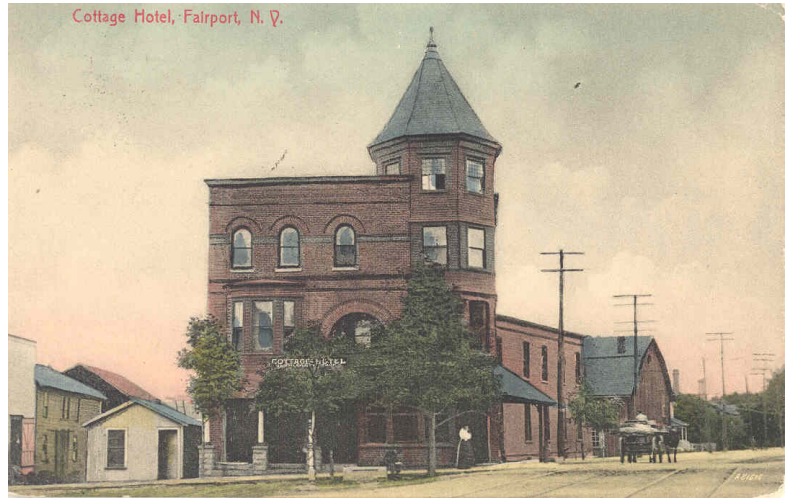


THE COTTAGE HOTEL

When the canal and the railroad regularly carried passengers, one of the characteristics of any town on those routes was the existence of numerous hotels, inns, and taverns (of which there were so many north of the canal in Fairport that the area was given the nickname “Whiskey Flats”). The Cottage Hotel, located at the corner of North Main and State Street (formerly John Street, currently Lift Bridge Lane East), was one of several hotels located in the village. Turn of the century advertising touted it as having unexcelled cuisine and as being “hotel headquarters” in Fairport.



The structure was built in 1886 on the site of a former blacksmith shop and wagon business. Peter Daily, the owner, built the brick building in the Queen Anne style with a four-story hexagonal tower, bay windows, and recessed porches, one facing on North Main Street and the other on John (State) Street. It included guest rooms, dining facilities, a bar, and a livery stable with horse barns in the back. Its location, in Fairport’s commercial north side, was close to the canal, the railroad, and what would later become the trolley line, and as such was convenient for both business travelers and tourists.

Joseph Smith, a hotel entrepreneur, purchased the building in 1889. He had run hotels in Macedon and Ontario, and the Osburn House in Fairport. He added a two story 60 foot long annex to the structure which included a barber shop, a popular reading and writing room with large bay windows, and a third floor with distinctive arched windows. The rooms were heated with steam and there was running water and electricity. All this could be enjoyed for \$1.50 to \$2.00 per night. By 1915, owner T.J. “Yank” McCarthy was advertising 35 rooms and unexcelled cuisine. By the mid 1920’s, the structure was billed as a “hotel and restaurant,” and the livery and horse barns had been replaced by cars and garages.

Apparently, during the late twenties and early thirties, the Cottage Hotel served primarily as a residential hotel for those who were doing business in Fairport or who were employed in construction jobs on the canal or railroad.

In the mid-1930’s, the hotel was purchased by Peter and Lucy Prinzivalli, who made extensive improvements and modernized the building. Concrete block sections were added to the front facade and to the annex. The old billiard room on the first floor was transformed into a dining room with an orchestra platform and a floor show area. Fraser’s orchestra from Rochester and other groups were engaged to play. The music was enjoyed not only in the dining-show area, but was also carried to the other dining area and the second floor dance floor by a newly installed amplification system. It was a popular night club which hosted many parties and was considered a “nice place to go” by area residents. In the 1940’s in particular, the bar area, which was located in the front, became a regular spot, especially for some second shift American Can workers who would stop for a drink on the way home.

From the 1930’s to the 1960’s, the building continued to serve patrons as a hotel, restaurant, and bar, even as the shift to interstate highways and their adjacent motels was making establishments like the Cottage Hotel increasingly difficult to sustain. In 1968, however, the question of the future of the Cottage Hotel was decided: the old hotel was gutted by fire. Flames were first noticed about 3:30 a.m., and it took 125 volunteers and six fire companies to finally bring the blaze under control. There

were injuries; one, Estile Hampton, an employee of the Stappenbeck Co. of Penfield, died, and several fire fighters were treated for smoke inhalation and cuts. The owner of "Hawk's Restaurant" across the street, Albert DiRisio, opened up in order to serve fire fighters and hotel residents and to be the headquarters for Red Cross aid. Unfortunately, the owners of the hotel, Ben, David, and Gordon Abbott, were unable to salvage the severely damaged building and it was razed the next year.

Although the village still has a number of restaurants and taverns, there are no longer any hotels located in the village.