

The Iron Man stands approximately five feet high and depicts a fireman of yesteryear, resplendent in helmet, red shirt, and blue trousers. He holds to his lips the ancient "fireman's horn" that was popular in early days as a sounding signal. It is also a decorative instrument carried in fireman's parades in which were carried bouquets of flowers.

The Iron Man was originally the property of the fire department at St. Catherine's, Ontario, Canada. The original purpose of the Iron Man was its use as a carrying piece in fireman's parades and conventions. Much was made of this figure, and it became the practice of other fire departments to "steal" the Iron Man for possession until the next year's convention. This was usually done by the department from the community where the next year's fireman's muster was to be held. In those days the Iron Man was of light material and easily carried by an individual in the line of march. The Iron Man came into possession of a fire company in Rochester, NY (possibly the protectives), and rumor has it that Albion may once have had possession of it. Later, by agreement or otherwise, the figure came to Avon, NY. The firemen of that department decided to reinforce the figure and place it on display atop of their fire hall. The Honeoye Falls firemen looked with covetous eyes at this cherished trophy and decided to take action.

The following is first hand information gathered in 1963 from three firemen who took part in the escapade: They were Capt. Charles B. Pierce, Harry Pilsbury and William Desmann. The raiders planned their attack, gathering the necessary ropes, saws, files and other tools. They boarded a carriage and wagon for a cold night's ride to Avon. A last minute addition to their equipment was a ladder borrowed from their own fire department headquarters.

Finding the Avon Fire house deserted, they set to work. Much of their pre-planned work had been carried out and two of the men had reached the roof of the building when the alarm went out. The Honeoye Falls men got away, but without their ladder. The following morning as little as possible was said about the attempted robbery, and it was assumed that the plot, having failed, would be given no further consideration.

However, minds were sharp. The Honeoye Falls volunteers were a determined lot. The following night, October 29, 1891, another trip to Avon was made in the shadows of the night. Encouraging news had come from Avon that the firefighters of that community would be celebrating a birthday party in the Livingston House and it was possible that the guard was down.

Between 1:30 and 2:00 am, the Honeoye Falls raiders crept stealthily along the Avon fire property and set up their equipment. Guards were placed at strategic spots facing Main Street to warn the workers of any passerby. Others, working from the ground, handed up climbing rigs and tools for those reaching the rooftop. Still other men stood in the dark alley holding strings attached to the climbers' elbows to signal a warning if the enemy approached. Those reaching the Iron Man were armed with saws to remove him from his perch.

The upright bar holding the Iron Man was of cast steel, inches in thickness, and most difficult to saw. With each slight pull of the cord attached to their arms the work halted. Twice the signal was given, once when two railroad workers stopped on Main Street to bid each other good

night, and again when a guest from a nearby hotel opened the window of his room to gaze out into the cold night air. Apparently not one of these individuals noticed anything unusual going on in their quiet, peaceful little town.

When the work of sawing was finally completed, and the tenseness of the situation was at its peak, the men who had been doing the actual cutting forgot to rope the steel figure. The Iron Man went rattling down the roof side and crashed with deafening thud in the alley below. Quickly the Honeoye Falls Marauders gathered together their tools, and the Iron Man, rushed to their wagon and carriage, and were gone from Avon town before the community was aware of its loss.

At break of dawn in Honeoye Falls, the crusaders, still gloating over their success, awakened the people of our village with their noisy demonstration as they drove into the village proper. After assuring themselves that the Iron Man was secure by chaining the figure to a counter at Pride's Hardware store, and assigning to stalwarts as guards, they assembled at the bar in the Wilcox House to accept the plaudits of all who cared to offer congratulations.

Within a short time the figure was given over to a local gunsmith, Mike Tucker for reconstruction. Inspired by the selection of a site for the Iron Man by the Avon company, the Honeoye Falls fireman decided that figure should adorn their Village Hall Spire as a permanent fixture. Mr. Tucker was instructed to rebuild the entire body to withstand the weather of both winter snows and summer rains and to attach a rod of Swedish steel through its center. This was done immediately and the Iron Man was erected on his high post in the fall of 1891.

A number of attempts have been made to remove this figure through the years. In September 1930, three truck loads of Avon men, bent on recapturing their lost treasure, were discovered when a barking dog spread the alarm and they left empty handed.

Rush made several visits. In 1938, Rush raiders tried to pull the Iron Man down by hitching a rope around him, but they were interrupted and their ladder went clattering down into the rocky creek bed. Lima, Geneseo, West Bloomfield, and other communities have tried during the years to take the Iron Man, but without success.

He remains there today, not only a tribute to the daring and fortitude of those who captured it, but in addition to the thousands of volunteer fireman of the nation who give untiringly of their time and effort in the protection of life and property from fire.

The above is reprinted from the Honeoye Falls Fire Department 100 year anniversary book.

By the way. If you go to the Picture of 565 [to the left] you can see (really small) the position of the ironman. Look over the truck to the right. In the background is a tower (made of brick). It's between the wires that run across the right side of the picture. On top of that tower (the village hall) you can see a very small figure on the steeple. That's the ironman. Not right behind the truck on the fire hall but to the right. You've got to look closely but it's there.

This why the Iron Man is the official emblem of the Honeoye Falls Fire Department and all the apparatus are emblazoned with the words "Home of the Iron Fireman".