

# A peek inside the historic Folsom home

An English Tudor in Brighton once owned by a man who helped create Social Security is up for sale.

By AMY CAVALIER

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Marion Folsom had an eye for detail.

He left exact specifications for how the home he lived in at 106 Oak Lane in Brighton should be built in 1927. The blueprints drawn up by the C. Storrs Barrows firm still hang in frames on the walls today.

Each room has a servant's buzzer and Folsom even had one installed under the dining room table. There are four working fireplaces and shelves hidden in the walls in the library — perhaps a throwback to the days of Prohibition, suggests Realtor Susan Aser.

The five-bedroom Tudor was once situated on the Erie Canal, which was a very prestigious location back in that day, said Aser. Located on a wooded lot on a winding cul-de-sac, there are varieties of



FOLSOM

## For more information:

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oak, black walnut and a Japanese Katsuma tree valued at \$20,000.

The house is on the market at \$429,900. For the public, it could be the only chance to see inside the home of one of George Eastman's top advisors and close friends.

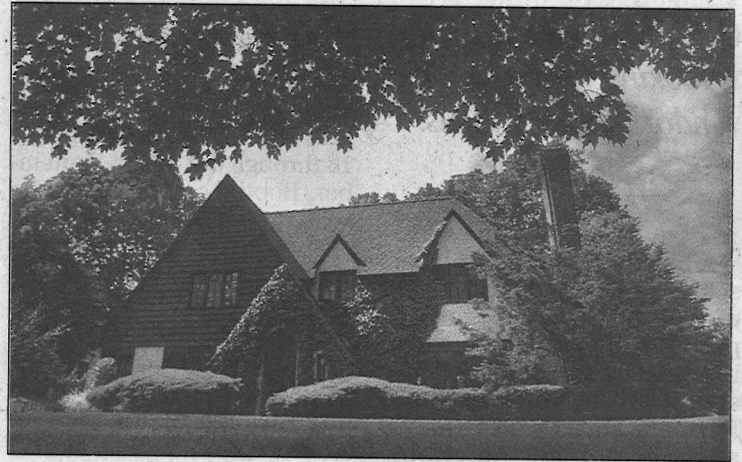
Inside, an oak leaf and book carving graces the top of the library door where Folsom very well might have done work for the President's Advisor Council on Economic Security, which drafted the original Social Security Act in 1934.

Folsom got his start right here in Rochester. An article published by Elizabeth Brayer in the *Brighton-Pittsford Post* in the 1980s chronicles his rise to success.

He was hired at Eastman Kodak Co. in 1914. At the time, the company had about 7,000 employees in Rochester and 10,000 worldwide. When he started in October 1914, he was paid \$100 a month.

In 1921, in the midst of a post-war recession, Folsom approached George Eastman about unemployment insurance, a topic he had heard a lecture about. Eastman instructed Folsom to prepare a plan for private unemployment insurance. Folsom recommended a plan that included retirement annuity, life insurance and disability benefits, which was inaugurated into the company on Jan. 1, 1929.

At the time, pension and retirement plans weren't unheard of in America, according to Brayer's article, but they were uncommon. The Kodak plan was lauded, though, and Folsom was called to testify before the U.S. Investigation of Unemployment. From there, he was named as advisor to the New York State Legislative Committee on Unemployment.



STAFF PHOTO/ADRIAN KRAUS

This English Tudor at 106 Oak Lane in Brighton was home to Marion Folsom, a former employee at Eastman Kodak and one of the founders of Social Security, until his death in 1976. It is for sale.



PHOTO BY CARRIE ANN GRIPPO

## A glimpse at the interior of 106 Oak Lane.

In 1934 he was called to Washington to serve on the President's Advisory Council on Economic Security and was instrumental in helping to draft the Social Security Act.

By 1953, he was undersecretary of Treasury, during which time he spent more than two years revising and codifying tax laws, the first total revision of the tax structure in 79 years.

Folsom in 1955 became the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare.

When he wasn't in Washington for work, Folsom lived at the home in 106 Oak Lane until his death in 1976. It's the same home he hosted dinners with George Eastman as a guest.

Aser's brother, Brian Katz, lives in the house now. He is

its third owner. Since buying it in 2004, he modernize the house without compromising the historic integrity of the structure. Katz removed asbestos, installed a new furnace and central air among other improvements, but he has left the signs of history intact. The servant's buzzers still work. The wide wooden trim remains unpainted. The door to the incinerator, located in the basement, is still in the kitchen. The house and almost 2-acre yard are still private, protected by a large concrete wall flanked by trees. It's one of the things people ask about when looking at the house, said Katz.

"People ask, 'Isn't that annoying?'" he said. "After a few days, you get used to it. It's like your own private waterfall."