

ROGERS & AKIN VINEGAR FACTORY & CIDER MILL - Site
and S.N.CLARK TUB & BUTTER FIRKIN CO.
HISTORY SHEET
General Information

Name of Structure: Rogers & Akin Vinegar Factory & Cider Mill /
S. N. Clark Tub and Butter Firkin Co. /
Mourin & Merrill Cabbage and Potato Storehouse

Address: 95 South Main St, Homer
Parcel ID: (113001) 76.26-01-56.000

Atlas:¹ 1863: Steam Planing Mill; 1876: Philetus Clark; Lot 45

When Built & Mason: ~1867²

When Razed: November, 1958
Why Razed: Urban renewal and out of safety concerns

Original Owner: James A Rogers, George W Akin
Subsequently: Samuel Pierce, Philetus Clark

Description: No photographs are known to exist.
The original house at 95 S Main St is still there.

OVERVIEW

This 2-story building was built by the firm Rogers & Akin (James A Rogers, George W Akin) for use as a vinegar factory and cider mill. It was built onto the back of a residence identified on the 1855 atlas as "S Pierce" which was later owned by Alonzo Rogers who built the cobblestone building. The residence (not cobblestone) was subsequently owned and occupied by E.D. Mourin and daughter Florence Merrill. The 1876 atlas indicates 'P Clark'. Philetus Clark and son Simeon ran the "S.N.Clark Tub and Butter Firkin Co". The property was foreclosed and a Sheriff's Sale was held on 3/28/1885. Subsequently it came into possession of

¹ 1876 Atlas includes a directory of businesses in Homer:

<https://www.historicmapworks.com/Map/US/208609/Directory+2/Cortland+County+1876/New+York/>

Clark, P. & Son ... Manufacturers of tubs, firkins, return pails, wood-ware, etc ... Main Street
... 1873 (date of settlement) New York

² 1863 map shows the building exists although newspaper accounts report it was built in 1867.

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Henry Hooker of Syracuse who owned it in 1894 when it was burned in a fire. In 1899 the building was purchased by Edward D. Mourin and William S. Wolfe. The firm of "Mourin, Wolfe & Co" was dissolved in 1903. Mourin retained and continued using the building for storing cabbage and potatoes purchased from local farmers. In 1916 he made his son-in-law, Lewis P. Merrill, a partner in the firm "Mourin and Merrill". When Merrill died in 1919 his wife, Florence, became active in this business with her father and remained so well into the 1930s. E.D.Mourin died in 1940 at 89 years old, when Florence was 65.

Cortland Standard, 11/14/1958, reported: "The old cobblestone building on the Merrill property on South Main St was torn down this week," after having been condemned as unsafe by the Village Board of Trustees. No documentation has been found relative to how or when the businesses and buildings of "Mourin and Merrill" were disposed of or for how long the cobblestone building had been vacant before being demolished.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Timeline:

Rogers & Akin (Alonzo Rogers built it) - vinegar & cider mill

S.N.Clark Tub & Butter Firkin Co: 1873 Philetus Clark opened business w/son - barrels & firkins

1885 - Foreclosure sale

1894 - Fire when Henry Hooker owned it

1899 - Purchased by Edward D. Mourin - store house for cabbage and potatoes

1916 - Partner with son-in-law "Mourin & Merrill"

1958 - "Merrill Cobblestone Building Razed" (safety concerns) - cabbage storage "until recently"

1867: The cobblestone building is constructed:

[Syracuse NY Daily Journal 1867 - 1482.pdf](#) (10/19/1867)

"The Homer *Republican* has the following recount of the new Vinegar Factory and Cider Mill, which has been erected by Messrs Rogers & Akin, at Homer. They operate by steam, and have a good, safe and reliable power. They have a large and commodious building, 40 by 80 feet, and built of cobblestone two stories above the basement. The wall of the basement story is two feet thick; first story 18 inches, and second story 16 inches. They have in the upper story in process of manufacture, 80 tubs, holding 83 quarts each. The second story has one large water

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tank, holding about one hundred barrels from which the engine is supplied. This story is devoted to the storage of molasses and vinegar in casks. Ten foot across the east end of the lower story is occupied by a large mixing tub, boiler and engine. The remainder of the room is used for storing vinegar in casks after it has matured. They have wine plant juice sufficient for 30,000 gallons of vinegar, and design to manufacture from 150,000 to 200,000 gallons of cider vinegar."

[Homer NY Republican 1880-1884 - 0134.pdf](#) (3/10/1881)

"... The house south of Mr. Ranney's, in which Col. Tubbs resided for a time, was subsequently owned and occupied by Samuel Pierce; afterwards by Alonzo Rogers, by whom the stone building in the rear of the house was erected for the purpose of manufacturing cider and vinegar, but since it has passed into the possession of Mr Clark, it has been converted into a cooperage, and in it is being carried on quite an extensive business."

[Homer NY Independent 1960-1962 - 0315.pdf](#) (9/29/1961)

"Histories of Homer industries are continued with the following article which is one of several submitted by Mr. R. Curtis Harris: ... Also in the 1860s on South Main St, Rogers and Akin operated a cider mill and vinegar factory in their new two-story cobblestone building near the river not far below Albany Street—a project requiring fifteen acres of wine-plant (rhubarb) as a source of raw material. ..."

Gazetteer and Business Directory of Cortland County, N.Y., for 1869.

<http://homer-ny.com/1869-homer-directory-2/>

ROGERS & AKIN, (Homer,) (*James A. Rogers and George W. Akin,*) props. of cider mill and vinegar factory and own 15 acres wine plant.

1884: Newspaper advertising

[Homer NY Republican 1884-1886 - 0019.pdf](#) (4/3/1884)

Advertisement: "Simeon N Clark, Manufacturers of Firkins, Tubs, Tobacco Pails, Kegs, Pall Handles, Apple Barrels. My facilities for manufacturing all kinds of Tubs and Firkins are unequalled. Simeon N. Clark, Office and Works, Main Street, Homer N.Y."

History of Cortland County : with illustrations and biographical sketches of some of its prominent men and pioneers © 1885, p. 215

<https://archive.org/details/historyofcortlan00smit/page/n235/mode/2up?q=XIX&view=theater>

"The butter firkin factory of S. N. Clark was established in 1873 and is now manufacturing about 15,000 tubs and 10,000 pails annually, giving employment during the busy season to twelve to fifteen men."

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1891: Undisclosed nature of litigation between Simeon Clark and Henry Hooker

[Homer NY Republican 1891-1895 - 0044.pdf](#) (9/17/1891)

"1891: County Court Cases ... No 8, Henry E. Hooker against Simeon N. Clark ..."

[Cortland NY Democrat 1891 - 0316.pdf](#) (9/18/1891)

"Henry C. Hooker, respondent, vs. Simeon N. Clark, appellant, arguments were heard and decision reserved."

No details given; no followup in later newspapers.

1894: Fire

[Cortland NY Standard 1894 a - 0231.pdf](#) (5/31/1894)

1894 Fire: On Tuesday evening shortly at 10:15 o'clock the fire alarm was sounded... The fire proved to be in the unoccupied firkin factory which at one time was owned and operated by Mr Simeon Clark, but which now belongs to Mr Henry Hooker of Syracuse. The flames were confined entirely to the rear and middle of the building which is a cobblestone structure, two stories high with a wooden annex... The damage to the building which was thoroughly gutted was not great. The insurance is supposed to amount to \$2,000. The building contained beside the engine, boiler, machinery and a few tools—several sleighs belongs to and stored there by nearby residents. Most of the latter were saved. There was no insurance upon the contents of the building. There is not much doubt but that the origin of the fire was incendiary, thus adding another to the long list of similar incidents which have occurred recently."

1899: Building purchased to be used for storage of cabbage

[Cortland NY Standard 1899 - 1987.pdf](#) (10/27/1899)

1899 New Owners: HOMER, Oct 27, 1899 — "Mourin, Wolfe & Co have purchased the factory on South Main St, formerly used as a vinegar factory. This building will be used by them as a cabbage storehouse, having a capacity for 500 tons."

1958: Cobblestone Torn Down

[Cortland NY Standard 1958 - 4180.pdf](#) (11/14/1958)

"HOMER — Cobblestone Building, Area Landmark Since 1869, Razed — The old cobblestone building on the Merrill property on South Main St was torn down this week by Gerald Contento and his men after having been condemned as unsafe by the Village Board of Trustees. Built in 1869 as a wine and vinegar mill, in subsequent years, the 2-story building has been used to store cabbage and reportedly, mushrooms have been raised in its deep cool cellar. According to R Curtis Harris who has done much research in the history of Homer, the building was used by the S.N. Clark Tub and Butter Firkin Company which at one time employed 20 men and in 1888, according to the Homer Republican, turned out 3,000 firkins, 10,000 tubs and 15,000 tobacco and candy pails. It was badly damaged by fire in 1894 and a few years later was

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purchased by Mourin and Wolfe for cabbage storage. It was used to store cabbage until a short time ago. ... now given way to progress and the interest of safety."