

HISTORY UNEARTHED IN TURIN, NY

By Steve Freeman

On an early June 2022 day, Water Operation Specialist (WOS) Tom Smith, with the Village of Turin, along with excavation contractor, Shue Brothers, were performing a routine water main tap for a new customer. While excavating to find the water main, the ditch man said he had found what looked to be a buried utility pole. Experienced track-hoe operator, Ronald Shue II, immediately suspected it to be a wooden water main. Excavation carefully continued and pieces of history were unearthed. Shue, who has seen wooden mains in the past, believed this to be called a pencil main, because the characteristics resembled a pencil.



Eager to learn more on this stunning discovery, Mayor Josh Leviker, had a sample of the pipe sent to the Department of Geology at St. Lawrence University. The analysis revealed that the tree used was red pine in species, native to the Turin area, and was felled between September and May of 1881-82. It is uncertain of how the tree was hollowed, it may have been hand drilled or burnt and scooped with a spoon like tool. Pictured below shows the flat end of the pipe and what is believed to be pine pitch as a joint compound.



It is uncertain whether the wooden main was used for public or industrial use. The source of water is also unknown. The unbelievable part of this story is that the wooden main laid beside an abandon cast iron main, a new ductile iron main and had never before been exposed. Smith and Leviker have polished the find and plan to display it in the village's library. Pictured below is Mayor Leviker and (WOS) Smith with the display.



Thanks to all involved in preserving this historical find. Thank you, Tom, for inviting me to view this rare discovery and allowing me to share your story with the members. As always together let's continue to provide Quality on Tap. 💧💧



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