

Canning the Old-Fashioned Way at Cobb Preserving Company

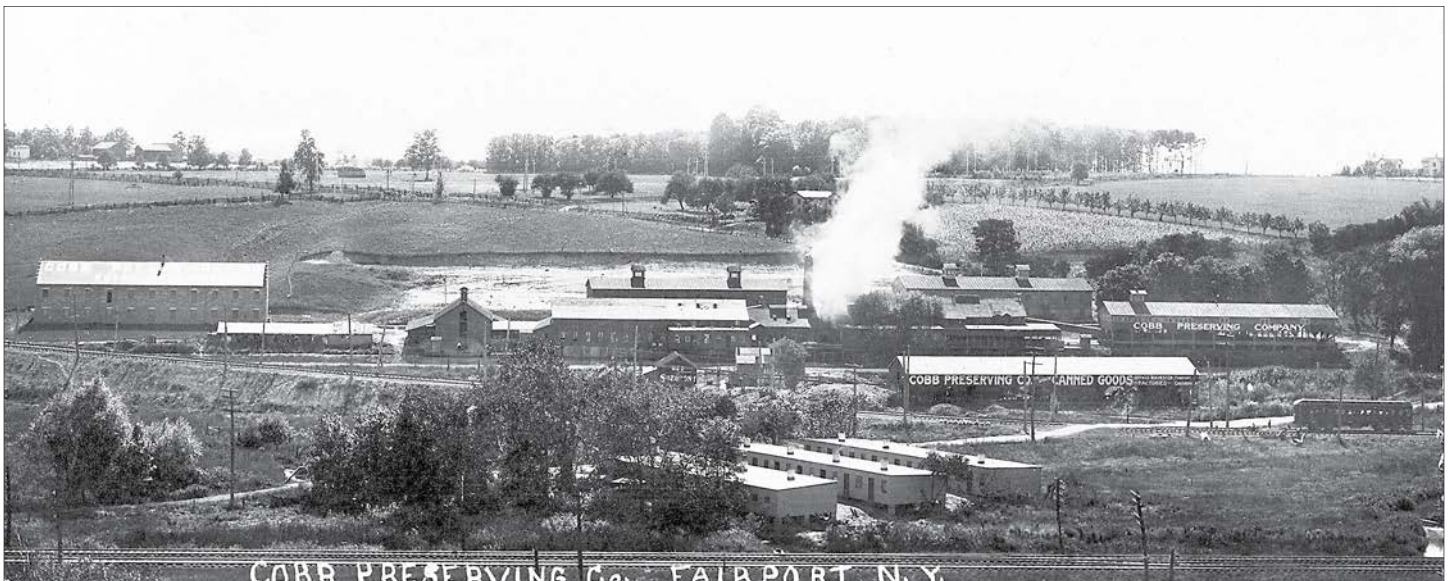
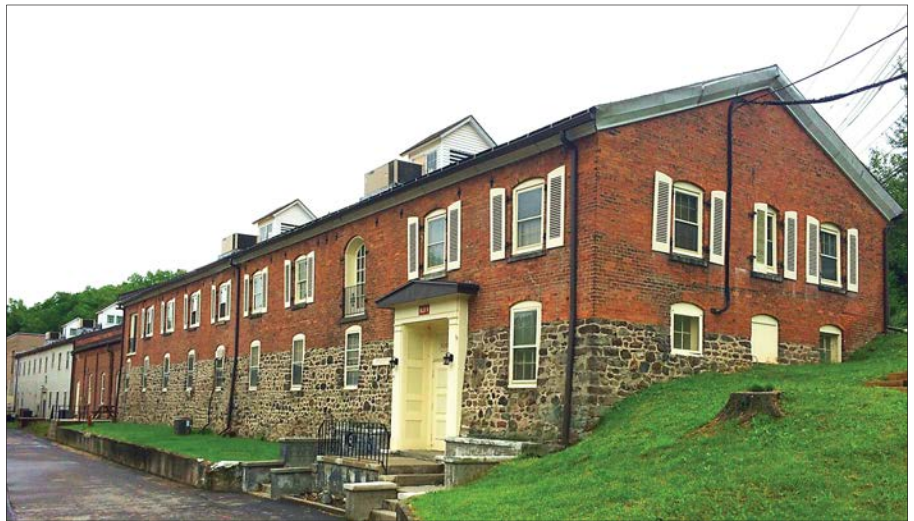
By Bill Poray

A surviving late 19th century building from the Cobb Preserving Company

A thriving canning operation was once located on the south bank of the Erie Canal in Perinton just east of Turk Hill Road. There is ample evidence of its presence today, with an early building or two still in existence, now home to a variety of businesses.

Ezra A. Edgett of Newark built the initial plant in 1872, and entrusted its operation to his brother, Ananias. Both had

Continued on page 4



View looking south at the Cobb Preserving Company, approximately 1907. The company's housing barracks are in the center foreground, and a Rochester, Syracuse and Eastern trolley can be seen at the far right. Many of the buildings are located on the bank of the canal, difficult to see here, running horizontally across the photograph.



From your President

~Vicki Profitt~

There is a small amount of snow on the ground now, but several days ago we had record warmth. It was wonderful to walk around in February in Rochester wearing only a light jacket! This has made me anticipate spring's arrival

even more than usual. This morning, my daughter and I are heading to the garden center to bask in the beautiful colors of spring and to smell some dirt. I intend to spend much time in my garden in the next few months as I prepare for my son's high school graduation party.

My furry and feathery little Secret Garden friends also appreciate the mild winter. Each morning, they wait for me as soon as day breaks. The birds sing and the squirrels chatter as they ask for their breakfast. The other day, I counted ten gray and four red squirrels feasting in the sunken patio while seven blue jays, two cardinals and a woodpecker sat in the dappled willow overlooking the garden awaiting their turn. This space and these animals have given me great joy and provide a stress-free haven.

March is always an exciting time at the Fairport Historical Museum as we prepare to reopen for the season. By this time, the volunteers have gathered for orientation, the museum has been given a thorough cleaning and the exhibits have been refreshed.

In the coming weeks, new items will arrive at the museum gift shop. Garden flags highlighting the mule sculpture and lift bridge are on their way. Train-related items in celebration of the caboose soon to arrive at Fairport Junction are on order. To learn more about the caboose and the train viewing platform, visit FairportJunction.com.

We hope you will stop by to view the new displays, which include the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, Fairport Savings Bank and a mini-costume exhibit featuring a plethora of peach colored dresses. Maggie the Mannequin is now dressed in a stylish new outfit ushering in spring.



Perinton Historical Society

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MISSION

To promote interest in preserving and sharing local history through education and accessibility.

The *Historigram* is published nine months per year by the Perinton Historical Society. The content of our newsletter is provided by PHS Board members and committee staff. Opinions expressed in any article in this newsletter are those of the author of the article alone and are not those of the PHS unless expressly stated otherwise.

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One Hundred Years Ago this Month

From Fairport's Monroe County Mail Newspaper

LEAVE YOUR ORDER FOR

HOT + BUNS

at the MODEL BAKERY on South Main St.
and they will be delivered at your home

Early Friday Morning. Or,
if you prefer, you can get them at the bakery
any day this week, fresh made.

You will also find plenty of other
GOOD THINGS TO EAT AT THE

Fairport Model Bakery

FRED LIEB, Proprietor
Phone 217-M
South Main Street
FAIRPORT, N. Y.

2022–2023 Special Recognition Level Memberships

As of February 15, 2023

Business (\$100)

Barranco's Clothing and Shoes

32 North Main Street, Fairport, NY 14450,
Phone: 585-388-1270
Email: BarrancosClothing@gmail.com

Canandaigua National Bank & Trust

72 South Main Street, Canandaigua, NY 14424
Phone: 585-394-4260, Web: cnbank.com

Fairport Village Inn

Wayne and Patty Beckwith
103 North Main Street, Fairport, NY 14550
Phone: 585-388-0112, Web: thefvi.com

Fulkerson Services, Inc.

111 Parce Avenue, Fairport, NY 14450
Phone: 585-223-2541, Web: fulkersonservices.net

GRITWORX Designs Woodwork

7 Tea Olive Lane, Fairport, NY 14450
Phone 585-678-1156, Web: gritworxdesigns.com

Hon. Evelyn Frazee, Hon. Thomas Klonick

Lift Bridge Yarns

23 North Main Street, Fairport, NY 14450
Dawn Verdugo & Jessie McNaughton
Phone: 585-364-0521, Email: Dawn@LiftBridgeYarns.com

Lucien A. Morin II, Partner

McConville Considine Cooman and Morin, P.C.
300 Meridian Centre Blvd., Suite 110, Rochester, NY 14618
Phone: 585-512--3534, Email: lmorin@mccmlaw.com,

Salle d' Escrime of Prescott, AZ A Fencing Club

Patricia Dodge Waples, Owner

DeLand (\$100–\$249)

Martha Bright

Potter (\$250–\$499)

None this month

Perrin (\$500 and above)

None this month

Upcoming Programs & Events

Saturday, March 4th from 9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

The museum reopens for the season.

Tuesday, March 21st at 7:00 p.m. at the museum

Program: The Illustrious Maud Humphrey
Speaker: Sharon Dwyer Buzard

See page 5 for more information about this
program and speaker Sharon Buzard

Tuesday, April 18th at 7:00 p.m. at the museum

Program: Fairport Historic Preservation
Commission

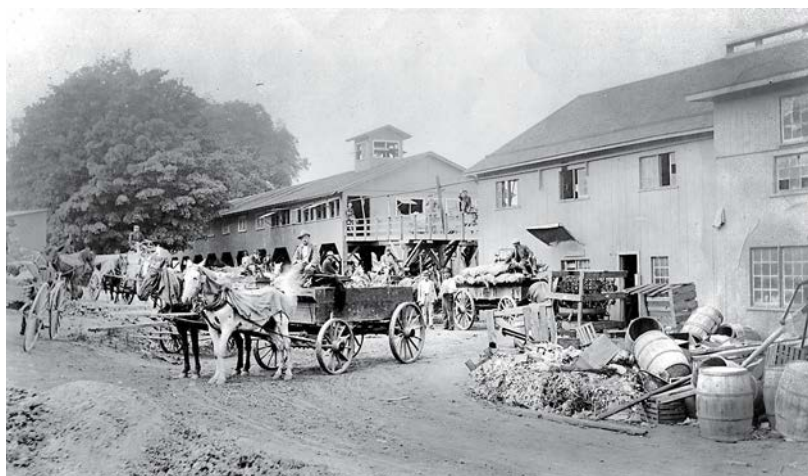
Speakers: David Steitz and Jill Wiedrick



How You can Support the Perinton Historical Society

- Become a PHS member / give a gift membership.
- Volunteer your time as a museum volunteer or on a committee.
- Donate artifacts to the museum that pertain to Fairport and Perinton.
- Purchase unique gifts from the Fairport Historical Museum gift shop.
- Donate gift cards and gift baskets for Yuletide Traditions silent auctions.
- Donate to the PHS through estate bequests, planned giving, IRA charitable giving, memorial and honor gifts, employer matching contributions and ROC the Day.





Left:

Local farmers deliver their harvest to Cobbs for canning in 1901.

Below:

A group of Cobb Preserving Company employees pose for a photo in 1896.

... early experience in the art of canning. In 1854 they planted the first acre of corn canned in New York State. They were joined in that adventure by their cousin, 14-year-old Amos Hubbell Cobb. After Ezra's brother failed to efficiently run the Fairport factory, he offered the operation to his cousin for a reasonable price. Cobb took charge in 1881, bringing his family to Fairport from New York City via the New York Central Railroad. The family's belongings arrived by packet boat, after a slight delay near Schenectady, where they accidentally fell in the drink.

The canning of fruits and vegetables was big business in the town of Perinton and village of Fairport, with several companies competing against each other. The canning process was primitive, as described in an essay penned in 1944 by Fairport's Albert Hupp (1875-1961):

"In the summer they canned, and in the winter, they made cans by hand. These were fashioned with tinsmith's tools by the muscle method. Energetic labor scissored out the cylindrical bodies with foot-actuated squaring shears and the tops and bottoms with lever foot presses. A second and separate press cut a cap hole in the top, about an inch and a half in diameter. These pieces were more or less painfully soldered together. The fruit or vegetable was forced through this hole, the cap soldered on and the filled cans immersed in boiling water, as long as the processor felt necessary. If the cans did not swell up and burst, they found their way to the tables of the public. If they burst, well, the canal was handy."

After the death of Amos Cobb in 1891, his family continued to grow the business. Farmers from across the area brought their crops in horse drawn wagons, and more fruits and vegetables arrived by packet boat and train. The plant ran day and night during the canning season, and many workers endured 18-hour shifts. An estimated two million cans of fruits and vegetables were packed in 1897. The factory also produced and delivered up to 80,000



cans per month for use at Fairport's Deland factory as well as the Monroe County Chemical Company. Most were filled with baking powder.

Company housing was built on the Cobb property in the early 1900s. Large numbers of transient seasonal workers arrived each year in the summer months when the canning season ramped up. Many of these were Polish immigrants from the Buffalo area. Several long structures known as "the barracks" were built on a swampy patch of land bordered by Thomas Creek, the railroad tracks of the New York Central, and the trolley tracks of the Rochester, Syracuse and Eastern. It was a noisy and dangerous place for families with small children, who often lived in the cramped quarters for several months at a time.

With advances in can manufacturing technology driven by descendants of Amos Cobb, a former shoe factory on Fairport's Parce Avenue became the home of the Sanitary Can Company, and later, American Can Company. Eventually the old canning works on the bank of the Erie Canal became a memory. Three early buildings at the former Cobb site were designated Fairport historic landmarks in 2020.



Tuesday, March 21st
7:00 p.m. at the Museum

The Illustrious **Maud Humphrey**

Born in Rochester, New York, in 1868 to a prominent family, Maud Humphrey studied art in her young years and was working professionally, publishing illustrations and greeting cards, while in her teens. Later, after pursuing studies in New York and Paris, she became a world-famous illustrator and often was the highest paid woman in America.

She married cardiologist and heart surgeon, Dr. Belmont DeForest Bogart from Watkins Glen in 1898. Their first child, a boy born in 1899, was named with their two surnames: Humphrey Bogart.

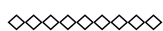
You are invited to hear her fascinating life story illustrated with photographs of her family and artworks from her many publications on Tuesday, March 21st at 7:00 p.m. at the Fairport Historical Museum. The program will be presented by Sharon Dwyer Buzard.

Rochester artist, teacher, and interior designer, Sharon Buzard arrived in Rochester in the late 1960s, having earned degrees in English and Art in Indianapolis at Butler University and John Herron School of Art. After teaching at Penfield High School, she earned a Master's Degree in Painting at The Rochester Institute of Technology from the great Fred Meyer, Robert Heischman, and Houghton Wetherald.

Sharon has taught art to teens and adults for four decades, exhibited in shows and galleries, and sold her works depicting cityscapes, portraits, and botanical studies to art collectors. Sharon also has been a member of Rochester's writing group, The Wednesday Club.

In her fifties, she returned to school to add interior design to her professional portfolio. Her love of antiquing led her to discover the works of Maud Humphrey, and the result is her illustrated lecture that she enjoys presenting in Maud's hometown and nearby locations.

This event is free and is open to the public.



Maud Humphrey Bogart
(1868—1940)

Mother of motion picture
actor Humphrey DeForest
(Bogie) Bogart

ROCHESTER DEMOCRAT AND CHRONICLE, NOVEMBER 24, 1940

Mrs. Bogart, 75, Taken by Death

Mrs. Maude Humphrey Bogart, 75, Rochester-born artist and mother of Humphrey Bogart, motion picture actor, died Friday night in Hollywood, Calif., according to the Associated Press.

Mrs. Bogart was the first cousin of Joseph Humphrey, Rochester attorney; George P. Humphrey, Rochester book collector, and the Misses Mary and Ethel Humphrey of Stonewood Avenue, Greece; Mrs. Lillian A. Williamson, Rochester, and Mrs. Bertha DeWitt, Syracuse, and the niece of Mrs. Charles Reed, Rochester.

Mrs. Bogart, who had not visited Rochester in many years, was the daughter of the late John Humphrey, a Rochester merchant. Besides her son and relatives here, Mrs. Bogart leaves a daughter, Mrs. Frances Rose of New York City.

Museum Display Features History of Filkins Block

By Bill Poray

The oldest commercial building on Fairport's South Main Street is featured in a new exhibit at the Fairport Historical Museum, opening for the season on Saturday, March 4th.

Built in 1888, the long-time home of Fairport Savings Bank at 45 South Main Street was spared the wrecking ball during the Urban Renewal era of the 1970s. Most of the commercial area of South Main Street and the eastern portion of West Avenue were demolished and replaced by the complexes known as Packett's Landing and Fairport Village Landing.

Civil War veteran and Fairport resident George S. Filkins (1838-1917) wore many hats. He developed the area that features his name, George Street and Filkins Street. He was a mover of buildings and houses, many of which were relocated to his two streets. He also built a large number of homes in Fairport, both of wood and brick construction. Most of the 19th century brick homes still in existence in the village were built by Filkins, who operated his own brick yard for many years.

George Filkins was interested in adding to his list of occupations by becoming a Fairport grocer. He began construction of his three-story Filkins Block in the late summer or early fall of 1888. His grocery business would occupy the first floor, and Filkins planned to generate income by renting out the upper floors.



Fairport High School marching band on South Main Street, circa 1938. The three-story Filkins Block is visible on the far-left, just above baritone player Clara Moore.



Fairport Savings and Loan, as it looked in 1965



New display related to the history found at South Main Street's oldest commercial building, the Filkins Block.

The Fairport Herald reported on the status of construction in its October 19th, 1888 issue of the newspaper:

"Geo. S. Filkins has finished the brick work on his store on South Main Street. It is about 24 feet front and 30 or more feet deep, and is built up three stories high. The upper story is leased to the I.O.O.F. (International Order of Odd Fellows) Lodge of village and is finished off just as fast as possible so that they can get in there with their society and its belongings. It will be fitted up so as to make a fine room for their use."

By December of 1888, the Filkins store was up and running, in partnership with Henry Eldridge, who brought to the endeavor the experience that George lacked. A full line of groceries and provisions were available at the new market, in a store described in the local press as *"fine, light and airy...filled with a fresh clean stock of goods."*

Fifty years after the building was constructed, the Fairport Permanent Loan Association purchased the Filkins Block, to be the new home of their bank, soon to be known as Fairport Savings and Loan. Remodeling of the building began immediately. Apparently in disrepair, the third floor was removed, and the second floor was renovated for a new tenant, the insurance agency of George A. Slocum. The first floor, which had been the Buick dealership of Fairport Motors, relocated to 38 West Avenue, freeing up space for the bank to move in.

Fairport Savings Bank was purchased by Evans Bank a few years ago, and still operates a branch in the old Filkins Block at 45 South Main Street.

Stop by the Fairport Historical Museum this spring and review our new display dedicated to this important component to our local history.



Henry Eldridge

Geo. S. Filkins

South Grocery !

NEW BLOCK

South Main St.

—IN—

FAIRPORT.

New and Complete

STOCK OF

GROCERIES !

AND

Provisions !

Consisting of

Flour, Meal,

Vegetables,

Salt Fish, Etc.

Sugars.

Coffees.

Teas,

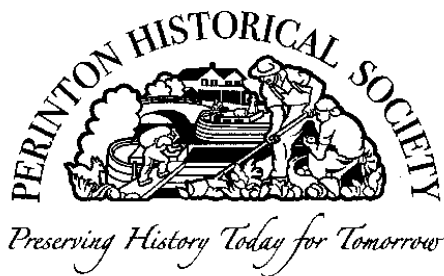
Spices !

And Everything kept in a
First-Class

Grocery Store!

PLEASE GIVE US A CALL.

Eldridge & Filkins



Non-Profit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Permit No. 149
Fairport, NY 14450



“Charlie Kopp’s enterprise should certainly come under the head of new industry and Charlie himself be regarded as Fairport’s new canal commodore. Five years ago this gentleman was quite content to tinker with motors that made wheels go round. Now more than half his time is devoted to restoring the aging lungs and eliminating the asthmatic wheezings of marine motors.

In a few short years Kopp’s Marina has become a by-word among the canal cruiser trade from Buffalo to Albany, and many a captain nurses his ailing ship a few extra miles to give Charlie an opportunity to diagnose an unwelcome motor murmur.

Under plans and ambitions Charlie Kopp hopes that by strict attention to his marina he can aid the growth of Fairport and help restore much of its past glories as a port of call.”

Charlie Kopp's portrait by photographer John North, and an excerpt from his Chamber of Commerce profile, (right), published in the *Fairport Herald-Mail* on October 11, 1961

Fairport Historical Museum, 18 Perrin Street, Fairport, NY 14450

The museum opens for the season on Saturday, March 4th. Hours are Saturdays from 9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m. and Sundays and Tuesdays from 2:00–4:00 p.m. Free admission. Group tours, presentations and special projects are by appointment. Please call and leave a message at **585-223-3989** www.PerintonHistoricalSociety.org