



Fairfield Notes

A Closer Look at the Past Issue 3, September 1, 2020

The Fairfield Homestead Heritage Association welcomes you to our new digital newsletter! Do you know any fellow history enthusiasts who might be interested in *Fairfield Notes*? Please forward them a copy and suggest they send an email to

fairfield1793@gmail.com to be added to our mailing list.

This material has been researched and edited by Emma Wyse and Barb Snyder.

Artifact Spotlight: *The Pastel Box*



Exploring Fairfield House after there were no longer Fairfields in residence brought many surprises. One of these was an unpainted wooden box about 7¾ inches long, 5¼ inches wide, and not quite 1¼ inches high. The surprise comes when the hinged top is lifted to reveal the remains of a set of pastels. Judging by the only 2 nearly whole sticks, the box once contained 40 sticks. What remains in the box are fragments of vibrant hues nestled on top of cotton wool. The box has all the signs of the set having been well used. Purple appears to have been the artist’s favorite colour, as there is barely any of that pastel remaining

Above: Pastel Box, F580

Below: Label



Girault Pastels Manufacturers

The inside of the box cover retains a printed paper label in French. The Girault factory, established in 1780, specialized in “superfine pastels, Soft and hard” and had won a medal at the Universal Exposition of 1878. This helps date the box. Girault Pastels continue to be handmade by a successor firm.



Maria, circa 1910

This excerpt from a letter to Maria from her friend confirms that Maria was fond of art and that the pastel box may have belonged to her. We know that the pastels came to the Fairfields sometime after 1878, based on dating from the label.

Unhappily, no works in pastels remained in Fairfield House to show us what caught Maria’s eye and artistic energies.

Who among the Fairfields was a pastel artist? A 1893 letter among the Fairfield Correspondence gives us one clue that Maria, daughter of Harmon and Alice Fairfield, worked in pastels. Maria, born 2 October 1830, lived her life at the Fairfield farm.

Dear Maria, *January 4th 1893*
Do you ever paint/pastel pictures now-a-days? Do the peonies and lilies bloom in the front yard? Are the red raspberries as large and as sweet as they used to be?
Sincerely, Sallie Seaton

Artistic Renderings of Fairfield House



020.001.002

Two paintings of the homestead remained in Fairfield House in 1973: an oil painting done in the last quarter of the 19th century and a watercolour done in 1955.

The oil painting was done by an unidentified artist on academy board. It measures 21¾” by 17½”, with a gilt gesso frame. Dating clues come from two sources.

The back of the painting has the label of F.W. Devoe, art supply manufacturer and dealer.

The New York address on the label was in use by 1878, but not earlier than 1873.

The second clue comes from a photograph of the house dated circa 1885.



SCHOOL OF ART,
Rooms Cor. Princess and Montreal Streets
CLASSES WERE RESUMED
MONDAY, OCTOBER 1st, 1888
Hours—Painting class—10 to 12 a.m.
Afternoon drawing class—2:30 to 4:30 p.m.
Evening drawing class—7:30 to 9:30 p.m.
Subjects taught include paintings in Oils and Water Colors on any materials, **Pastel** and Crayon work, Elementary and advanced Drawing both freehand and mechanical. A special class for sketching from nature. Fees and prospectus on application.
CHAS. E. WRENSHALL, Principal,

Art Lessons?

The Kingston *British Whig* of Oct 1, 1888 carried an ad that fits into the time frame for the pastel and painting Sallie Seaton mentioned. Classes had were resumed. Students could learn how to paint with oils and water colours and to draw with pastel and crayon.

20th Century Work

The watercolour of the house was painted in 1955 by V. Reed and was given to the Fairfields. It is measures 16½” by 23.½” and is held in a beautiful wooden frame. This painting shows the familiar east side of Fairfield House, but cleared of most of the vines visible in the 1885 painting.

Does anyone have information about V. Reed?



F501



JRR 1361 CabIV (Staples)

In the **Toronto Public Library Special Collections** there is a third artistic rendering of the House, along with a black and white photograph on which the painting is based. The painting, done in 1911, is attributed to Owen Staples.

The artist used watercolour and gouache, over pencil on watercolour board. Inscribed on the back is simply the word “Fairfields”. The photograph of the house (right), taken sometime in the 1880s. The painting measures 276 x 260mm.



A Closer Look: Examine these paintings and photographs. All show the same side view of the house, but the trees and vines differ somewhat in each picture. See how wild and uncontained the vines look in the oil painting in comparison to the 1955 watercolour? Such clues can help us in dating the paintings and photographs and also in tracking the history of greenery and plant life here at Fairfield House.

Activities for you!

This WORD SEARCH was inspired as we planned the “Focus: Furniture” virtual Tour. Find it through the Fairfield Homestead Heritage Association Facebook page or use this Youtube link : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B9hgzg_mukWQ



- | | |
|----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Rush Seat | 21. Stove |
| 2. Loom | 22. Settle |
| 3. Farm | 23. Furniture |
| 4. Cherry | 24. Inventory |
| 5. Stringing | 25. Rocking Chair |
| 6. Inlay | 26. Warping Reel |
| 7. Turning | 27. Splint Seat |
| 8. Skirt | |
| 9. Slat back | |
| 10. Splat | |
| 11. Pembroke | |
| 12. Carving | |
| 13. Dropleaf | |
| 14. Tapered | |
| 15. Windsor | |
| 16. Cornice | |
| 17. Sheraton | |
| 18. Polite | |
| 19. Vernacular | |
| 20. Folk | |

News and Events

Fairfield House Summer Staff have finished their work for the 2020 Season and will be returning to their academic studies: Emma Wyse at Queen’s University and Elizabeth Van de Kleut at Western. In the absence of tours, Fairfield Staff accepted the challenges of new projects to share more of the history of Fairfield House with the public.

Fairfield Notes. This is the third, with research done for more.

Video Tours: Two are on YouTube. Look for **Focus: Furniture. A Curator’s Tour:** Link is https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B9hgzg_mukWQ.

A Summer Walk in Fairfield Park: Link is https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gbkf_VRFd4

Facebook: If you are a Facebook user, look for the new **Fairfield Homestead Heritage Association** page.

Fairfield House Pewter Ornament



The Fairfield House ornament is finely detailed, 2 inches wide, and 1 1/4 inches tall. The FHHA recently acquired from Downtown Kingston the ornaments remaining from the 2019 holiday season.

For 2020, we’re happy to offer these for \$10, plus shipping costs. At this time, shipping methods and costs are still being checked into.

Are you interested? Please contact us at fairfield1793@gmail.com.

Answers to The Bewildered Hunter Puzzle:



Did we miss anything? What else did you find bewildering about this image? The team here at Fairfield House had many chats looking for all the hidden things in this image.

We are looking to expand our readership and engagement with social media.

We want hear from YOU!

We'll welcome any ideas or questions you might have.

We'll do our best to answer questions in a future issue of *Fairfield Notes* or with an email.

Send us an email at fairfield1793@gmail.com.

You can also phone us at 613-384-2813 during July and August.



Become a Friend of Fairfield House.

Our Association aims are:

* To promote the preservation of the Fairfield Homestead, including the House, the associated collections, and landscape for the study, education, and enjoyment of present and future generations.

* To provide programs for the discovery and appreciation of the heritage of the Fairfield Homestead and its neighbouring region.

We carry out these aims both by volunteer work and by fund-raising.

As a **Friend of Fairfield House**, you have the opportunity to join a group that supports these objectives and be involved in the future directions of development and programs.

If you can volunteer, please let us know of your interest.

Call Fairfield House at (613)384-2813 during the season. At other times, call (613)389-1907.

Membership fees and donations are eligible for charitable tax receipts.



I wish to be one of the Friends of Fairfield House.

Name (s): _____

Address: _____

Postal Code _____

Phone Number: (home) _____ (work) _____

Email Address: _____

Please check for the year 20___: New _____ Renewing _____

Individual (\$20) _____ Family/Charitable Group (\$30) _____ Corporation (\$50) _____

Donation _____

Please make cheque payable to **Fairfield Homestead Heritage Association, or simply FHHA.**

Mailing Address: 14 Harcourt Place Amherstview, ON K7N 1L5

