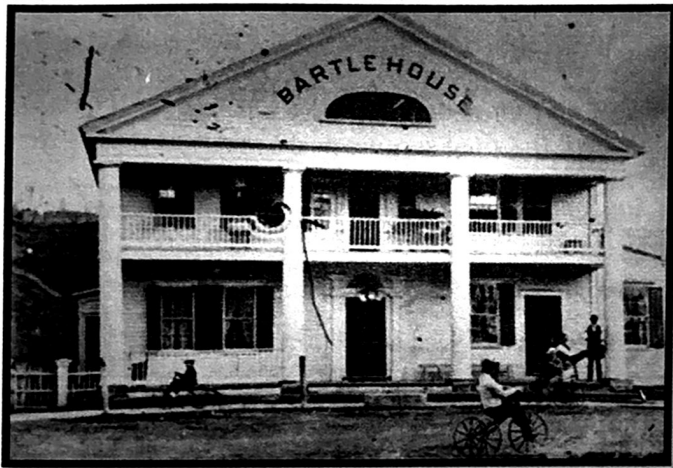


Perkins Tavern, Park Hotel, Bartle House to Bida Home

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I did an article several years ago to commemorate Bartle's Pharmacy on their 50th anniversary in business in Oxford. A picture was included with the article of the Bartle House and several people have asked about its history.

Erastus Perkins came to Oxford from Norwich, CT in 1799. Perkins Tavern was built in 1801 and faced Washington Park where young boys played baseball. The Chenango Canal was not in existence at that time and a large number of the mercantile businesses of the village were located on the east side of the river. When the canal was completed in 1837, most, if not all of the businesses moved to the west side of the river.

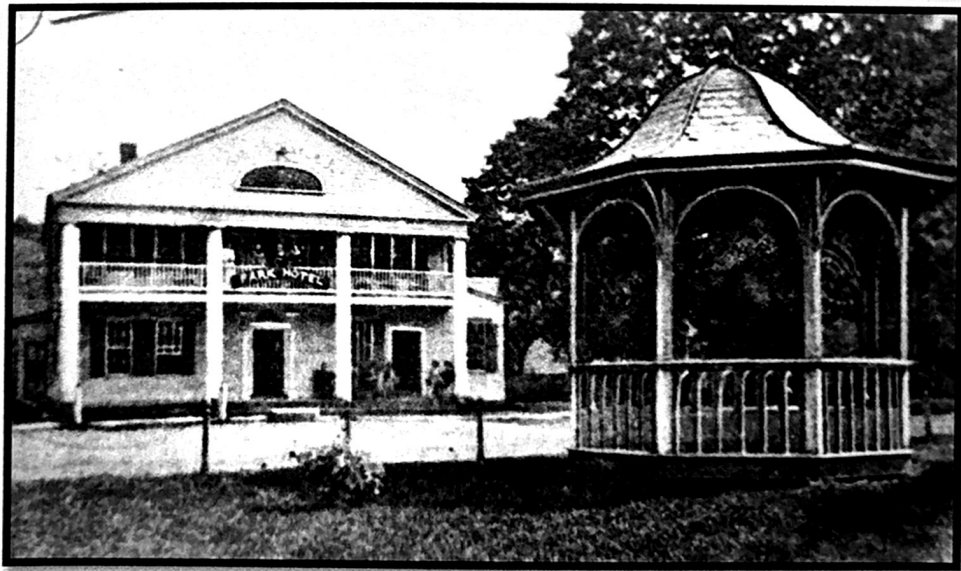


Captain James Perkins succeeded his brother as landlord of Perkins Tavern in 1822 and in 1837, Alvin S. Perkins, son of James, managed the tavern until 1850. There were several landlords and by 1871, Levi and Alanson Bartle were in possession. The name was changed to the Bartle House and the "Bartle Boys" remained landlords until around 1900 when Leonard G. Sanford obtained the property.

A newspaper article in the DeRuyter Gleaner dated September 22, 1898, reports that "Landlord Sanford has moved the old Park Hotel, Oxford, back and will add an attractive new front."

The Park Hotel
before it was the
Bartle House.

The Pagoda looks
beautiful in this
early 1900s image.



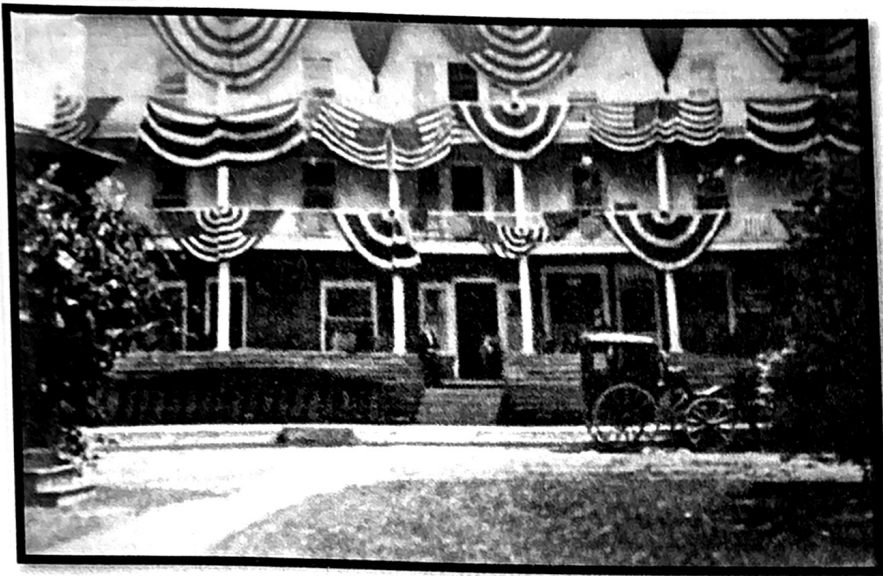
The hotel was remodeled and enlarged including changing the front to give it an imposing appearance. The now Park Hotel was then leased to a group from Hancock who had planned to open the hotel as a retreat to big city visitors. When that attempt failed, the hotel was sold to James McEneny. Dances were held at the hotel, but on October 28, 1903, the hotel was nearly destroyed by a fire. Albert Skillman broke a leg when he leaped from a second story window in an attempt to save his life. Merton Wright purchased the burned property and constructed the double tenement which he shared with Fred A. McNeil.

Back then, Washington Park was not the beautiful park it is today, but a dusty ground with road and by-paths crisscrossing it. According to historical records, this land was the first ball ground and it was on this spot that the first games of organized baseball were played in Oxford. When the circus came to town, the tents and animals occupied the land.

An enjoyable pastime for the tenants of the Park Hotel was to sit on the large front porch and witness one of the many hometown baseball games. Third base was a short distance from the Park Hotel's bar-room door and it was reported that no runner dared to take advantage. The Oxford Celtics took on the Sheridans of Greene where the final score was 12 and 13 in favor of the visitors and the game considered, "a wonderful game at that time." "Mike" Casey, who owned the Casey Block, developed his remarkable skill as a catcher and Charley Bennett, pitcher, claimed if they would let him throw a "skew-ball," he could fool the batter. In those days, the pitcher had to deliver a stiff arm throw. W. H. Deshon, who became the editor of the Utica Herald-Dispatch, was a prominent member of the Celtics. He claimed that Charley Bennett's "skew-ball" was "the forerunner of the pitcher's curve ball of today."



By 1949, the hotel was converted into a nursing home (Bida Home) by Mrs. Lyons and still stands today. Washington Park was landscaped with grass, trees, shrubs and the old pagoda placed back where it was years ago. Today, it is decorated at Christmas and used as a setting for weddings and graduations.



Note the carriage in front. Carriage drivers were always present to pick up or drop off guests at the hotel. With two train stations, the drivers were kept busy.

To celebrate "Old Home Week" in 1908, the hotel was dressed in red, white and blue decorations.



This photo was taken shortly after the building was renovated and reopened as the Bida Home in 1949.

Whether it is called Perkins Tavern, Bartle House, Park Hotel or the Bida Home, the building has a long and interesting history. Like so many other beautiful buildings in Oxford, it was threatened by destruction by one means or another, but still stands strong today.