

our home

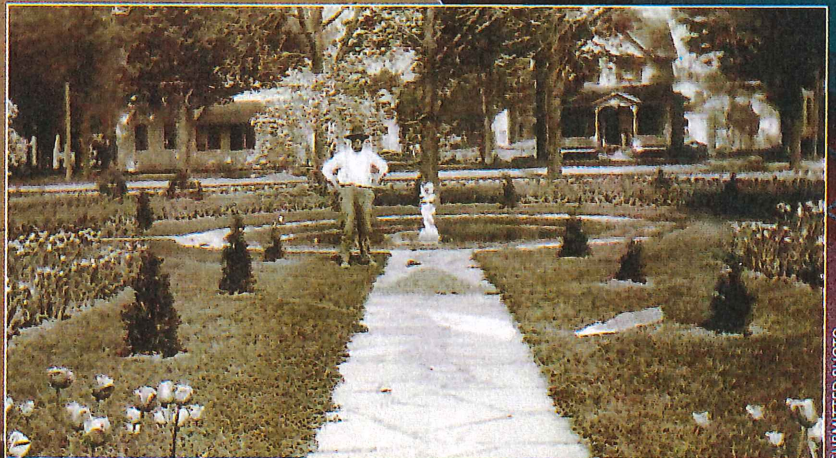
in the finger lakes



JUNE 2016



In 1872 the Jackson & Perkins Company was founded when Charles Hinsdale Perkins (1840-1924) started a small wholesale operation with financial help from his father-in-law, Albert E. Jackson (1807-1895). The business expanded its inventory and gained world-wide fame by the beginning of the 20th century with its new varieties of roses and other plants. For 50 years they specialized in wholesale trade until the company's popular exhibit at the 1939 New York World's Fair prompted them to sell by direct mail.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

VINTAGE GARDENS BED & BREAKFAST

historic inn continues to bloom.

BY LAUREL C. WEMETT | FREELANCE WRITER
PHOTOS BY JACK HALEY | MESSENGER POST MEDIA



The impressive Tudor-Revival style home was once the residence of the Jackson and Perkins families of the famed Jackson & Perkins Company, which became the world's first rose-delivery business and an important dealer of hybridized roses.

A stately house surrounded by formal gardens and woodlands sits on a quiet residential street in the village of Newark, only two blocks from the Erie Canal. The impressive Tudor-Revival style home was once the residence of the Jackson and Perkins families of the famed Jackson & Perkins Company, which became the world's first rose-delivery business and an important dealer of hybridized roses.

Newark became known as the Rose Capital of America and each summer thousands of visitors came to see the roses until, under new ownership, the business moved out-of-state in 1973.

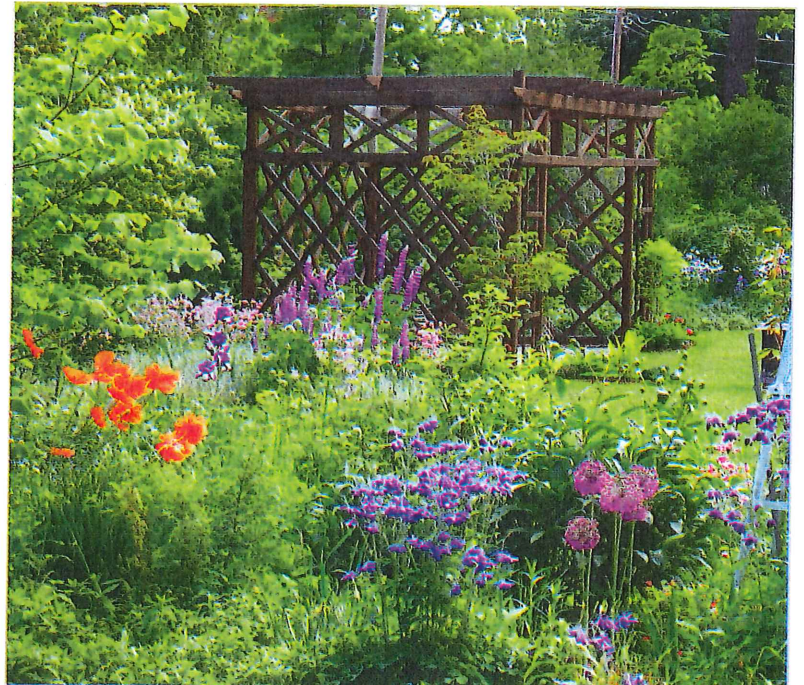


Kimberlee and Michael Meeks, native Californians, purchased the estate when on vacation in the Finger Lakes region in 2006.



“We own a unique piece of property,” admits Kimberlee Meeks, owner of the 19th century home which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, an indication of the exceptional role the estate played in America’s horticultural history. Kimberlee and her husband Michael, native Californians, purchased the estate when on vacation in the Finger Lakes region in 2006. Friends told the couple they would be perfect as innkeepers.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS



Guests can wander around the estate’s 2.6 acres of gardens. There are bits and pieces of history all over. Beside the beautiful flower beds, there’s the foundation of a greenhouse and remnants of former landscaping and fountains.



The Meeks’ goal has been to return the house to its “historic self” attempting to reflect the 1920s era.

Surviving from the Jackson and Perkins era are 2.6 spacious acres containing the residence, a garage/carriage house, the foundation of a greenhouse, remnants of former landscaping and a fountain. A portion of the original parcel became the site of Perkins Park in the village.

Today at Vintage Gardens Bed and Breakfast, guests can stay in five well-appointed guest rooms and enjoy the lawns, gardens and wooded trails maintained by the Meeks. This year marks the 10th anniversary of their ownership.

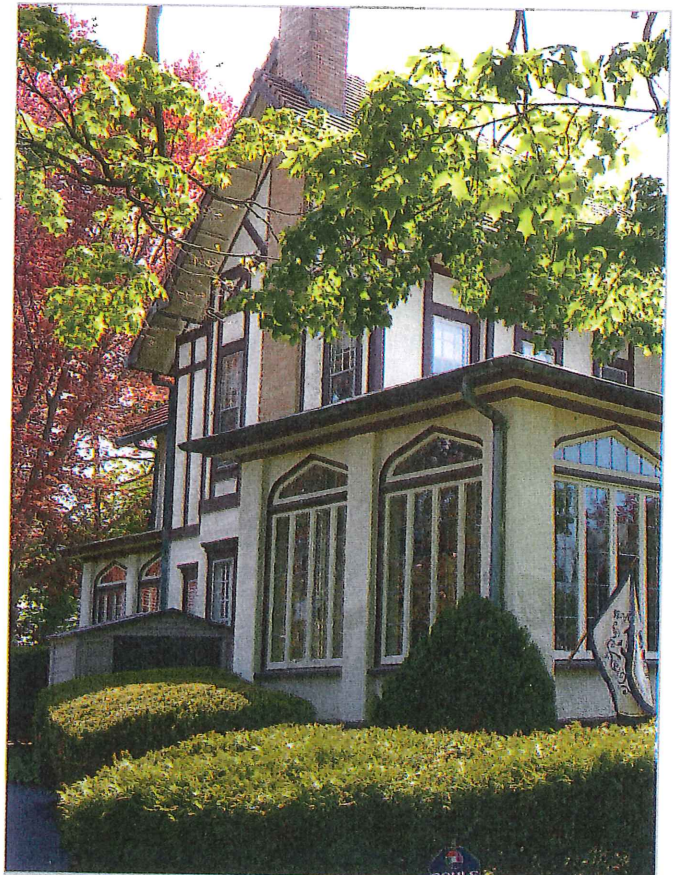


***Historic property:
from bulbs to bed & breakfast***

“Many people who stay here come for the gardens,” says Kimberlee. Initially, grapes, fruits and vegetables were cultivated at this location on a somewhat larger parcel in the 1860s. The Jackson & Perkins Company was founded in 1872 when Charles Hinsdale Perkins (1840-1924) was able to start a small wholesale operation with financial help from his father-in-law Albert E. Jackson (1807-1895). The business expanded its inventory and gained worldwide fame by the beginning of the 20th century with its new varieties of roses and other plants. For 50 years, they specialized in wholesale trade until the company’s popular exhibit at the 1939 New York World’s Fair prompted them to sell by direct mail.

According to the “Estate History” on the Vintage Gardens Bed and Breakfast website, portions of the framing of the large home dates to the mid-19th century, though little is known about the property before the Jackson and Perkins families acquired it. The large two- and one-half story wood-frame house saw two periods of remodeling, first in the late 1880s and again around 1921-22 under George Perkins, the second generation of the Perkins family. The early 20th century alterations include exterior stucco and battens that replicate half-timbering, giving the house its striking English Tudor appearance. The Meeks’ goal has been to return the house to its “historic self,” attempting to reflect the 1920s era.

One of the innkeeper’s goals was to replicate the 1920s era. They managed to do that, not just with the house, but with the gardens and grounds.



House tour: downstairs

A central hall divides the first floor into a parlor and guest room on the eastside and a dining room and library on the west. The sunroom is located at the north side of the house and dates to the 1920s when an open porch was enclosed. Kimberlee calls it her favorite room and guests often opt to have breakfast there. Tall windows topped with ogee arches are enhanced by woodwork accented with teal. Original fresco borders depict Casa Blanca lilies. Wicker furniture and a tiled floor lend the room an inviting, comfortable ambience.

The Parlor, adjacent to the sunroom, is a warm cranberry and mauve with a comfortable loveseat facing one of the home's two marble fireplaces. An old photograph on the parlor wall shows the Jackson & Perkins demonstration Rose Garden. "Many people worked for Jackson & Perkins," says Kimberlee who hears stories of the home and the experimental gardens that were once cultivated on the grounds.

The Meeks returned a wall to the parlor which had been taken out in 1920s, creating the adjacent Garden Guest Room overlooking the original formal gardens. It is tastefully decorated in taupe and white with botanical prints and framed butterfly specimens. Like all the beds at Vintage Gardens, this room has a Wesley Allen reproduction iron bed.

The downstairs rooms have pocket doors with small paned, leaded glass windows which open into the wide central hall. Michael Meeks enjoys the library, once





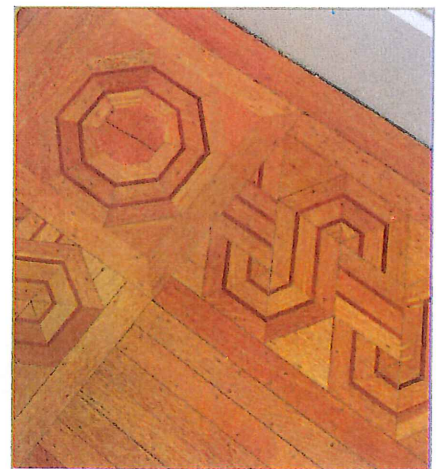
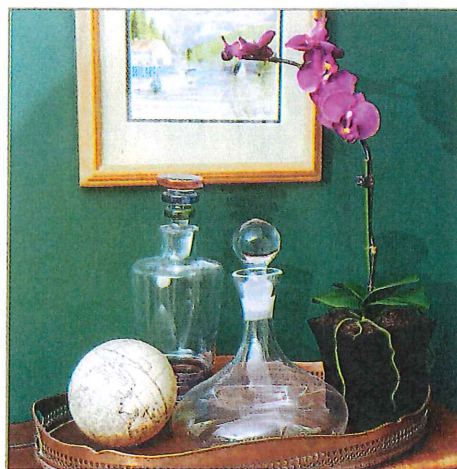
used as an office by the Jackson & Perkins Company. Dark green walls provide a perfect backdrop for framed maps and original artwork.

Memorabilia such as the Jackson & Perkins plaque from the 1939 New York World's Fair enliven interest in the home's storied past. It was one of two signs that marked the perimeter of the demonstration rose garden at the fair. Due to public demand, the company began shipping their roses and before long, published its first catalog. "They put roses in the hands of all the American people," points out Kimberlee. "Up to that time only the wealthy had roses."

In the adjacent dining room guests are served breakfast at the quarter-sawn oak tables made in West Virginia and designed to provide versatile seating arrangements. Gracing the tasteful reproduction circa 1920s-30s floral wallpaper are framed Newark postcards and photographs of the house from the 1940s.



Beyond the dining room is the full kitchen and private living quarters for the Meeks. One of the unique architectural features on the first floor is the fumed oak floors. Ammonia fuming was a process used by famed furniture maker Gustav Stickley. The process darkened and enriched oak furniture. At Vintage Gardens wide, oak planks feature inlaid hand-cut bow-tie and circular peg shapes, a hallmark of Stickley Furniture. Kimberlee believes further research could definitely link the floors, part of the 1920s restoration, to the Stickley business.





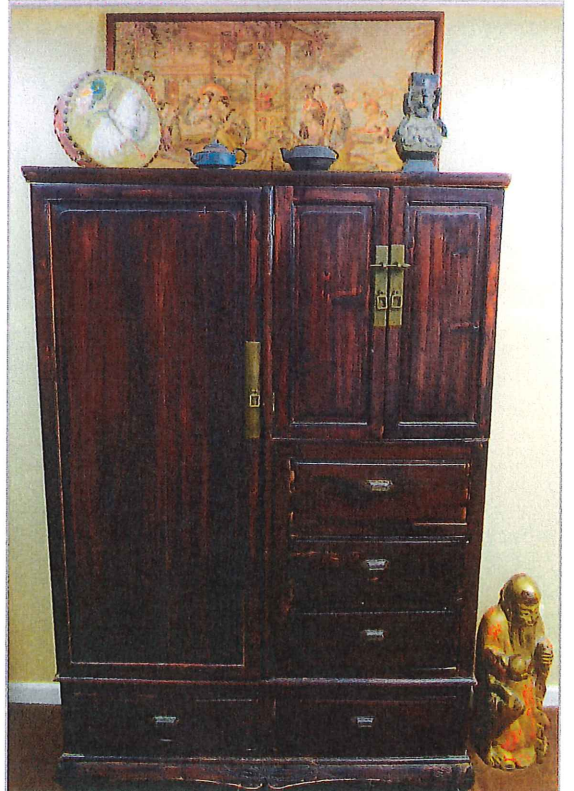
House tour: upstairs

Four guest rooms on the second floor embrace horticultural identities: The English Tea Rose Room, the American Beauty Room, the Asian Lily Suite and the Heirloom Peony Suite. Each room is outfitted with an antique wardrobe and inside hangs comfy terry robes. A large portion of the oak and Art Deco style furnishings reflect the 1920s and 1930s. Some pieces, like the wardrobes, were shipped from California.

Two former maids' quarters have been converted to bathrooms. Modern amenities like refrigerators and televisions are in each room. Bedroom windows overlook the grounds and delight visitors with seasonal changes, such as the cherry tree that can be seen from the English Tea Rose Room, which creates what Kimberlee describes as a "puff of pink" when in bloom. "That's my favorite thing in the spring"

Perhaps the most striking upstairs room is the Asian Lily Suite with gold tones and beige providing a warm color scheme. Tasteful decorations include Oriental-themed prints along with a bright, contemporary two-sided painted panel depicting an Asian Lady and a phoenix.

The Meeks welcome a wide assortment of visitors to the Finger Lakes and Erie Canal region. There have been numerous business travelers, the occasional politician and even a dignitary from the United Nations.





“We go over and above for our guests,” says Kimberlee whose “necessity box” is ready for sewing repairs and other unexpected needs. One experience demonstrates the innkeepers’ dedication to service and trusted rapport with other local businesses. A guest intended to propose to his girlfriend while staying at Vintage Gardens, but the sapphire ring he selected had not arrived at his home before his departure for Newark. “No big deal,” recalls Kimberlee, who went to two Newark jewelry stores to select samples of appropriate rings based on his description. The guest made a selection and was able to carry through with his romantic plan. “I bought him a cake and a rose, too!” recalls Kimberlee.

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