

## The Eleventh Decade

### Overview

As Batavia began the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it experienced its greatest population growth to date. The number of Village residents reached 11,613 in 1910 (“Genesee County Information,” *Richmond Memorial Library*, online, accessed 3 January 2014). This was an increase of 2,433 individuals since 1900. The greatest contributing factor to this growth was the demand for labor generated by the industry which had developed in the last several years.

This was the decade in which Batavia’s sewer problems came to a head. Recall from the last chapter that a representative of the State Health Department, in a visit to the Village in 1900, had said it was “damnable” that a community like Batavia should allow such an entirely inadequate and wholly defective sewerage system to exist. As the cost of successful law suits from various property owners began to mount, the Village Aldermen were finally forced to act. Information about the events involved is in the following section titled, “Infrastructure.”

### 1: Infrastructure

As this decade began, Batavia had neither a public sewer system (in any real sense of the term) nor a sewage treatment facility. Sewage commonly drained into open ditches and/or the Tonawanda Creek. Sewage that didn’t end up in the Creek instead flowed into fields or swamps. The situation was greatly exacerbated by both construction of a public water system, which allowed for indoor plumbing including toilets, and a major population growth amounting to nearly 3,600 additional residents in the years between 1890 and 1910.

Beginning in 1906, property owners who owned land onto which sewage was flowing brought law suits against the Village (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 22 November 1906). The first to do so were Trumbull Cary and Hiram Swezey. They were later joined by Hinman Holden, Dr. E. A. Morse, Mrs. Marietta Gleason, Mrs. Sarah J. Heintz, and a Mrs. Simpson. The suits ranged up to \$5,000, a considerable sum at the time. (*The Buffalo Courier*, Buffalo, N.Y., 27 June 1909)

## 1901-1910

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In 1907, having found sewage in the Tonawanda Creek, the State informed the Village that a date had to be set for building a sewer system (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 September 1907)

Two years later, forty-two residents along the Tonawanda, who were downstream from where the Big Ditch emptied into the Creek a little east of South Lyon Street, began to consider filing law suits. They argued that, under public health law, they had a right to recover damages and obtain an injunction. This action created the potential for fines totaling \$125,000. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 26 June 1909)

The Village Aldermen initially dragged their heels in responding to the complaints. This was most notable in the case of Hiram Swezey's complaint about sewage being discharged onto his land on East Main Street. No response was forthcoming even after several years of efforts by Swezey to have something done about the situation until he eventually sued the Village and won his case. Even then, the Aldermen did not act right away, an inaction that resulted in mounting fines for contempt of court. ("Events of the Week at Batavia," *The Batavia Times*, Batavia, N.Y., 25 October 1907; "Events of the Week at Batavia," *The Batavia Times*, Batavia, N.Y., 31 January 1908)

As law suits proceeded, the fines had the potential for exceeding the cost of building a sewer system. That fact seems to have been the factor that finally prompted the Village to take some action. As a first step, the residents who were discharging sewage into the Swezey ditch were ordered to cease doing so (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 24 October 1908). This impacted the area of the Village that included Ross Street, East Avenue, and other streets east of Ross and North of East Main (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 22 October 1908).

Then, in June of 1909, Village voters were presented with a proposal to build a \$375,000 sewer system. An observation of interest is that, in an era when women ordinarily did not have the right to cast ballots, women taxpayers in this instance were allowed to vote (*The Buffalo Courier*, Buffalo, N.Y., 27 June 1909). The proposal was approved by a vote of 739 in favor of funding a sewer system versus 338 who were opposed (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 1 July 1909). Passage of the proposal resulted in a spontaneous parade by supporters who also lit a celebratory bonfire at the intersection of West Main Street and Harvester Avenue (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 July 1909). That fall, the Thomas Sweeney Co. of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania was granted a contract to construct a sewer system ("Word from Mr. Sweeney," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 9 November 1909). Work began the first of December (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 1 December 1909).

## 1901-1910

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One unanticipated side effect of sewer construction was its impact on private wells. For example, the depth of the ditches on West Main Street averaged 20 ft.; and this resulted in many wells in the area either drying up or having low water levels. One well on Dellinger Avenue, 14 ft. deep, that had furnished water for a “large community,” was among those that went dry. After the sewer system was completed, it was anticipated that wells less than 14 or 15 ft. deep would be of little value. (“Sewer Trenches Robbing the Wells,” *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 7 January 1910) Later, the same problem showed up on Park Avenue (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 4 June 1910).

As work proceeded on the sewer system, the recently formed Sewer Commission filed a report indicating that a sum of \$6,262.35 had to be raised in the next Village budget (*The Sunday Times*, Batavia, N.Y., 27 March 1910). This was the beginning of an annual line item for the expense of a public sewer system.

In 1908, a Village dump was established on State Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 4 June 1908). This may have been the first time that trash and garbage were disposed of in a location other than on private property.

Prior to this decade, streets in Batavia were unpaved. Then, in May of 1905, *The Daily News* reported that the Aldermen were discussing paving Main and Jackson streets (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 11 May 1905). Later the same year, in November, Mayor Harvey Burkhart laid the first brick (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 November 1905).

With a growing population, new streets were opened. One example was Holland Avenue (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 7 May 1901). Another was Hull Park, named in memory of Village Clerk Carlos Hull (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 14 April 1906).

In 1901, a decision was made to erect an additional bridge across the Tonawanda Creek. The site chosen was between South Main Street and the present-day South Lyon Street, the location of today’s Lyon Street bridge. Plans called for moving the existing Walnut Street bridge to this new site. Then a brand new structure was to be constructed between Walnut Street and West Main Street. The combined cost of these two projects was estimated to be \$16,600. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 30 November 1901).

The location of railroad tracks and depots in central Batavia posed problems with stopped trains blocking both vehicular and pedestrian traffic. In 1905, the problem of blocked pedestrian traffic was addressed by the construction of a footbridge on Ellicott Street over the New York Central tracks (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 February 1905).

# 1901-1910

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## 2: Transportation

In the last chapter, it was noted that the popularity of bicycles was soaring. That popularity carried over into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In May of 1902, *The Daily News* reported that local cyclists had organized to form a group known as Batavia Wheelmen (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 17 May 1902). However, the intense popularity was peaking as automobiles began to appear in increasing numbers.

During the early years, someone went to the trouble of recording the number of automobiles passing through the community. One day in August of 1901, 30 vehicles were observed. The next day, there were another 15. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 16 August 1901)

Most of the early vehicles were gasoline-powered, but some were electric- or steam-powered. As noted in the last chapter, sometimes early automobiles were homebuilt. In 1901, a Herbert Smith built a 6-horsepower steam-powered vehicle (*The Daily News*, 6 August 1901). The next year, he built a 5-passenger, 8-horsepower automobile for a J. A. Dabney at a cost of \$1,000 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 19 August 1902). The first electric automobile owned by a Batavian appeared in 1903 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 24 August 1903). There were 40 automobiles of all sorts in 1908 ("Past and Present," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 22 July 1933). By 1910, the number had grown to 300 (*The Daily News*, 22 October 1910).

Batavia had speed limits before the appearance of automobiles. However, it seems that automobiles may have led to higher limits. While in 1902, the speed limit was 8 mph (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 15 May 1902), by 1906 it had been increased to 10 mph (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 12 May 1906). Of course, even that seems low compared to the current community-wide limit of 30 mph.

In 1910, New York State began mandatory vehicle registration (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 1 August 1910). The first Batavian to obtain an automobile license was Oren C. Steele. He was issued a plate numbered 9622. (*The Batavian*, Batavia, N.Y., 22 July 1910)

The ability of automobiles to cover ground at speeds far exceeding horse-drawn wagons and carriages led to an interest in speed records. *The Daily News* in April of 1903 reported that an automobile had been driven from Buffalo to Batavia in just three hours (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 April 1903). Three years later, the newspaper reported that the same trip had been made in only 40 minutes with speeds up to 70 mph (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 27 December 1906). Those times were apparently established by gasoline-powered vehicles.

## 1901-1910

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Electric automobiles were considerably slower. In 1910, one of the latter took two hours and 45 minutes to make the trip from Buffalo to Batavia (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 31 May 1910).

Just as the appearance of the automobile was about to adversely impact the popularity of bicycles, it also was about to affect the popularity of travel on the Tonawanda Creek. Still, in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, rides aboard steamboats remained popular and, in 1904, yet another steamer was built. This time, the vessel was a small side-wheel steamer (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 16 August 1904).

A trolley line was built early in this decade. It was constructed by the Buffalo & Williamsville Electric Railway Company and was planned to be part of a line running from Williamsville and Depew through Batavia to Rochester. However, only the mile and a half from Clinton Street along East Main, Main, and West Main to near Lewiston Road was ever completed. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc, 1993] p. 21)

Work on the trolley line began the 24<sup>th</sup> of August in 1902 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 22 August 1902). The power station was located on Clinton Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 August 1903). A single track ran along East Main Street from Clinton to near Bank. Then a double track ran from there along Main Street before becoming a single track again along West Main Street. The purpose of the double track was to allow the trolley cars of the system to pass each other while running in opposite directions. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 21)

The trolleys began running with great fanfare in September of 1903. Most of the Village Aldermen reportedly showed up for a ride (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 21). Despite Batavia's population being less than 11,000 at that time, there were 16,500 riders in the first four days (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 25 September 1903). Unfortunately, ridership at this level was not sustained and Batavia's trolley system eventually succumbed to the same force as adversely affected bicycles and steamers on the Creek—the arrival of the automobile.

### 3: Housing

As the Village's population grew, so did the need for additional housing. In response to this need, contractors built new structures throughout the Village. As an example, in 1910, *The Daily News* reported that Winfield Spink was building 21 houses on Holland Avenue (*The Daily News*, 18 April 1910).

## 1901-1910

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The only row houses in the community were built in this decade. Located on Lewis Place, they were erected by Jared L. Uphill between 1908 and 1909. They were constructed of rusticated concrete block and brick. (Catherine Roth, *Architectural Heritage of Genesee County, N.Y.* [Batavia, N.Y.: Landmark Society of Genesee County, 1988] p.72)

Recall that George Law had erected a mansion in 1864 near the intersection of South Main and Walnut streets. In 1903, John Pickert purchased the mansion. He initially planned to tear it down, but in 1904 instead divided it into three separate buildings. The two-story east wing was moved slightly east and north, then rotated 90 degrees counter-clockwise. It was numbered 3 South Main Street. The two-story south wing was moved west and a bit south, placing it behind the remaining structure. It was numbered either 5-1/2 or 7-1/2 South Main Street. The main part of the Law Mansion, a 2-1/2 story building with a cupola, appears to have been moved closer to South Main Street where it was made into a four-family house. It became 5-7 South Main Street. The former south wing has disappeared, apparently destroyed in a fire, but the other structures remain. (Larry Barnes, *A Brief History of the Law Mansion* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published, 2007], p. 7)

### 4: Energy Sources

The big energy news in this decade was the arrival of electric power from Niagara Falls and natural gas from Pavilion.

Prior to this time, the only gas that was available was that produced locally from coal or petroleum. Then, on October 12th of 1901, *The Daily News* reported that the Alden-Batavia Natural Gas Company of Binghamton had been incorporated the day before, with \$300,000 capital stock, to develop coal, oil and natural gas lines. The new corporation was formed solely for the purpose of bringing natural gas to Batavia and “disposing of it here.” (“New Corporation,” *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 12 October 1901)

It’s not clear how soon natural gas delivery began, but it was obviously occurring by 1908. A newspaper account in December of that year reported that the Alden-Batavia Natural Gas Company was supplying customers in Batavia with gas from “new” wells at Pavilion through a “new” pipe line. The newspaper account also referred to the completion of a regulator house in the rear of the Free Methodist Church on Ellicott Street, the *third* regulator house in the Village. This, it indicated, would insure “better” pressure and “more efficient” service throughout the community. (“Pavilion Gas Here,” *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 December

## 1901-1910

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1908) The wording of these statements implies that gas service had been provided by the company for some time prior to 1908.

In 1906, a Niagara Falls company sought a contract to serve the electrical needs of the area (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 8 February 1906). The company was successful and most area consumers began using Niagara Power. The trolley line, which had been generating its own power, was among the users who took advantage of this new source (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 22 October 1909). However, the Village continued to light its streets with the municipal power plant.

In July of 1908, the Batavia Gas and Electric Company announced that it would be shutting down. Most of its patrons were switching, or had already switched, to natural gas and/or Niagara power for their energy supply (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 11 July 1908). The next year, the Village sold its electric plant at auction (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 8 September 1909). Thus ended local sources of gas and electricity.

Ice harvested from the creek for cooling purposes continued well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. For example, in 1901, *The Daily News* reported that Suttell was harvesting ice for storage in his Jackson Street ice house (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 1 February 1901) and, in 1907, the paper reported that the Batavia Ice Company was harvesting ice 8-1/2 inches thick from the Creek (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 5 February 1907). However, as early as 1903, manufactured ice was being produced. In that year, George Phelps installed an ice-making machine in his Main Street market (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 7 February 1903). In 1910, Walter Buxton began ice-making at his business on Ellicott Street ("Mere Mention," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 July 1910).

### 5: Communication

As mentioned in the last chapter, during the early years of telephone service, several companies competed for customers. This continued as the 20<sup>th</sup> century began. In 1901, the Batavia Home Telephone Company was incorporated (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 June 1901). The next year, Inter-Ocean Service also offered telephone service. These were in addition to the Bell Telephone service that had begun operation in the 1890s. Evidently, customers switched back and forth between companies. For example, when Bell Telephone doubled its rates in 1908, *The Daily News* reported that the local doctors switched to Batavia Home Telephone (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 5 March 1908). Eventually, Bell Telephone absorbed or bought out all its rivals and became the New York Telephone Company, the

## 1901-1910

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community's sole provider of phone service (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 31).

In the last several years, the post office had been located on Jackson Street. With the beginning of the new century, a new location was sought. In 1908, it was announced that Brisbane family property at the corner of West Main Street and Jefferson Avenue had been chosen (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 9 November 1908). However, several years would pass before a building would be erected.

Readers may recall from the chapter on the years 1801-1810 that the first post office sign was painted in 1804. Then it disappeared. However, in 1910, *The Daily News* reported that it had been found (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 June 1910). Then, surprisingly, it disappeared again, apparently not to be rediscovered until years later (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 July 1957).

### 6: County and village boundaries

In 1903, a new charter was adopted that expanded the Village boundaries east of Cedar Street to the "New York Central overhead bridge" and south to the Lehigh Valley railroad (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 16 April 1932).

### 7: Government/governing structure

Batavia's governing structure had been most recently changed in 1884. Then, in 1904, a revised charter went into effect on March 8<sup>th</sup>. It provided for a Mayor, 10 Aldermen, three Assessors, a Police Justice, a Clerk, and a Treasurer. The most notable change was an increase in the number of Wards from four to five and a corresponding increase in the number of Aldermen from eight to ten. (*Charter & Ordinances of the Village of Batavia, Genesee County, 1904*)

1904 had not yet passed into history before inadequacies of this new charter became evident as the Village Aldermen sought to start paving streets. Consequently, a committee, made up of the Aldermen plus Lewis McLean and Postmaster John Hamilton, was established for the purpose of developing amendments to address the problem. However, before the committee had gotten very far, "special" State legislation was "obtained" in 1905 that permitted the paving of Main and Jackson streets without any amendments to the charter. Thus, the committee, apparently no longer sensing an urgency in fulfilling its charge, did little further work ("Batavians at the Polls Adopted a City Charter," *The Daily News*, 10 June 1914)

## 1901-1910

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At a dinner meeting of the Batavia Business Men's Association, on January 29, 1907, the matter of a new charter came up in general discussion apparently prompted by C. C. Bradley, acting Village Mayor. The discussion ended in a resolution urging the appointment of a Charter Revision Commission. Soon after, at a general meeting held in the Municipal Council Chambers, a Charter Revision Commission was created with representatives from the Village Aldermen, Business Men's Association, Board of Trade, and labor unions. ("Batavians at the Polls Adopted a City Charter," *The Daily News*, 10 June 1914)

The Charter Revision Commission prepared a bill for introduction in the State Legislature. It featured a city government that eliminated wards, eliminated political parties, and was run by a manager and five councilmen elected at large. (Larry Barnes, *Batavia's Route to Becoming a City: A Surprisingly Difficult Path 11 Years in the Making*, self-published monograph, 2013) The bill was introduced early in the Winter of 1908-1909 by Assemblyman Fred B. Parker. It was defeated. The bill was again introduced the next year and again defeated. ("Batavians at the Polls Adopted a City Charter," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 June 1914)

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

In late December of 1909, *The Daily News* reported that the police, who had been headquartered in Ellicott Hall (the original county courthouse), would need to move due to "space problems" (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 28 December 1909). The move, made the following month, relocated the department in the Municipal Building at 3 West Main Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 January 1910).

Since the 1850s, prisoners had been housed at a County jail located on the south side of West Main Street about where Oak Street Extension is now situated. In 1903, the County built a new jail at 14 West Main Street (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993]).

In this era, it was a common practice for police to provide overnight housing to tramps and transients. For example, in 1906, the Batavia police reported lodging over 1900 tramps (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 14 October 1907).

*The Daily News* in late November of 1910 reported that there were "no spitting" signs all over Main Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 29 November 1910). It seems likely that a good bit of the spit was tobacco juice since chewing tobacco was popular at that time. In fact,

## 1901-1910

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it was common in places where men gathered, such as the Elks Club, for spittoons to be much in evidence.

As the 21<sup>st</sup> century got underway, a decades-old, Nation-wide campaign against alcoholic drinks continued on. It would ultimately culminate in the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the United States Constitution that, beginning in 1920, prohibited the manufacture, transportation, and sale of alcoholic beverages. Prior to this total restriction on alcohol, in 1910 State (?) regulations were adopted that restricted liquor sales to drug stores and hotels (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 47). This led to a proliferation of “hotels” as saloons converted to hotels to avoid restrictions imposed by the new regulations (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 11 August 1910). At the end of the year, leaders of the Batavia area Anti-Saloon League concluded that saloon elimination had not improved matters locally (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 12 December 1910).

### 9: Retail establishments/other commercial enterprises

As noted above, in this decade, there was a wholesale conversion of saloons to “hotels.” In late September of 1910, according to newspaper reports, the Mayor inspected four of the former Batavia saloons (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 27 September 1910). Presumably the inspections were to determine the legitimacy of the new “hotels.”

A new invention appeared in Batavia in 1905 when the Hanlon-Karper Company of Batavia, a wholesale and retail dealer, began selling electrically-powered delivery wagons. According to *The Daily News*, it was taking delivery of the entire production of the Shadyside Vehicle Company of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Hanlon-Karper employed salesmen who travelled throughout the Country. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 30 January 1905)

### 10: Factories/industries

The Mathes Shell & Novelty Company began in Buffalo. Operated by Kirk B. Mathes, it used shells in making novelty items such as napkin rings, pin cushions, and paper weights. It later expanded its offerings to include items such as ashtrays, products that were made without the employment of shells. The company moved to Batavia in 1901 and occupied a building on Jefferson Avenue. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] pp. 178-179).

The Batavia Rubber Company. began operation in 1902 on Robertson Street as the Sweet Rubber Tire Co. (Robertson Street was located roughly between present-day Mill and Maple

## 1901-1910

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streets.) It eventually went into bankruptcy after a “problematic” takeover of the Simplex Rubber Company of America. Tires manufactured by the Batavia Rubber Company were sold under the trade name, “Keystone-Batavia.” (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 185)

### 11: Banking/financial services

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

### 12: Education

In 1903, the school building on Washington Avenue was razed and replaced by a new one with twice as many classrooms. Designed by Henry Homelius and son, it was built by Edward Dellinger. Classes in the new building began in February of 1904. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 88).

In 1905, night school classes were offered by Batavia’s public school system for the very first time. According to newspaper accounts, they were a success. In early 1905, there were 48 students enrolled. Forty of them were males, the majority of whom were between 16 and 20 years of age. Most of these students were seeking to continue their educations after the necessity of going to work had caused them to drop out of regular school. The courses sought included arithmetic, writing, reading, bookkeeping, English, geography, spelling algebra, and mechanical and architectural drawing. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 13 January 1905)

In May of 1906, the School Board voted to double the size of the Pringle School (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 8 May 1906). The work was completed less than six months later (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 27 October 1906).

With a rapidly growing Catholic population, there was a demand for more parochial schools. The Rev. Peter Pitass started the Sacred Heart School in 1904. It first occupied a barn on South Jackson Street. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 93) In 1908, Father Ciabatonni opened St. Anthony’s School (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 7 November 1908). According to Ruth M. McEvoy, the next year The Rev. Joseph Laguzzi bought property near Liberty Street and Central Avenue and put together two old houses to serve as St. Anthony’s School and as a parish house (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 94).

## 1901-1910

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### 13: Religion

While the first official meeting of the Salvation Army was in 1892, it later disbanded. It reorganized in 1907. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 127)

The First Church of Christ Scientist incorporated in 1902. Five years later, it rebuilt a stone building at 217 East Main Street to serve as a church. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc.] p. 121).

Prior to 1904, all Catholics in the Village attended St. Joseph's Church. Then, in 1904, St. Mary's Parish was established. A temporary chapel in a house on Ellicott Street, just west of the current church, was the first church building. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] pp. 113-114).

Also in 1904, Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish was created, in this case especially to serve Poles and Italians. At that time, there were about 50 Polish families in Batavia and a similar number of Italian families. A house on South Jackson Street was rebuilt to provide a sanctuary and a residence for the priest. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] pp. 114-115).

Then, in 1908, a fourth Catholic parish was founded, the St. Anthony of Padua Parish. A house on the corner of Liberty Street and Central Avenue was rebuilt to serve as a church building. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] pp. 115-116).

In 1908, members of St. James Episcopal Church voted to build a new church at 405 East Main Street to replace the one on Ellicott Street. The new building was designed by Robert North who had spent a year in England studying English architecture and became attracted to the English Gothic style. The congregation held its first regular service in the new church on September 12, 1909. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] pp. 108-109)

### 14: Libraries/archives/museums

There were no significant developments during this decade.

## 1901-1910

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### 15: Cemeteries

When, in 1903, approaches were being excavated for a bridge across the Tonawanda Creek between South Lyon Street and South Main Street, several bodies were uncovered. These were judged to have been burials in the cemetery that once stood in this area, burials that had been overlooked when most of the other bodies were moved to the Batavia Cemetery on Harvester Avenue. The newly discovered remains were then reburied in the Batavia Cemetery. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 29 October 1903; 31 October 1903; 3 November 1903)

Bodies in the Potters Field area of the old cemetery on South Lyon Street, unlike most of the other bodies that had been moved in the 1820s, were intentionally left there until 1904. At that time, the Village Aldermen ordered them to also be moved to the Harvester Avenue cemetery. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 14 June 1904) For more details on this matter, refer back to the “Cemeteries” section of the chapter on the third decade, 1821-1830.

In November of 1905, Charles Buchholtz and John Pratt purchased farm land on Clinton Street Road and laid out the first lots in what was to become Grandview Cemetery (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., In. 1993] p. 106).

Prior to the existence of cemeteries and, sometimes even after, burials occurred on private property. One such example occurred at some unknown date on present-day Ellicott Street. In 1909, bones and part of a headstone were discovered there while excavating a basement for the transformer house of Genesee Light & Power Company (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 17 December 1909) The location appears to have been a little east of Evans Street.

### 16: Firefighting

In 1902, the whistle at the Johnston Harvester plant served as a fire whistle (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 24 May 1902). How long this continued to be the case is unknown.

In terms of fires, one of the most bizarre incidents occurred in 1905. Sometimes firemen lacked sufficient hose to reach a fire from the nearest fire hydrant. This was the case on June 28, 1905 when fire broke out at a house located at 123 Oak Street. The most that could be done was to save furniture from the burning structure. One piece was a piano. According to the newspaper report, at the height of the fire, someone sat down at the rescued piano and began playing “In the Good Old Summer Time.” As if that wasn’t strange enough, the crowd which had gathered then added its contribution by singing the words to the chorus at the end of each stanza! The homeowners were reportedly present, but the newspaper account failed

## 1901-1910

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to indicate how they responded to this levity. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 28 June 1905)  
One suspects they were not amused.

### 17: Healthcare

Early in the century, outbreaks of smallpox continued to be a health menace. In 1902, during one such outbreak, *The Daily News* reported that Village officials were planning the construction of a smallpox hospital on River Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 29 November 1902; 4 December 1902; 19 December 1902). No record has been found regarding whether such construction actually occurred.

Batavia's first public hospital, Batavia Hospital, located on North Street where the United Memorial Medical Center is now situated, opened for business on July 16, 1902. It was the result of efforts by a group known as the "Woman's Hospital Association of Batavia." The latter had been incorporated in July of 1900. This hospital was the direct predecessor of both Genesee Memorial Hospital and, later, the United Memorial Medical Center. (Larry Barnes, *A Brief History of Batavia's Public Hospitals* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published, 2013] p. 2)

The Primrose Hospital, located at 5 Thomas Avenue, was opened in 1906 by Charles V. Gray, M.D., and his wife, Cora West Gray, a nurse. The name of the hospital was derived from the name given to the property prior to its purchase by the Grays. Reportedly, Gray specialized in diseases of women, mild mental disorders, and drug addiction. The hospital ceased operation in 1918. (Larry Barnes, *A Brief History of Batavia's Public Hospitals* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published, 2012] pp. 3-4)

According to a newspaper account, in 1910 a John King was "fitting up" a house at 2 Central Avenue to serve as a private sanitarium (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 11 July 1910). It is unknown how long this institution survived.

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

In 1909, \$6,407.32 in public funds was expended on care for the poor (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 30 December 1909). This sum appears to include expenditures on both Town and Village residents.

## 1901-1910

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### 19: Disasters

Over the years, the Tonawanda Creek repeatedly overflowed its banks. For example, in July of 1902 a series of thunderstorms caused the Creek to rise to the point that boats wound up in streets on the south side (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 7 July 1902).

### 20: Entertainment and recreation

Boating on the Creek continued to be a major attraction throughout the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1902, *The Daily News* reported that a Mr. Andrews was buying “Pratt’s Place” on South Street to rent boats and sell soft drinks (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 29 May 1902). (South Street later became South Jackson Street.) The location in question appears to have been just upstream from the current water-treatment plant.

In 1907 there were newspaper accounts of “young people” hiring Andrews’ launch for trips to Whiskey Point (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 13 September 1907; 21 September 1907).

In July of 1908, what was billed as the “First Annual Regatta” was held on the Creek (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 27 July 1908). Whether there ever was a second annual regatta or for how many years regattas continued to occur is unknown.

In 1909, it was reported that a Mr. Smith and a Mr. Watson were building a boathouse above the dam (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 19 May 1909).

On August 15, 1910, *The Daily News* reported that “hundreds” had enjoyed boating the day before (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 15 August 1910).

As noted earlier, the Dellinger Opera House served as a venue for a wide variety of entertainment. In November of 1901, residents of Batavia could view wrestling matches at the opera house (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 11 November 1901).

As elsewhere, by this time, baseball was a popular sport. In June of 1903, plans were announced for a baseball grandstand on Jackson Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 June 1903).

In May of 1904, a hurdy gurdy, referred to as a “hand organ” by the press, could be heard on local streets, reportedly the first such occurrence in Batavia (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 May 1904). Hurdy gurdies are stringed instruments that produce sound by a crank-turned,

## 1901-1910

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rosined wheel rubbing against the strings. The wheel functions much like a violin bow, and single notes played on the instrument sound similar to those of a violin. Melodies are played on a keyboard that presses small wedges, typically made of wood, against one or more of the strings to change their pitch. Hurdy gurdies have a sound board to make the vibration of the strings audible. (“Hurdy Gurdy,” *Wikipedia.org*, online, accessed 17 July 2014)

Ice skating was popular and, over time, several locations were developed for the purpose. In 1904, a commercial rink was built on East Main Street on property owned by S. L. Houseknecht (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 8 October 1904).

Roller skating also became very popular at this time. One of the first rinks, perhaps the first, was the Empire Roller Rink located in Ellicott Hall (formerly the County Courthouse erected in 1803). This rink opened for business in October of 1904. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 13 October 1904)

Bowling was also becoming popular. Usually, bowling alleys were first floor operations. However, that apparently was not always so. Consequently, the Village enacted a law in 1909 that prohibited second-floor bowling alleys (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 7 October 1909). One only needs to imagine the sound of dropped pins and flung balls to appreciate the motivation for this ordinance.

According to Ruth McEvoy, the earliest anyone remembered seeing motion pictures was in 1900 in a store on Jackson Street run by someone named Bridgeford. Somewhat later, Frank Russell, a local real estate dealer, showed movies in Ellicott Hall. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 62) However, actual movie houses didn’t appear in Batavia until a few years later. In December of 1906, the Dreamland Theater opened in the Pan American Building on Court Street. According to newspaper accounts, there was standing room only. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 14 December 1906) “The Lyric,” located at 49 Main Street, opened in the same general time period. It featured several dozen seats fastened to an inclined floor and facing a large screen (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 62).

### 21: War/impact of war

Fortunately for Batavians, there were no wars occurring at this time in which local men were fighting. However, this might be seen as having been the “quiet before the storm” since World War I was looming on the horizon.

### 22: Families/persons of note

The development of industry in Batavia led to changes in the ethnic make-up of the Village as the manufacturing plants attracted immigrants seeking jobs. Particularly notable was an influx of Italians and Poles. Ruth McEvoy pointed out that few Polish couples lived in Batavia before 1900. However, by 1904, there were enough to warrant a separate parish served by a Polish-speaking priest. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 250) As a reflection of this change in the ethnic make-up of the population, note that there was only one Catholic Church in 1901, but by 1910, there were four. Most of the new Batavians came to live on the south side, sometimes as a result of provisions in the deeds of property on the north side that restricted sales to individuals who were white, Anglo-Saxon, and Protestant.

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

This decade saw the beginning of many different groups and organizations. The Shakespeare Club began meeting in 1901. It read uncut versions of Shakespeare's plays. At first, it was thought not proper for unmarried women to hear some passages. However, by 1907, unmarried women were allowed to join. Membership was limited to Presbyterians. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc. 1993] p. 145)

The Holland Club was organized about 1902. It was a competitor to the Batavia Club. Membership was limited to men. The Holland Club had a club house, a former home, at 212 East Main Street and a shooting range on Law Street. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 160) A local chapter of the Order of Eastern Star, a group associated with the Masons, was also organized in 1902. It was designated as Eyla Chapter No. 276. The name was chosen to honor Eyla Chappel who did much of the preliminary paperwork involved in establishing the chapter. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 137). Also in 1903, a Humane Society formed. It was originally founded to prevent cruelty to children, but then expanded its scope to include the prevention of cruelty to animals as well. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 October 1902; 13 January 1903; 13 September 1904)

## 1901-1910

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In October of 1904, the Wednesday Study Club began meeting. Composed solely of women, its programs covered widely varying subject matter. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 145)

The Elks Lodge organized in March of 1905 as BPO Elks No. 550. It initially met on Jackson Street before purchasing the former St. James Episcopal Church building on Ellicott Street in 1909. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 139).

In 1908, the Canoe Club was organized. It built a clubhouse on the bank of the Creek. Members held races and regattas. Also in 1908, automobile enthusiasts formed the Automobile Club of Batavia. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., 1993] p. 160).

In 1909, a Civil Improvement League was formed. Its primary focus was on making the community more aesthetically attractive. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 12 April 1909; 14 April 1909; 23 April 1909) Also in 1909, The Genesee County Gentleman's Driving Club was formed. It held horse races on the oval at the Fairgrounds. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] pp. 160-161) In May of 1909, a series of meetings was held to discuss the possibility of forming a local Young Women's Christian Association. These meetings culminated in a decision to move ahead with the establishment of a YWCA and Frances Francis was chosen to lead the effort. ("Batavia Y.W.C.A. May Be Formed," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 21 May 1909; "Idea of Y.W.C.A. to Help Girls," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 22 May 1909)

In January of 1910, the Batavia Lodge No. 196, Loyal Order of Moose was organized (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 139. Later the same year, a Parent-Teachers Association organized (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 8 October 1910; 5 November 1910).

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

Prostitution continued to be a concern in Batavia. In December of 1904, Mayor Burkhart stated that "red light" places "must go." He announced that, as of December 20<sup>th</sup>, places harboring disreputable persons had to see that such individuals were out of town within 48 hours. He gave notice that the police would make frequent and unannounced inspections to make sure the order was obeyed. ("Red Lights Must Go," *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 21 December 1904) Evidently the warning was not fully successful. A year later, *The Daily News*

## 1901-1910

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reported that Mrs. Thomas Moore had just been convicted of recently running a disorderly house at the West End Hotel on West Main Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 15 December 1905).

### 25: Urban renewal

There was no urban renewal in this decade.