

Every Picture Tells a Story

By Bill Poray, Perinton Town Historian

Researching an old photograph can yield a surprising amount of information. In this case, the image is part of a collection donated to the Perinton Historical Society and their museum in Fairport. The photo is of the storefront of Edson D. Warren in the old Bown building. Warren, born August 7, 1872, was engaged in retail business his entire adult life. Prior to arriving in Fairport in 1910, he operated stores in Fishers, Newark, and Victor. Warren purchased the general store of M.J. Kellogg in the Bown building on South Main Street. According to signs in the plate glass windows, the E.D. Warren general store featured “Dri-Phut” shoes and offered S&H Green Stamps.

Edson Warren had heart trouble, and met his fate while sailing on Sodus Bay on August 17, 1939. According to the Fairport Herald-Mail, he was in a boat operated by his 13 year old granddaughter, Jean DeLand: “They were on their way from the family summer cottage to the mainland when Jean heard her grandfather say he was not feeling well, and glancing back saw him crumpled down and unconscious. They were very close to shore at the time.”



Mabel Chesbro and C.A. French at the E.D. Warren store in Fairport's Bown block

In April of the following year Sam Silver of Rochester opened a new men's store, “Silvers”, in the space formerly occupied by Warren, and Kellogg before him. Silver was followed by others, including the D&W Department Store, and the Fairport Department Store.

Other clues are to be found in the vintage photograph reproduced here. Two people, most likely employees, stand proudly in front of the E.D. Warren store, probably not long after the doors first opened in 1910. The young lady is Mabel Chesbro, of 38 South Avenue. Born in 1893, Mabel was a member of the Fairport High School class of 1913. She went on to become a teacher, and eventually became a public school principal in New Jersey.



1965 photograph of the South Main Street store of Charles French, who is pictured in the early photograph of the E.D. Warren store

The gentleman in the photograph is Charles French. Born in 1879, French and Edson Warren were friends, and likely came to Fairport from Victor at about the same time. Charles French served as a village trustee in the 1920s, and eventually opened the C.A. French store on South Main Street, where many area residents bought their first refrigerator and television. Although French died in 1954, the business carried on under his name for many years to come.

The storefront on the right of the Bown building was the location of the E.D. Warren store. In this 1965 photo, Warren's Florist and Gift Shop occupies the space.



As fate would have it, the storefront occupied by the E.D. Warren store from 1910 to 1940 once again featured the Warren name in 1961. Some might remember the store - Warren's Florist and Gift Shop, owned by Warren C. Tetor.