

Local Grocers: Allen, Perrin and Griswold; Thomas Prushaw; Maytum

By Douglas Shepard / Barker Museum Newsletter (Autumn, 2000)

*(Conversations with **Robert Maytum, Sr.** October 17, 1994 and October 20, 1994.)*

Allen, Perrin and Griswold

Artemus Perrin was born in Connecticut in August **1803**. He came to Pomfret in **1832** and to Fredonia in **1861**. He and his wife had two sons, **Horace P.** and **Henry V. Perrin**. **Horace** attended the Fredonia Academy in **1853-1860**. He was married in **1866**, elsewhere, then returned to Fredonia in **1867**.

In the same year, **Owen W. Allen** came to visit his sister, **Mrs. Artemus Perrin**, and decided to move here permanently. In April **1868**, he took over the “Little Wooden Building” at **43 Main [20 East Main] Street**, where **J.R. Roberts** and **Spencer Allen** had had a grocery, and opened his boot and shoe store there.

His nephew **Horace** was Principal of the Fredonia Public School and later taught at the Normal School. He and his wife moved away in **1869** but returned in **1871**.

Around **1877**, **Horace** and his cousin **H.D. Allen** bought out **O.W. Allen** and continued the shoe business as “**Perrin and Allen**” at 20 W. Main Street. In **1881** they moved the business to 18 West Main Street while the **Hanisers** took over 20 West Main Street as a tobacco shop. **O.W. Allen** died in **1882**. In **1886**, **Horace Perrin** bought out his cousin keeping the store at 18 West Main Street.

In September **1887**, he took his former clerk, **Herman S. Griswold**, into partnership as “**Perrin and Griswold**” until **1891**, when **Perrin** retired from the firm. Around **1895**, **Griswold** moved the store to 71 [7 East] Main Street. In **1930**, he moved to 17 East Main Street. He closed the store in **1939** but lived on until December 10, **1957**.

Thomas Prushaw and Family

Thomas Prushaw and his French bride, **Cecile** (?) came to **Fredonia**. One son died very young (young **Thomas**?) and was buried in their plot in **Forest Hill Cemetery** as was their son **Henry** later on. **Thomas Prushaw** and his wife went to Pasadena, California with her mother who had consumption. He painted houses out there for a living. They died out there.

Their daughter, **Gertrude**, on January 1st **1888**, married **Arthur Maytum** who came here from England where he had apprenticed as a grocer. He worked for a **Mr. Knight** in Fredonia and then bought his own grocery store. The family lived over the store on Water Street. (The “**Maytum**” sign over the store was in raised cement. Later chiseled off but a black outline still showed the letters. It was overpainted several times until the name disappeared.)

The family later lived at 64 West Main, which was afterwards torn down to build the Caboose tavern. **Robert Maytum, Sr.** was born after his parents separated. He was raised by his **Maytum** grandparents.

Arthur Maytum, the **Coburn** Mill and the Canning factory on Eagle Street ran a phone wire to the Depot to know when the train was coming in. A student of **Mr. Jewett's**, not **Jewett** himself showed them how to rig the phone and the line. He had learned about it at his home elsewhere. **Jewett** did not know about the telephone. **Maytum** didn't go into the telephone business until the patent expired around **1892 (1876 + 16 years?)** freeing it up for some small companies to move in.

Arthur Maytum was not particularly religious. **Prushaw** was a Congregationalist originally but joined Trinity Church here. The **Maytums** got involved after they were married, and since then, there have been seven generations of **Maytums** involved with the church. **Arthur Maytum's** father, **Robert**, came to **Fredonia** to live with them, but boarded instead at **Fagan's** on Day Street.