



The Osburn house was one of several hotels in the Village of Fairport at the turn of the 20th century. Pictured here is a room in the Osburn House featuring a group of young men and the small son of the proprietor Edward Cary. There is no explanation of why the gentlemen were gathered in this particular room.

The Osburn House was built in 1860, 1868, or 1870 by either Patrick Doyle or Robert Mars, depending on the source. What is clear, however, is that it was an imposing building and a well-equipped hotel. It had floor to ceiling windows and double doors that led into a wide hall on the first floor, which had an office, parlor, bar, and dining room that could accommodate up to fifty people. The second and third floors provided eight to ten bedrooms for guests, and living quarters for the hotel owner. The kitchen wing was in the back, as was an ice house and a livery stable. Ice came either from the adjacent mill pond or from the canal at the Oxbow. It was certainly more elegant than the earlier canal inns where a dormitory had been the most common accommodation.

By the early 1900's, the hotel was owned by Edward J. Cary, whose letterhead advertised the Osburn House as heated by steam, having electric lights, and also having a first-class livery. During this time, the hotel became a popular eating place, offering an "old-fashioned chicken dinner" on Sunday for thirty-five cents.

By the beginning of the twentieth century things were changing and hotel advertisements talk about catering to "automobile and special parties." Sometime during this period, the second floor was converted to a meeting hall for the Fairport Grange. They created two large rooms, one with an attached kitchen. One room was used for dining and the other for meetings. A variety of social events including dances, weddings, and, apparently even the occasional basketball game were held there. Jack Ryan's bar on the first floor, however, was still a popular destination.

W. Lines Baker purchased the building in 1922. He completely renovated and rebuilt, converting the hotel, according to one source, into "one of the most complete gas and auto service stations in the state." His father, Frank J. Baker, joined him in the business that they named the Fairport Oil Company. The Bakers operated a Chevrolet sales agency there as well. After Lines Baker's death, Max Humphrey leased the facility to store auto parts and tires and sold American Gas from the gas pump that stood where the front porch canopy had been.

In 1938, the elegant old Osburn Hotel was demolished and a rather ordinary but functional concrete building was constructed on the site, which Max Humphrey continued to lease and to run as an Amoco gas station until his retirement. The building is now the home of Fairport Donuts.

