900, a State fire inspector ordered a sloped floor installed along with permanent seats. Thus, the Village lost its best dance hall. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y., Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 62)

### 21: War/impact of war

The Spanish-American War was a conflict in 1898 between Spain and the United States, the result of American intervention in the Cuban War of Independence. American attacks on Spain’s Pacific possessions led to involvement in the Philippine Revolution and ultimately to the Philippine-American War. The results produced American control over Cuba and authority over the Philippine Islands, Guam, and Puerto Rico. (“Spanish-American War,” *Wikipedia.org*, online, accessed 13 June 2014)

Local men participated in this conflict. *The Daily News* of April 28, 1898 reported on the first four Batavians to leave for the Spanish American War (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 28 April

1898). Among Batavians who eventually served was William Coon, later Batavia's first appointed historian.

### 22: Families/persons of special note

Meriting recognition at this point are Henry and Frank Homelius, father and son architects/builders who had a major impact in the years between 1876 and 1941. Together or individually, they designed and supervised the construction of dozens of the finest homes and commercial buildings in Batavia.

Henry was born in Buffalo in 1850, the son of German immigrants. His family moved to Batavia when Henry was six years old. There is no evidence that he was graduated from high school or attended college, but he acquired extensive informal training through working with others and reading.

In 1876, Henry and his wife, Catherine, became the parents of Frank Homelius. As Frank grew into manhood, like his father he did not graduate from high school or college. But also like his father, he acquired extensive informal training. Eventually, Henry and Frank worked as partners until Henry's death in 1917.

After his father's death, Frank continued to design and build structures throughout Batavia. His first major project after his father's death was the 1918 conversion of the Brisbane mansion into a city hall.

Like his father, Frank was a staunch Democrat and was elected Mayor in 1939, only the second Democrat to serve in that office. When he died in 1941, his wife, Maud, was appointed to fill out the brief remaining days of his tenure. As such, she became Batavia's only female mayor.

### 23: Private clubs/social organizations/service organizations/non-profit groups providing services

There were numerous organizations formed in the tenth decade. Among them were:

The Upton Post of the Women's Relief Corps (the W.R.C.) which received its charter in July of 1891.

The Holland Purchase Historical Society, founded in 1894, and which was discussed in the earlier section on libraries/archives/museums.

The Monday Literary Society established by the women of the United Methodist Church in March of 1894.

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Three bands of King's Daughters in June of 1895, formed by the Rev. Cyrus A. Johnson, Pastor of the First Baptist Church.

The Political Equality Club, established in 1895 by a group of women seeking the right to vote, but also concerned later with other community matters.

A second group of Odd Fellows formed Masonic Lodge No. 754 in 1896 when the first group became too large.

The Daughters of the American Revolution, made up of women who could trace their lineage to someone who fought in the Revolutionary War, was granted a charter in 1897.

The Conversation Class, a women's study club, was formed in 1897. All programs were presented orally and without notes.

The Knights of Columbus, Council 325, was organized in April of 1898.

The above information was taken from Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* (Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993).

### 24: Sex/sexual services/sexual entertainment

There were apparently no new developments in this area.

### 25: Urban renewal

The requirement that downtown buildings be of brick or other fireproof exterior, improved fire apparatus, and the construction of a public water system with fire hydrants was having its impact. There were no major conflagrations in the central part of the community, in contrast to earlier decades. Consequently, there was also no "urban renewal" in any sense.