

FABIUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

October 9th Meeting, 7pm : Aerial Photographs of Fabius and Pompey presented by Mark Parker, owner of Owner of American Aerial Scenes, covering his life as an aerial photographer. Join us at the Fabius Area Community Center to view various flight scenes of farms, some of which are no longer in existence. Refreshments in abundance afterwards.



DeRuyter Reservoir

FABIUS AREA CREAMERIES AND THEIR OPERATORS



Fabius Creamery Company, incorporated in 1893, replaced the previous building that had been destroyed by fire. Farmers shown delivering milk cans by horse and wagon.



On July 7, 1926 Borden's Farm Products Co. started the first glass-lined tank truck run from Apulia Station to the Hoboken, NJ terminal of the D.L. & W. Railroad.

The Hughes family and Cheese Making in Central New York

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Since the formation of the Town of Fabius, NY on March 9th, 1798, the major occupation of its residents has been working the land. In viewing the Fabius Assessor's Records of 1799, of the 118 property owners in the town, 107 are listed as farms, or 91% of the population is in agriculture.

Early farming required much land-clearing of the virgin forest. The first product to be marketed from the land was potash made from burning the felled trees. In 1835, Fabius had 3 asheries for making potash. As saw mills were established (15 in 1835), logs could also be marketed. With the clearing of the land, crops including wheat, barley, rye and oats could be grown, establishing the cereal grains in this area. In 1835, there were 4 grist mills in the Town of Fabius. Some of these grains were milled for flour or animal feed and some were utilized in the fermentation process of making whiskey. On the list of "Manufacturers of Fabius" from the 1820 Census who owned whiskey factories include:

Stephen Tripp (located on the Goodrich Farm west of the village) utilizing rye and corn.

Ezra Parker, Simon Keeney, John Meeker, and Philip Carter who all utilized rye, corn, barley and hops. There are no breweries or distilleries listed in the 1835 Fabius Census. Perhaps this was due to the American Temperance Society founded in 1826, Boston and spread across the nation with similar organizations, such as the Woman's Christian Temperance Union and the Anti-Saloon League founded in Christian base primarily championed by women.

The War of 1812 increased taxes on distilleries reducing the demand for grain crops. With this reduction of cereal grains, the next progression was the establishment of pastures and hay fields to support the raising of sheep and perhaps a family cow. As the climate and soils in central New York are best suited for growing hay and pasture, it was only natural that dairy cows could become one of the best uses of the land and a steady source of income for the farm family. Within a short time, farms increased the number of cows beyond the needs of the farm family. In the Fabius Census of 1835, Fabius boasted of 4156 neat cattle. Surplus milk was converted into butter and cheese by the farm family members, mostly falling into the hands of the farm wife. Her skill at making quality butter and cheese translated into value in bartering in the neighborhood at a higher price.

A gallon of whole milk would yield about 1/3 pound of butter with some byproducts: skim milk and buttermilk, while a gallon of milk would yield just slightly less than a pound of cheese. Butter had a much shorter shelf life, while farmer cheese could be stored for months and transported much further distances. Butter had the advantage that it could be churned every other day while cheese had to be made every day and perhaps twice each day after each milking. There had been much controversy about the making of whole milk cheese. Some farmers felt that the night milking, if let to set overnight, the cream would not mix well with the morning milk. Others corrected this problem by skimming the cream of the night milk and making butter with it, therefore not using whole milk to make cheese. Fabius resident Elizabeth Benedict Call (corner of Bailey and East Keeney Rd.), known as the milk maiden from Keeney Settlement, addressed this issue in her book "Advice to a Farm Wife", printed in 1859. Elizabeth wrote that she always made whole milk cheese by making her cheese right after each milking and taking the night cheese curds and combining them with the next morning's curds. By doing this, she could easily be finished with her evening cheese making by 9pm.

Jesse Williams, dairy farmer in the Town of Rome, Oneida Co., NY married Amanda Wells in 1822 and established a dairy farm in Verona. Amanda and Jesse made cheese with their milk and attempted to perfect their cheese making skills with the help of family members. Their reputation for fine cheese making was recognized after winning the NYS cheese championship held by the NYS Agriculture Society. In 1849 Jesse's son George married Anna Stark Rudd and they started a dairy farm next to Jesse's farm with the expectation to also make and sell cheese. Jesse assumed that his son would make the same quality cheese that he had always made and contracted both farm's cheese for the next year. With the quality concerns of the added farm, an arrangement was reached that George would supply his milk to Jesse and Jesse and Amanda would produce all the cheese. This arrangement worked so well that

surrounding farmers asked to join into a similar arrangement with Jesse. Jesse envisioned a concept he called "Associated Plan of Dairying" where farmers would share in the building and materials costs and also share in the profits. Jesse's sons George and Dewitt helped build the new cheese factory and within the next few years, Jesse was making cheese with the milk from 800 cows. Unlike many prospering businesses, Jesse openly shared all that he had learned about cheese making, his equipment and his factory layout. One of the families that lived in the area here were the children of Hiram and Phebe Eaton Hughes.

The Hiram Hughes Family Members of Fabius

At the time of Jesse William's development of "Associated Plan of Dairy", the Hiram Hughes family lived on a farm in Verona, Oneida Co., NY, milking 36 cows and making annually 1200#s of butter and 100#s cheese. Hiram and Phebe had eleven children, no doubt they all helped out with chores of milking, crops, cheese and butter making.



Hiram and Phebe Eaton Hughes

William Hughes (b.1834), Hiram's eldest son, married Sarah Benedict about 1860 in Fabius. We have not been able to establish a relationship between the early Fabius family of Aaron Benedict who



William and Sarah Benedict Hughes

opened the first store in Fabius in 1814 and his sons James and George. In the Tully 1870 and 1875 census, William and Sarah Hughes are operating a farm on Meeker Hill west of Apulia Station. We are told that he operated a small crossroads cheese factory from this location. His brother John and sister Trewey were living with them in 1865. William & Sarah had three children: Brainard, Minnie and Luther. Brainard (b.1865 in Fabius and married Etta Viola Briggs b. 1870) farmed on what is now the Hill & Dale Golf course. Brainard and Etta had five children, including Wilber Jay (b. 1895 and married Reba Lois Dodge b. 1896). They remained on the Hill & Dale Golf course farm, parenting 5 children. Their daughter, Beulah A. (b.1924) married Harlan Abbott who was a

vice-president of the Fabius Historical Society.

John Hughes (1842-1925), Hiram's fifth child, married Fanny Berry, daughter of Mathias and Sylvia Osborn Berry of Pompey. She was the first cousin of his sister Trewey's husband Orrin Osborn. Fanny died a year after their marriage in 1873. Two years later he married Polly Alexander of LaFayette, NY. John worked with his brother William at his Meeker Hill cheese factory in 1865. John's cheese making operation in LaFayette began in 1872. He then established the Richfield Cheese Factory at Collingwood and operated



John Hughes, Fannie Berry (1st wife) and Polly Alexander (2nd wife)

a crossroads cheese factory there. In the 1880 US Selected Industry, Special Census of Cheese, Butter and Condensed Milk Factories he is listed as owner. His factory operated there for the year from May 1879 to Oct. 1879 producing 22,050 lbs. of cheese from 100 cows. It was said that in his best year he produced 17.5 tons of cheese and was prosperous enough to have a new house built for himself in 1887. His operation came to a sudden halt in 1896 when the Onativia Creamery was created to handle fluid milk with the hope for a market all year long. All his dairy patrons elected to take their milk directly to the new creamery and receive a regular milk check rather than being paid in cheese that the farmers then had to market.

Eliza Hughes (b.1844), Hiram's sixth child, married in 1871 Abram Thomas Babcock (b.1845) of Cowles Settlement, settling on his parent's farm. They operated a dairy and a crossroads cheese factory and made cheese for the

local farmers. Their daughter, Mae Babcock (b.1875) married Newton Owen Woodford (b.1865) of Pompey in 1894. Nine years after their marriage they lost the farm in Pompey and settled in Cowles Settlement on her parent's farm. It was there they moved into "the factory", a house with the cheese factory in one end and their living quarters in the other. Mae and her mother made cheese were the cheese makers there. Mae Babcock was Israel "Izzy" Woodford's mother.



Newton Owen and Mae Babcock Woodford, Izzy's parents.



Eliza Hughes Babcock



Babcock Cheese Factory at Cowles Settlement

Irving Hughes (b.1854), Hiram's tenth child, was a cheese maker in Fabius in 1880, boarding in Apulia with the Wells family. He was also the cheese maker in Pompey's Fly Marsh area. In 1887 he bought a house and had a barn built in Union Valley, Cortland Co. In 1894 he married Florence Lincoln (b.1862) of Union Valley and for 25 years became the proprietor of the creamery there. In the 1910 Census the Hughes family is in Lisle, Broome Co. where Irving is listed as a "creameryman" owning his own creamery. They then moved to Cincinnatus where they lived. He died working at the Union Valley creamery on 20 Dec 1912. Their daughter Blanche Mae(b.1895) became Blanche Clapp when she married Morris Beard Clapp of Pompey, NY in 1913.



Irving Hughes

Trewey Hughes (b.1839), Hiram's fourth child, married Orin Osborn (b.1835) in 1865. Orin had been working with William Hughes in his Meeker Hill cheese factory. They purchased a Pompey farm and ran a small cheese factory there. In the photo below, Orin and Trewey

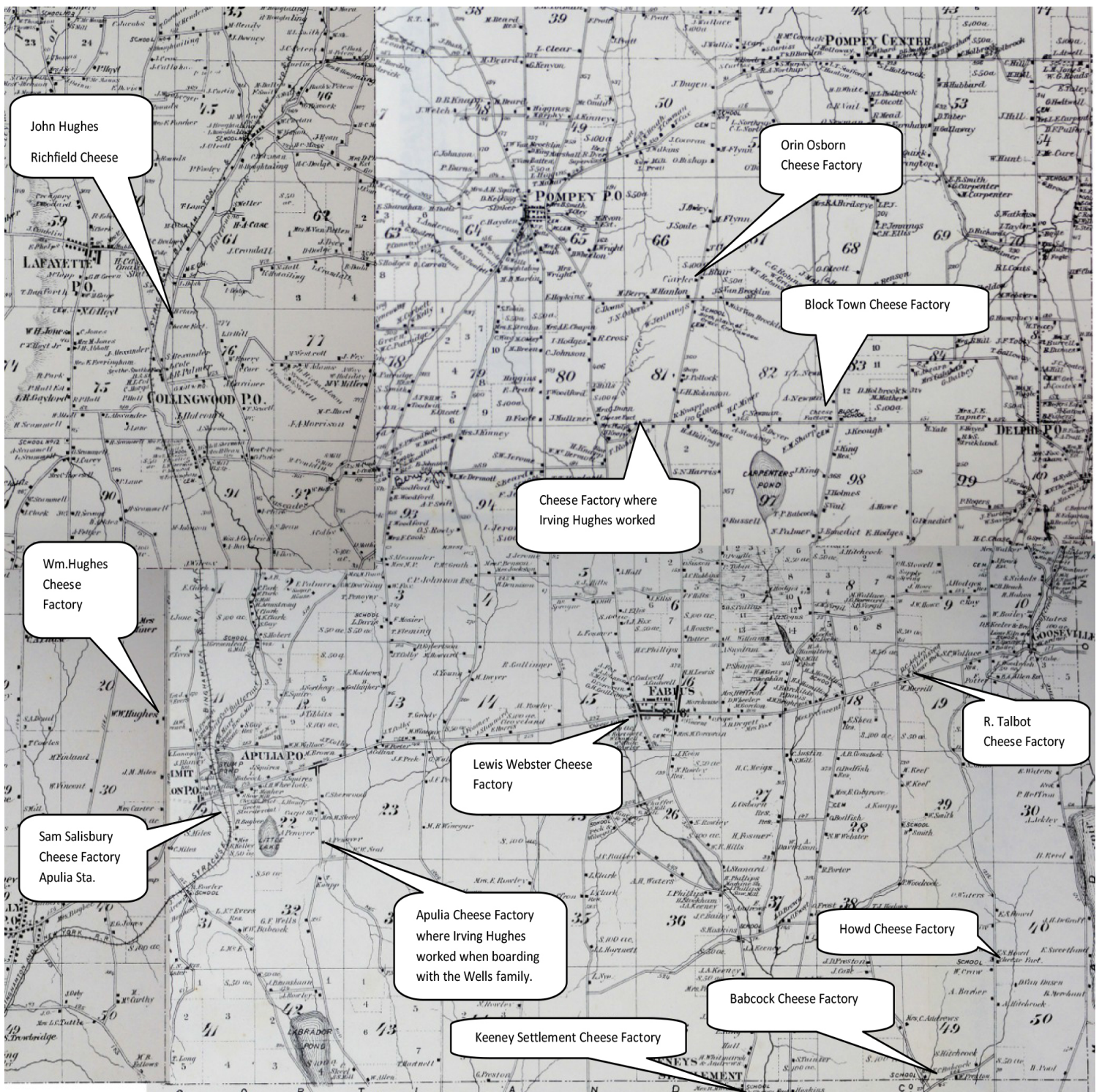


Hughes Osborn are posed in front of their Pompey farmhouse.



The old Clark farmhouse, after 1896 Orin Osborn's. Photo made March 1906. At left of house is the cheese house from which cheeses were stolen in Sept. 1880. More information about the theft can be found in [An Historical View of Pompey Hill, NY](#), Vol. III, by J. Roy Dodge, pg. 1044

Hiram and Phebe's other children either died young (Marvin) or were not involved in cheese making. Small crossroad cheese factories came to their demise when fluid milk could be safely transported by the railroad. The first transport of refrigeration (cans packed in ice) was on May 9, 1888, when a milk car from Tully went south on the D.L.&W. for the first time. The milk car ran daily after that, allowing central NY dairymen to expand their dairy production from seasonal to year round.

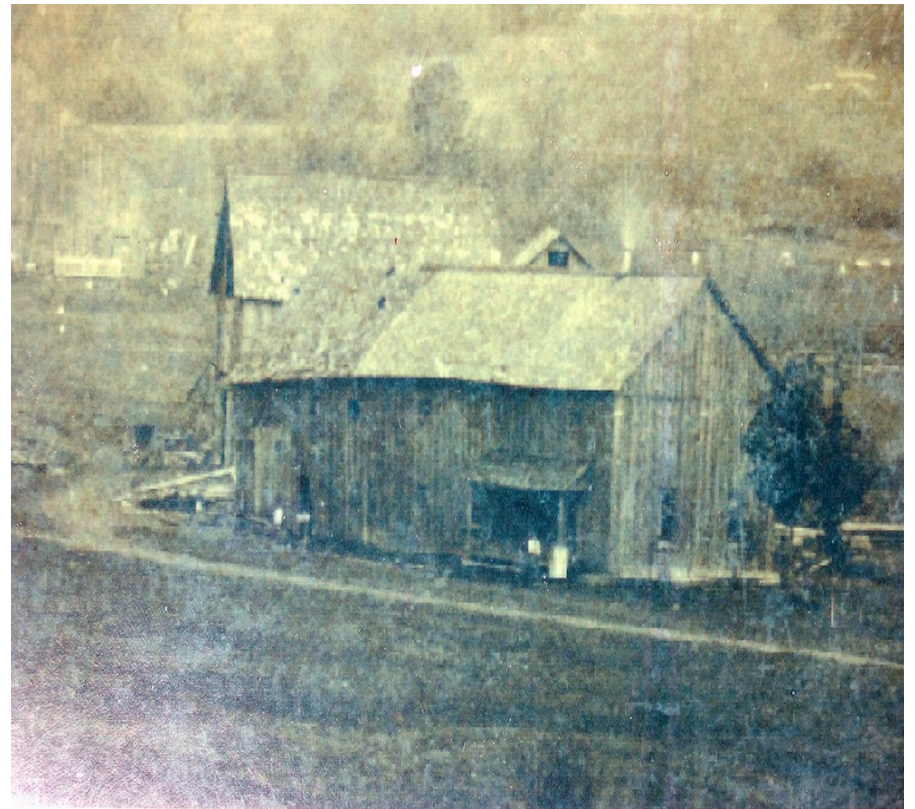


Map of the towns of Fabius, Pompey and LaFayette where some of the early cheese factories were located. At the same time, cheese was also made on many farms in the area for the family use and to be bartered.

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Newsletter

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Fabius, NY



The Babcock cheese factory in Cowles Settlement in Town of Fabius operated by Eliza Hughes Babcock and her daughter Mae Babcock Woodford.

Fabius Historical Society
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