

P R A T T - H U X L E Y   H O U S E (Site)  
HISTORY SHEET  
General Information & References

Name of Structure:    Huxley Cobblestone House

Address:                7544 Fisher Rd<sup>1</sup>, Dist 4, Lot 48

Parcel ID:                (544600) 64119-00-217229 (current house built 1974)

Atlas:                    1853, 1858: "A Pratt"; 1874: "J.B. Huxley"; 1904: "Mrs Huxley"

When Built /Mason:    Unknown

When Razed:            After 1946 fire (maybe late 50s)

Subsequently:          Site redeveloped into a subdivision early 1970s

Original Owner:        Descendant of Aaron Pratt

Subsequent Owner:    Jonas B Huxley and Huxley family for 3 generations (son Franklin;  
then grandson Frederick (and his children) )

Original Use:            House and Fruit Farm

Subsequent Use:        Tenant House

Photographs:          Chet Peters<sup>2</sup> had one but couldn't find it at my visit 4/5/2012.  
He said it was a 1½-story Greek Revival very similar to the Meaker House  
just south of it (7212 Fisher Rd; destroyed in fire 8/30/2012) and it had  
been gone for many, many years, razed after 1957.

Description:

Meaker house was a simple, 1½-story house with a center entrance (with two windows flanking each side); frieze with 5 belly windows centered above lower openings; limestone quoins, lintels, sills; chimney at each gable end; long side facing road. The long side faced the road. The sides appear to have been mirror images of one another with 2 windows on lower level and two similar sized windows above them. The chimney on the left (north) end was an internal chimney, but on the right side it appears to have been on the exterior of the house, between the windows (an apparent later modification).

This may also be what the nearby Huxley house was like, especially if built by the same mason as was common in the period.

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<sup>1</sup> Fisher Rd: aka Ontario-Williamson Townline Rd

<sup>2</sup> Chet Peters was Williamson Town Historian from ~1970 until 2016, 93 years old at the time I visited. During my visit we toured some sites of both extant and razed cobblestone buildings. He pointed out 7544 Fisher Rd where the Huxley cobblestone house had once stood.

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NOTE: Meaker House was consumed in a fire on 8/25/2012. I photographed it during my 4/5/2012 visit with Mr Peters. The stone and masonry work on the Meaker house was all in very good shape, but the paint was peeling away and the property was overgrown, appeared to have been abandoned for some time. All debris was promptly removed from the site and a year later no trace remained of the structure ever having existed there.

### Overview

In 1874 Jonas B Huxley purchased a large fruit farm containing a cobblestone house. This house burned in 1946. It was kept in the Huxley family for 100 years when in 1974 it was sold.

Unknown which member of the Pratt family was associated with this house—there are many people named “A. Pratt” and no primary resources to narrow which one of them is the owner in the 1850s. We do know, however, it acquired by Jonas Huxley in 1874. Farm remained in Huxley family until sold in 1974. The cobblestone house itself was burned in a fire in 1946 and subsequently torn down. DWP<sup>3</sup> documented the Huxley house in her 1940 survey. The late Chet Peters, Williamson Town Historian, said the Huxley house had been nearly identical with the Meaker house just south of it on the east side of Fisher Rd before it was razed many years ago. DWP described both houses with red lake stones on the façade set 5/Q and varicolored stones on the sides. Photographs of Meaker house confirm these details.

### References

Genealogy Report: Descendants of Thomas Huxley, done by Carolyn P Jordan

<https://www.genealogy.com/ftm/j/o/r/Carolyn-P-Jordan/index.html>

The information herein is almost exclusively from the genealogy at the following web links:

<https://www.genealogy.com/ftm/j/o/r/Carolyn-P-Jordan/GENE1-0005.html> Jonas B

<https://www.genealogy.com/ftm/j/o/r/Carolyn-P-Jordan/GENE1-0006.html> Franklin W

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<sup>3</sup> Dorothy Wells Pease (DWP), p33 of her 1940 essay, entries 2 and 3:

2. “Meaker house; lake stones 5/Q. Facade are red stones, on sides are varying colors. Iron grillwork covers eave windows. Josiah Smith’s father built the house but it’s been in the Meaker family for 3 generations.”
3. “The Huxley house, north of here, is a 1-story. The front is red lake stone 5/Q; the ends have varicolored stones 4/Q. It is occupied by a tenant now.”

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<https://www.genealogy.com/ftm/j/o/r/Carolyn-P-Jordan/GENE1-0007.html> Frederick B

Beginning with Jonas B Huxley (1801-1885).

<https://www.genealogy.com/ftm/j/o/r/Carolyn-P-Jordan/GENE1-0005.html> Jonas B

"There are no Huxley names in Wayne County census records prior to 1830 ... Jonas pursued many occupations in Wayne County. In the 1840s he was a canal boat Captain on the Erie Canal. In the 1852 he owned land and possibly still captained a canal boat. In the 1860s he was an Inn Keeper of the Farmer's Exchange Hotel in Palmyra., Wayne Co, NY. In the 1840s Jonas purchased a little white house across the canal from the farmer's Exchange Hotel. Both the hotel and the house had been owned by Butler Newton. Jonas then moved the little house to Canal Street. In **1874 Jonas** traded the hotel for a large fruit farm on Millard (now Fisher) Road in Williamson, Wayne Co., NY from a Mr. Miller. The farm consisted of \_\_\_\_ acres and a cobblestone house, built from stones carried from nearby Lake Ontario. This house **burned in 1848**<sup>4</sup>. This farm was kept in the Huxley family for 100 years when in 1974 it was sold. "

Then son, Franklin W Huxley (1832-1912)

He was eldest of five children (3 boys, 2 girls)

<https://www.genealogy.com/ftm/j/o/r/Carolyn-P-Jordan/GENE1-0006.html> Franklin W

From his obituary: "Frank Huxley, a well known resident of Ontario, and a former Palmyra man, died in Ontario on Tuesday of this week. He was the son of the late Jonas Huxley who was for years the proprietor of the Exchange Hotel. He is survived by one son, Frederick B Huxley" (1/3/1913) He also worked as a boat Captain on the Erie Canal in the 1850s and 1870s in Palmyra NY. In the Horton Block and one door east of the Eagle (now Palmyra) Hotel, Frank owned a saloon in the basement in the 1860s. By 1875 Franklin was farming in the town of Williamson. (The farm was located in the town of Williamson but considered Ontario)."

Note: Actual obituary notice: <http://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn83031814/1913-01-03/ed-1/seq-2/>

Third generation, Franklin's son, Frederick B Huxley (1869-1952)

<https://www.genealogy.com/ftm/j/o/r/Carolyn-P-Jordan/GENE1-0007.html>

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<sup>4</sup> This date may be a typo. The house did burn, but it was in 1946. <http://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn88074529/1946-04-04/ed-1/seq-1/> "At 6:40 PM a second alarm summoned the firemen to the North Townline Road where a dwelling on the F.B. Huxley farm, about a half mile from the lake road apparently caught fire from sparks from the kitchen chimney and burned, leaving a family of six homeless ... Isaac Christiaansen, the tenant farmer, discovered the fire at 6:30 PM."

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"In 1906 Frederick purchased his father's farm on Fisher Rd (formerly Millard Rd), Williamson that included 140 acres with a value of \$5,000."

The Carolyn P Jordan genealogy does not mention the farm or cobblestone house beyond this point.

No newspaper accounts have been found relating to Jonas or Franklin with respect to this farm. Third generation Frederick does manage the farm and grows it into a large successful fruit processing (apples) operation, aided by his three daughters and son.

Rochester NY Democrat Chronicle 1892 - 3201.PDF (2/11/1892)

Fred Huxley has returned from Texas and rented his father's farm north of Ontario village.

Palmyra NY Courier 1894-1899 - 0721.PDF (9/10/1897)

Fred Huxley's warehouse is nearing completion. It is said to be one of the largest buildings of the kind on the line of the H.W.&O.

Fairport NY Monroe County Mail 1899 - 1901 Grayscale - 1108.pdf (8/22/1901)

Fred Huxley has gone to Missouri to make arrangements for apple drying.

<http://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn88074232/1943-03-04/ed-1/seq-2/> Newark Courier Gazette

Third Dehydrating Plant in Vicinity Finished at Ontario — Growth of the dehydrating method of processing foods is emphasized by the announcement this week of the third plant for this purpose now in operation in this area. It is being operated at Ontario F. B. Huxley and Son, owners of canning plants in Ontario and Newark. Earle Huxley, the junior partner and manager of the new plant, announced that the factory was begun last May and went into partial operation in October to fill government orders. It is now fully completed and by this process removed from 90% to 95% of the moisture from fruits, vegetables and meats for economical shipment and storage without the use of cans ...

<http://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn88074529/1945-08-30/ed-1/seq-4/> Williamson Sun and Sentinel

Inspectors from the USDA at Washington DC are investigating the cause of the \$200,000 fire which recently destroyed the new dehydrating plant of the F.B. Huxley Co in the village of Ontario. According to Mildred Huxley, manager ... the plant held a government contract for a million pounds of dehydrated beets ... no plans were being made at present to rebuild."

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<http://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn88074529/1946-04-04/ed-1/seq-1/> Williamson Sun and Sentinel

"House Burns Leaving Six Homeless; Local Firemen Called to Fruitland Fire  
Wednesday, March 27th ... House Burns— At 6:40 alarm summoned the firemen to the north TL Rd, where a dwelling on the F.B. Huxley farm, about a half mile from the lake road apparently caught fire from sparks from the kitchen chimney and burning, leaving a family of six homeless. The roof of the attached woodshed was in flames, when Isaac Christiaansen, the tenant farmer, discovered the fire at 6:30 PM. Before turning an alarm he rescued from the burning house his wife, Mary 7, Nancy 6, Peggy 5, and Bonnie 2. He then attempted to control the flames with his spray rig until the firemen could arrive, but was unsuccessful due to the high wind blowing.

Williamson and Pultneyville firemen responded to the call and fought the blaze for 2½ hours. However, the combined fire companies ... were unable to save the house due to the high wind and the lack of water. What little water was available was conserved to save the barns and adjacent buildings. With the aid of neighbors and firemen, most of the household furnishings were carried to safety. Christiaansen estimates the damage to his furniture at \$100. It was not insured. ..."

<http://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn88074529/1947-07-31/ed-1/seq-1/> Williamson Sun and Sentinel

Camp Manager Arrested For Possessing Firearms ... Albert D Corley, 27, of Tampa FL, manager of the F.B. Huxley Migrant Labor Camp on the Shepherd Rd was arrested ... illegal possession unlicensed firearms ..."

<http://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn88074529/1953-02-12/ed-1/seq-4/> Williamson Sun and Sentinel

"FRED HUXLEY — Last rites for Fred B Huxley, 84 year old former food processor of Ontario, were held on Tuesday, Feb 10 at the Huxley residence in Ontario. Burial was made in the Palmyra Cemetery, Mr Huxley died Friday, Feb 6 at the General Hospital in Rochester, following a heart attack a few hours earlier. He had operated the F.B. Huxley and Son Canning Factory and Dehydrator at Ontario for about 30 years and was also one time Ontario Postmaster. He was a member of the Ontario Masonic Lodge and one of the early members of the Ontario Fire Company. Beside his wife, Bertha Allen Huxley, he leaves a son, Earle of Ontario, and three daughters, Mildred of Ontario, Doris of Rochester, and Mrs Lorenzo Palmer of Williamson."

See also: <http://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn84035938/1953-02-12/ed-1/seq-5/> - "Fred B Huxley, 84, died ... born in Palmyra on 2/3/1869, the son of Mr and Mrs Franklin Huxley."

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From this point forward, the F. B. Huxley farm is no longer reported in newspaper accounts. It is not clear what becomes of it from this point forward, when exactly it was sold, or to whom. The genealogy account documents it remained in the family until 1975 until it was sold. This property has been subdivided and is now populated with residences. One reference was found around this time period authenticating the genealogy account:

<http://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn87070398/1973-12-13/ed-1/seq-11/>

LEGAL NOTICE: Planning Board of the Town of Ontario ... public meeting ... **John Martin**, Huxley Farm Lake Rd, for a four lot subdivision ... 18th day of December ...

About A. Pratt

Little is documented about Aaron Pratt who initially settled here. There are many Pratt families throughout the town of Williamson. The cobblestone house was not built until much later, but as documented by George Cowles, some descendant was the original owner of the cobblestone house.

<https://archive.org/details/cu31924028835143/page/n355/mode/2up?q=Aaron+Pratt>

*Landmarks of Wayne County*, George W Cowles, © 1895, p308 Williamson chapter  
"In 1808 Aaron Pratt settled on the northwest lot in the town, where he died, and which was long owned by his descendants."

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/90544142/aaron-pratt> LakeView Cemetery (1759-1813)