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September 3, 2017

The Holly Manufacturing Company 1858-1916

In 1859 Ex New York Governor Washington Hunt, and the Hon. T.T. Flagler, ex-NY Congressman recognized the ability of Birdsill Holly and induced him to take charge of their machine works in Lockport.

The Holly Company was organized on May 2, 1859. T. T. Flagler, (Southern Florida Railway, Flagler Banks); was elected President, with a capital stock of \$20,000. The company engaged in the manufacture of sewing machines, pumps and hydraulic machinery.

On July 2, 1859 the company entered into an agreement with the Lockport Hydraulic Company to construct a race on the south side of the canal to be utilized for water power with the Manufactures Building Co.

In 1858, the Kennedy Hatch lease to the surplus waters of the Erie Canal was transferred to the Lockport Hydraulic Company and in 1858 obtained permission from the Canal Commissioners to construct an underground tunnel (hydraulic race) on the north side of the canal. The total fall for the Holly water turbine water wheel was 56' of head equal to 240 horsepower. The works of the Holly Company covered an area of 4 ¼ acres.

In 1861 the Holly Company began construction of a five story building to be used as a foundry and boiler building located between the Canal and the Hydraulic Race. 25 mechanics were hired for the machine shop.

In 1862-63 a number fires struck Lockport and due to an enlistment in the Union Army there was a lack of regular volunteer firemen. The Holly Company convinced the City of Lockport to install a fire protection system in the business district with hydrants and underground pipes driven by the Holly turbine pump. The new fire system was funded by a tax. Citizen complaints led T. T. Flagler company president to offer indemnification to anyone whose taxes were not offset by the reduced fire insurance premiums. A circular water turbine was constructed adjacent to the Moore flour mill to supply the water.

While superintendent of the works, Birdsill Holly devised a plan to supply the city with water for sanitary and domestic purposes and at the same time provide fire protection in such a manner that disposed of reservoirs, stand pipes and expensive fire engines.

In 1864 the capital stock was increased from 500,000 to 1,000,000.

The Holly Company constructed the Lockport Water Works in 1864. 6,000 feet of pipe were laid with 27 hydrants. The highest being at an elevation of 72' above the stationery power. A 5' diameter turbine provided 140 horsepower from 19" of head from the race on the south side of the canal. The rotary pump delivered 1,200 gallons per minute through 2,500' of cast iron mains. Pressure could be regulated between 20 and 200 pounds per square inch.

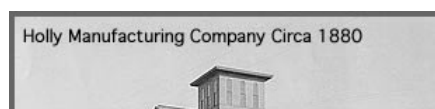
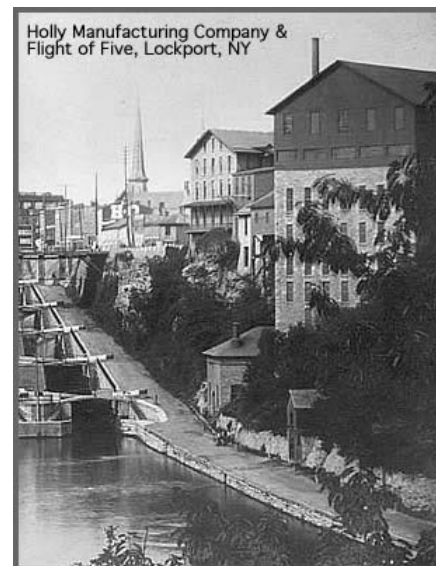
By 1881, over 100 cities in 35 states in the United States were using the Holly System of Water Supply and Fire Protection.

In March 17, 1864 the company purchased the triangle formed by Lock and Caledonia streets on the banks of the Erie Canal, directly overlooking the basin and the locks. (Lyman A. Spalding once had owned this property). Massive stone buildings were erected which were completed for occupancy in 1866. The company began using water from the North Tunnel, designed by Holly for waterpower. The Holly Co. was regarded as one of the most important in the county, manufacturing various kinds of machinery including water wheels engines, steam boilers, fire hydrants, and pumps for mills and factories. A NYCRR switch connection was nearby and machinery was loaded on railroad cars or boats on the canal at the building and shipped all over the country.

In 1879 the Holly Co. entered the Paper and Pulp mill industries and became a major supplier of pumps. In 1881 the Paper Trade Journal devoted an entire feature to the fledgling company.

In February 23, 1882 the company board voted to erect new manufacturing facilities for waterworks machinery and erect a new foundry on the corner of Lock and Caledonia St.'s Construction began in 1887 for a new erecting shop to be primarily devoted to construction of the Gaskill horizontal compound pumping engine.

The Holly Company devoted a great deal of capital constructing entire water systems for municipalities. However, its roll changed to one of marketing by selling rights to the system. In 1868 the Chicago department of public works recommended the adoption of the holly system.



On May 3, 1886, the Holly Company subscribes \$100 per year for 5 years towards establishment and maintenance of the Young Men's Christian Association proposed to be organized in the city of Lockport.



The company gained new prominence by the production of the Gaskill pumping engine the invention of Mr. H.F. Gaskill, the Chief engineer of the company. The first quadruplex engine was installed in Saratoga NY in 1882.

Charles Worthington of New Jersey becomes the assignee on July 31, 1897 of the mortgage of \$100,000 from the Mutual Life Insurance Co. and in 1899 Holly Co. becomes part of Worthington.

Late in the 1890's the Holly Co., expanded into Buffalo NY on High St.

On 1906, the Holly Co. agrees to lease all Lockport properties to the Amazon Rubber Company from December 1, 1906 – May 1 1910, including all equipment excepting patents, for the sum of \$6,000 per year with an option to purchase the Lockport building for \$150,000 by December 1, 1909.

The Holly Company complex in Lockport burned in 1904 but by then the company had expanded the Buffalo plant and continued manufacturing at that location.

The manufacturing of Holly System of direct pressure water supply and fire protection for cities, towns and villages brought wealth and prosperity to the community employing more than 500 men in the industrial complex. Water supply and fire protection ultimately were constructed in over 220 cities.

The Holly Steam Combination Co. was incorporated in 1877 with a capital stock of \$25,000. The city of Lockport gave the company a franchise permitting them to open trenches for the purpose of laying wooden pipe. By 1879 approximate 5,000 of pipe had been laid. The company established a boiler house, on Elm St.

On January 19, 1881 the Holly Steam Co. combination Co. was reorganized and became the ADSCO.

Holly Manufacturing Co. 1872 states in its' THIRD ANNUAL ANNOUNCEMENT "Fire to your doors in pipes as gas and ware are fulfilling every requirement of fire in dwellings warm your apartments cook your food, was, dry and iron your clothes, run your steam engines, clear the snow from the streets heat and ventilate your school-houses and public buildings and in act do all and everything that either fire or water (for steam is both)"

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2017 Tour Dates:

Tours begin in May, 2017.
Dates and times are listed on the 2017
Tour Calendar. Just click the link below:



Ticket Office:

5 Gooding Street, Lockport, NY, 14094
716-438-0174

2017 Rates:

Adults: **\$15.00***, Youth (6-12): **\$10.00***
Children 5 and under: **\$3.00***

*Admission prices do not include tax.

Coordinates:

+43° 10' 18.7" N, -78° 41' 33.4" W

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