

## A TRIO OF FAIRPORT BUSINESSES

At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the fertile agricultural lands of Perinton and the surrounding areas produced a large quantity of fruits and vegetables that provided the raw materials for a growing canning industry. The two largest packing and canning firms in the area were Cobb's Preserving Company and the Egypt Canning Company.

Thomas Packing Company, also known as Fairport Packing Company, might well be known as the "other packing company." Ananias Edgett, founder of that company, was the brother of Ezra, who along with George Cobb had founded the larger Cobb's Preserving Company.

In 1881 Ananias apparently stopped working with his brother Ezra when the latter decided that Ananias was not a good enough plant manager. He went on to form a smaller canning company on Parker Street just north of the bridge, setting up business in a building that had formerly been a blacksmith shop.

The company changed hands several times in the 1890's, first being sold to the Burlingame brothers, and then to Thomas Roberts, who had worked as a wholesale grocer in Philadelphia. By 1892, Howard Thomas, whose name the company would bear for a time, took over. Thomas had had several years experience in the canning business in New Jersey before resettling in Fairport.

Thomas improved the plant, adding new machinery and building a large brick engine and boiler room. He employed between two and three hundred workers who processed large quantities of fruits and vegetables, most of which came from local growers. At times of increased demand, apples, pears, peaches, and other produce were imported from other areas. Brands, which were sold nationwide, included "Rochester Beauty," "Pride of Rochester," "Park," "New York State," and "Fairport." By 1908 the company had become known as the Fairport Packing Company and was selling Golden Tip, Rochester Beauty, and Oakfield Brand products.

In a similar vein, the Monroe Chemical Company and the E.L. Dudley Company were the "other baking soda" companies, having been overshadowed by the DeLand Chemical Company.

Edward Dudley joined Charles Howe and John Dixon to form Howe, Dixon and Dudley, manufacturers of soda, saleratus, and baking powder. By 1895, it became Dudley and Company, after the departure of Howe and Dixon and the addition of D.C. Becker. They manufactured Napoleon Baking Powder, Napoleon Baking Soda, and Utopia Corn Starch. These three products were also sold in quantity to retailers who marketed them under their own labels. Their business grew rapidly enough to warrant a move from their original location in the Deal block at 34 North Main Street to a larger facility on Railroad Street with better shipping facilities and room to expand.

W. I. Ayers had a spice and baking powder business which he sold to William Newman in 1874. The company was known as Newman and Son and then as Monroe Chemical Company. Ads of the period noted that there was "nothing superior to Golden Shield Soda and Golden Shield Baking Powder," and that the products were "warranted to give perfect satisfaction." The manufacturing facility was located on the east side of North Main Street just north of Railroad Street and the NYCRR rail lines, in buildings now occupied by Fairport Antiques & the Fairport Erie Canal Shop.

The 1913 Fairport directory lists both the Dudley Company and the Monroe Chemical Company.