



The large house at 53 West Church Street, pictured in the two photos on the left is probably the largest and most elegant residence on Church Street and a well-known Fairport landmark. The house was built in the 1850's, but is known as the Potter house after the family that lived there from the 1870's through the 1940's.

Alfred and Hulda Potter and their children Fred, Alice, and Bertha took up residence in 1872. Hulda and Alfred made some significant changes to the house, removing the tower and adding a third floor with balconies and space for a ballroom. Eventually Alice and Bertha married and moved away, and Fred, a more or less solitary figure, remained, living with his mother in the Church Street house after his father's death. When Hulda died in 1925, the house became Fred's.

Fred, who was considered a bit eccentric, collected antiques, enjoyed his cars, Fairport village, and traveling. The photo on the right shows Fred and his chauffeur in his 1905 six cylinder Ford, one of the first autos in the village of Fairport. Upon his death in 1943, he left money to the Fairport Library, several churches, Mt. Pleasant cemetery (where the family is buried), and selected friends. The house, the carriage barn, five acres, and a sum of money were left to the village of Fairport.

Fairport village proceeded to remodel the house and property as a community center. The grounds were developed to provide citizens with space for tennis, softball, and skating. Swings and a sandbox were added. The barn (later known as the Nook and then the Tiger & Toe) was renovated to provide a space where "young folks may meet and enjoy wholesome recreation." The house was redesigned to include recreation and meeting rooms. A live-in director was hired to oversee the house and the property. The center and the playground opened in 1944. Today this landmark village house continues to serve several community groups; the playground is still used, and the skating rink area has been successfully converted into a community garden.

