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ROCHESTER

By

Howard L. Osgood

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Howard L. Osgood

ROCHESTER;

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ITS FOUNDERS AND ITS FOUNDING,

BY

HOWARD L. OSGOOD.

Read before the Rochester Historical Society, April 13th, 1894.

From the C. Walter Smith ...
February 1899

A distinction must be made between the first settlers within the present limits of our city and those who actually established it as a settlement. The first white settler on the site of Rochester was undoubtedly Ebenezer Allan, a man whose name appears to have been wholly disrepute, and therefore is best when unknown. Before 1812, a few settlers lived near the Genesee Falls, but they certainly made no effort to establish a village, and had no influence upon the events here chronicled.

The persons who first planned a village here and induced settlers to immigrate to it, were Nathaniel Rochester, William Fitzhugh and Charles Carroll. The story of the manner in which these men became interested in the site of Rochester has been told many times, but, until now, was never, so far as the writer is aware, compiled from contemporary documents, independent of human memory.

The three gentlemen just mentioned were men of high character, accustomed to large business transactions.

Nathaniel Rochester was born in Westmoreland county, Virginia, on February 21, 1752. At the age of 16, his father having died and his mother having remarried, he was employed by a merchant at Hillsborough, Orange county, North Carolina, and from that time until his death was constantly and actively engaged in commercial affairs. During the Revolutionary war he was a resident of Hillsborough and was highly honored by his fellow citizens. In 1775, being then 23 years of age, he was a member of the committee of safety of Orange county, a member of the first provincial convention of North Carolina, a justice of the peace, a major of militia (commissioned September 9, 1775), and pay master of the battalion of minute men in that district (commissioned October 20, 1775.) In April, 1776, he was made lieutenant colonel of militia and in May of the same year was elected a member of the convention which formulated and adopted the constitution of his state. In the same year (May 11th) he was appointed deputy commissary general of military and

other stores in North Carolina for the use of the Continental army with the rank and pay of colonel. A severe illness then compelled him to retire from further service in the field. But he was not allowed to cast off public duties, for he was elected member of assembly, clerk of the court of Orange county and was appointed a commissioner to establish and superintend a manufactory of arms at Hillsborough for the Continental army. In 1778 he became a business partner of Colonel Thomas Hart, whose daughter afterward married Henry Clay. For the following five years he was engaged in trade in Hillsborough and in Philadelphia, and at the close of the war he removed to Hagerstown, Maryland, where Colonel Hart then resided, and there established a considerable mercantile business and built and operated manufactories of nails and of rope, besides a flour mill. His partners were, Colonel Hart in the rope and nail business, and in the flour mill, Captain Daniel Stull. His business operations were extended even into Kentucky and West Tennessee. In 1788 he married Sophia Beatty of Hagerstown. In 1790 he was elected a member of the Maryland legislature. In the succeeding year he was appointed postmaster at Hagerstown and in 1797 became one of the three judges of the Washington county court. He held the postmastership until 1804, when he resigned to accept his election as sheriff of Washington county, and held that office until 1807, when he became the first president of the Hagerstown bank, with all the affluence which came from a salary of one thousand dollars a year when applied to the support of a large family. This position he retained as long as he lived in Maryland. In 1808 he was appointed an elector of President and Vice-President of the United States from Maryland. Dansville, then in Steuben, but now in Livingston, county, N. Y., became his home in May, 1810. In January, 1814, he sold his property at Dansville, comprising a grist mill, a saw mill, seven hundred acres of land, an interest in a wool carding shop, and the first paper mill in Western New York, for

\$24,000, and moved in April, 1815, to a farm in East Bloomfield, Ontario county. In 1816 he was again appointed a presidential elector. In April, 1818, he came to Rochester. In 1821 he succeeded in procuring the erection of the county of Monroe and was immediately appointed county clerk. In 1822 he sat in the New York legislature and two years later he became the president of the Bank of Rochester, the first bank in this city. He died May 17, 1831, honored and lamented, having lived a life of great service to his fellow men.

Colonel William Fitzhugh was born in Calvert county, Maryland, October 6, 1761. He was an officer in the Continental army under General Nathaniel Green in his southern campaigns; and, for a time, he, and his brother Peregrine, were employed as aides on Washington's personal staff. He afterwards drew a pension for his services. His father's estate was on the eastern shore of the Chesapeake, near the mouth of the Patuxent river and was much exposed to the incursions of the enemy during the war. After the war, Colonel Fitzhugh, having inherited a considerable property, settled upon a large estate near Hagerstown, Maryland, and was elected to the legislature of that state. He moved to the town of Groveland, Livingston county, in May, 1816, the emigrant party consisting of forty persons and Conestoga wagons drawn by twenty-seven horses. He died at his home, "Hampton," on December 29, 1839. He was a hospitable, elegant, courtly, dignified, Christian gentleman.

Charles Carroll was born upon his father's estate at Carrollsbury, Maryland (now the site of the national capital) on November 7, 1767. He became a large land holder and a man of extended activity in commercial matters. His home was Bellevue, on Georgetown Heights, Maryland. He was known as Charles Carroll of Bellevue to distinguish him from his cousin Charles, of Carrollton. He came to the town of Groveland, Livingston county, in the spring of 1815, and made a new home at Williamsburg. In 1818 he was appointed United States register of deeds for the territory of Missouri, with an office at Franklin, and resided there for some years. The wanton murder of his son at that place caused him to return with his family to Williamsburg, where he lived for the remainder of his life, and died October 28, 1823. He was distinguished in family, honorable at all times, cultivated and a host whose house was always open to his friends. The family home after his death was at the "Hermitage," about three miles south of Williamsburg.

Messrs. Carroll and Fitzhugh never lived in Rochester.

In the year 1799, Charles Carroll, of Bellevue, and his brother, Daniel Carroll, of Duddington, made a trip of observation through the Genesee country, but made no purchase of land. In this year, Colonel Peregrine Fitzhugh moved to Geneva and a few years later made a home at Sodus.

In the month of September, 1800, Charles Carroll, William Fitzhugh, and Nathaniel Rochester came to Western New York, leaving Hagerstown on horse back, followed by a mounted negro servant leading a pack horse to carry their baggage. They started for the purpose of finding a suitable country in which to settle. Colonel Rochester had already invested in lands in Tennessee and Kentucky and, in the summer previous to the journey just mentioned, he had been into Ohio looking for a free country where his family could be reared away from the influences of slavery.

The three friends crossed the Maryland line into Pennsylvania, passed through Shippensburg and Carlisle, thence along the road on the west bank of the Susquehanna to its juncture with Lycoming creek, at Williamsport, and there took the Charles Williamson road to the Genesee. They climbed the mountains to Blossburg (then Bloss's), then passed down the Tioga river to Painted Post, then up the Conhocton, through Bath, crossed over to Judge Hornell's (now Hornellsville), then through Dansville to Williamsburg. At Williamsburg there was a small settlement, composed of a tavern and a few houses, the remnants of Charles Williamson's projected great city. Of Williamsburg not a trace now remains; even its ruins are no more.

In passing through Dansville (named after Captain Dan Faulkner), Colonel Rochester was struck with the advantages of the water power and purchased one hundred and twenty acres at that place, including the most desirable mill seats on both sides of the Canaseraga.

At Williamsburg our travelers looked across that beautiful valley over the famous Genesee flats and were delighted with the beauty of the situation and the fertility of the soil. Colonel Fitzhugh and Major Carroll bought of Charles Williamson, at \$2 per acre, twelve thousand acres, lying partly on the eastern slope of the valley and partly upon the flats on both sides of Canaseraga creek. Colonel Rochester also purchased a small farm of four hundred acres near the lands bought by his friends.

The friends returned to Maryland and reached Hagerstown about the 12th of October. In 1801 Carroll and Fitzhugh again came to the Genesee country and made further purchases; Colonel Rochester set out with them, but illness compelled him to turn back. This trip was taken between October 7th and November

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1802. In August and September, 1802, Colonel Fitzhugh and Colonel Rochester again visited their purchases, but without Major Carroll.

It has been the universal statement that these three friends purchased the One hundred Acre Tract, (the nucleus of our city), in this year, 1802, but such is not the fact. In this year Major Carroll did not visit this region, and his own signature appears on the contract of sale, dated November 8, 1803.

The circumstances of the purchase were as follows: About the 7th of October, Rochester, Carroll and Fitzhugh left Hagerstown for the Genesee, visited their former purchases, went to Geneva to make payments at the land office, and turned their faces homeward. But Mr. Johnston, the land agent at Geneva, learning that they were interested in water powers in Maryland, called their attention to the fine power at the Genesee falls. They then agreed with him that they would go to the upper falls and examine the property, and would meet Mr. Johnston at Bath to give their answer.

Rochester, Carroll and Fitzhugh, coming by the rough woods road from Canandaigua, crossed the river on horse back, not without trepidation, at the slippery ford a little north of the present mill dam.

The upper falls (or rather an extended cascade) stretched across the river about where the aqueduct is now situated, and were of a total vertical height of about fourteen feet. They were blasted away to make room for the aqueducts and a water passage under them and there is now only a continuous rapids. On the west side of the river, extending up stream from the top of the falls, was a small island separated from the west bank by a narrow channel, thus providing a natural race-way. From this channel the water was led in a rude flume to the old Allan mill on the flats below. Ebenezer Allan, in the fall of 1789, had built two mills, first a saw mill and second a grist mill. The spring freshet of 1803 had carried away the saw mill and had seriously undermined the grist mill.

Our travelers rode through the forest along the portage leading to King's landing, below the lower falls, until they looked down upon the old mill, now almost in ruins, and, descending the sloping bank, entered the little log house under the present site of E. R. Andrews's printing house. The mill was inhabited then only by the ubiquitous rattlesnake, whose meditations were seldom interrupted except by some settler whose family had become tired of the continuous succession of pork and mutton, hominy and bacon, and had demanded a feast of real wheat bread.

No more than one-half an acre was

cleared of the trees; the stumps still remained; and the foliage of briars, grape vines and saplings to the clearing, was broken only by the narrow and thorny path to the mill. What a scene of desolation! An abandoned log house, the roof broken in, the door ajar, wild raspberries, shoots obstructing the en-



PORTAGE ALONG RIVER.

trance, and a rattlesnake to greet the traveler. Inside the building were the little mill stones, and the primitive, dilapidated machinery; the floor was broken and decayed; and the porcupines had gnawed the bunks, window sills and benches. Under the mill was a little tub wheel, patched almost beyond repair; and the flume from the fall no longer held water.

Oliver Phelps bought 184,320 acres from the Indians for a mill lot; of this amount Allan obtained 100 acres to build the mill upon; and one half an acre was more than enough to clear, both for the foundation and for the timber to build the mill.

But these travelers had not come to examine the aesthetics of the place. They found a fall capable of producing great power and easy to adapt to commercial purposes. The land near the river was elevated above the ordinary stages of water, there were two great falls lower down the river, settlements were advancing to the neighborhood, and there seemed to be evidence that the water power and the one hundred acres of land would be worth the \$1,750 at

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which they were offered. They decided to purchase the mill lot and their mill there began the germ of Rochester.

The friends left the mill and, returning to the portage, traveled along the west side of the river to King's (now Hanford's) landing and arranged with Gideon King to lease the mill in consideration of having its use. They then turned back and traveled through New Hartford, Big Tree, Williamsburg and Dansville, to Bath. At Bath they met Mr. Johnston and, on November 8, 1803, an agreement was there executed, between Mr. Johnston, as the agent (under Robert Troup) for Sir William Pulteney, on the one part, and Carroll, Fitzhugh and Rochester, on the other part. That agreement is as follows:

A CONTRACT, Made the eighth day of November, in the year one thousand eight hundred and three—Between Charles Carroll, William Fitzhugh, and Nathaniel Rochester, of the county of Washington, and state of Maryland, esquires, of the first part—and Sir William Pulteney, of the county of Middlesex, in the united kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, baronet, by John Johnston, his attorney, by virtue of a Letter of Substitution bearing date the first day of February, in the year one Thousand eight hundred and two, from Robert Troup, esquire, the attorney of the said Sir William Pulteney, by virtue of a letter of attorney, bearing date the 29th day of July, in the year one thousand eight hundred and one, and recorded in the secretary's office of the state of New York, in lib. deeds endorsed M. R. N., page 409, etc., of the second part, as follows, (to wit) First—The said Sir William Pulteney agrees to sell to the said Charles Carroll, William Fitzhugh, and Nathaniel Rochester all that certain tract of land in township number one in the short range on the west side of the Genesee river in the county of Genesee (late Ontario) and state of New York, being the tract commonly known and designated as the Genesee fall mill lot and containing one hundred acres together with all the privileges and advantages of the waters thereon and the mills thereon erected.

Secondly—The said Charles Carroll, William Fitzhugh and Nathaniel Rochester agree to pay for the said tract of land and mills the sum of one thousand seven hundred and fifty dollars in manner following, (that is to say) the sum of three hundred and fifty dollars on the first of May next and the remainder in four equal annual payments thereafter with interest from the first day of May next.

Thirdly—The said William Pulteney agrees that immediately after the full payment of the said purchase money, in manner above particularly appointed, he the said Sir William Pulteney will execute, and cause to be delivered to the said Charles Carroll, William Fitzhugh and Nathaniel Rochester a good and sufficient warranty deed for the said tract of land and mills, with the appurtenances.

In witness whereof, the said party of the first part, and the said Sir William Pulteney, by his said attorney John Johnston by virtue

of the letter of substitution aforesaid, have hereunto set their hands and seals, on the day and in the year first above written.

Sealed and delivered in the presence of John Taylor.

William Pulteney
by his city John Johnston

Ch. Carroll

Wm. Fitzhugh

N. Rochester

(ENDORSED.)

It is agreed by the parties to the within contract that in case the within mentioned mills are destroyed by fire or any other casualty the loss arising therefrom shall be borne wholly by the said Charles Carroll, William Fitzhugh and Nathaniel Rochester and in no degree by Sir William Pulteney.

N. Rochester,
Ch. Carroll,
Wm. Fitzhugh.

Having concluded these arrangements, they travelled homeward, reaching Hagerstown about November 20th. On this trip were accompanied by a young Marylander named Thomas Begole, who, in the following spring, was sent back to the Genesee country by Colonel Rochester to take charge of property there. He was instructed to go to the Falls in order to see that the mill was properly cared for by Mr. King, but finding that King had died, he put Salmon Fuller in charge. Fuller made sufficient repairs upon the mill to be able to operate it and occupied it in 1805. In 1806 the mill was destroyed, either by a fire or a freshet, and Mr. Fuller incontinently took the mill stones and machinery to his own new mill on Irondequoit creek. The mill is gone; even its site is buried; the rattlesnake has departed; but the mill stones came back and are still with us.

The three proprietors of the One Hundred Acre Tract remained in Maryland for several years without visiting their Genesee property. In the spring of 1809, however, Colonel Rochester came to Dansville to make arrangements for removing his family to that place, and brought with him his sons, William B. and John C. Rochester. His saw mill and grist mill were to be repaired and put in condition for active operation, a paper mill was to be furnished and his farm needed care. The father soon returned to

Maryland, but left his sons in charge of his property until autumn.

On March 30th, in this year, the legislature of New York passed an act providing for the "building of a bridge across the Genesee river between the towns of Boyle and Northampton at the place where the north state road crosses the said Genesee river," and authorizing the supervisors of Ontario and Genesee counties to raise the sum of two thousand dollars (\$2,000,) for that purpose; one half to be raised in 1809 and one-half in 1810.

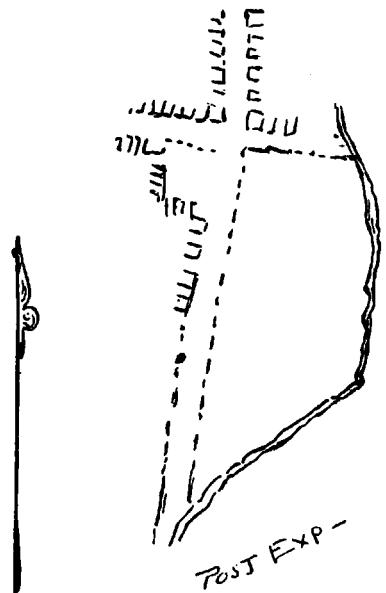
In May, 1810, Colonel Rochester brought his family to Dansville. Mrs. Carroll and Mrs. Fitzhugh up to this time had declined to live on the wild frontier of Western New York, and did not give their consent to leave Maryland until four years later.

The road from Hagerstown to Dansville was about two hundred and seventy-five miles in length and the family were over three weeks in reaching their destination. The train was composed of two carriages, six or seven riding horses for the father and his sons, and two or three large baggage wagons hauled by four horses each. With them came two or three young men from Hagerstown, and a half dozen negroes. The journey was arduous, not to say dangerous. A traveler who had passed over this road across the mountains only a few years before, had recorded that it was so poorly cut out that it looked as if the trees had been gnawed off by beavers and that he was often in danger of being mired. Probably at the time when Colonel Rochester was making this journey the road had been somewhat improved, but those of you who have traveled through a back woods country and over corduroy bridges, have seen the propriety of providing the horses with means of aquatic, arborial, and terrestrial locomotion.

The caravan finally reached Dansville in safety, except that one teamster was thrown from his wagon in crossing the mountains and was killed. The survivors reached Dansville on June 10th, 1810, and the family put up at Stout's tavern until their home should be prepared.

After Colonel Rochester's arrival in Dansville, the settlement of his family and the details of conducting his business took his time to the exclusion of attention to the Falls property, and during the remainder of this year his saw-mill, grist mill, paper mill and wool-carding shop made such heavy drafts upon his purse and his time that he became discouraged about his ability to retain his interest in the Falls lot and offered to sell it to his friend Carroll; but Major Carroll magnanimously declined to buy, saying: "Hold on and it's an estate for any man."

Colonel Rochester in reply wrote to



FIRST MAP OF ROCHESTER.

Charles Carroll. " Dansville, January 13, 1811. . . . I return you my sincere thanks for your advice to keep my Genesee Falls estate. I am aware of the growing value of that property and although I am not so sanguine as you are about its future value, yet I believe the time is not distant when it will be worth \$15,000 or \$5,000 a share. I have been applied to for building lots there and there is no doubt of there soon being a village there and much business done if lots could be had. It must become a town of great business at some future period."

The commencement of the bridge, where the present Main street bridge stands, settled the importance of property at the falls. The nearest bridge was at Avon, and the country west and northwest of the falls was being placed on the market. The progress of the bridge and the rapid immigration of settlers forced Colonel Rochester, in the summer of 1811, to take steps to lay out a village on the mill lot. He had a knowledge of surveying and in July began to stake out some lots among the trees and in the bogs on the property.

Enos Stone, in the previous year, had brought his family to the falls and had begun housekeeping in a little shanty on the bank of the river near the east end of the ford. Colonel Rochester appointed Mr. Stone his local agent and promised him a good lot in the prospective village for his services. The first lots surveyed were those about the corners made by the new state road which followed substantially the present lines of Main and State

streets, and led to the Big Ridge road to Niagara and Buffalo. The Power's block lot was the first one laid out. The lines of Buffalo (now West Main street) and of Mill street (now Exchange), were determined and at first a large lot on the corner now occupied by Smith's Arcade, was sent apart for a public square. Some fifty lots in all, of one-quarter of an acre each, were staked out, and Mr. Stone was directed to offer them for sale. Advertisements were soon inserted in the Canandaigua and Geneva newspapers and applicants began to appear.

William Scott, then of Dansville, gave this account of Colonel Rochester at this period:

About this time (1811) Colonel Rochester was making a visit every few weeks to the "Falls," as Rochester was yet called, to superintend the laying out of village lots. On his way home from a collecting tour I met him returning from one of these trips, at Begole's Tavern, a little log house standing about fifty rods northeast of the residence of the late Judge Carroll. I see him now, riding up to the door, seated firmly on a small bay pacing mare, and carrying his surveyor's chain and compass strapped to the saddle. After a well cooked supper to which our sharp appetites did full justice, we were shown to a room in the garret containing one bed. . . . We occupied it together, though it was long before sleep visited us, for Colonel Rochester was full of the flattering prospects at the Falls. "The place must become an important business point," said he, and he expressed regret that he had spent so much time and means in Dansville, instead of going to the Falls at once, adding, "If I had just made over to you by gift a deed of all my property at Dansville, and gone direct to the Falls, I should have been the gainer. Dansville will be a fine village, but the Falls, sir, is capable of great things." I reminded him that he had established a paper mill and other machinery at Dansville and had otherwise aided in giving an impetus to the business of that already thrifty town. "Yes," said he, "but I am past the age of building up two towns." During the conversation I remarked that the name the "Falls," was good enough then, but added, "of course you will find a more fitting one as the place increases." "Ah," said he, "I have already thought of that, and have decided to give it my family name," and that was the first time I ever heard the word "Rochester" applied to the present prosperous city.

Colonel Rochester was a fine type of the true Southern gentleman. His manner was commanding. He was then venerable in years, though his step was firm. He was tall, perhaps quite six feet high, stooped a little and always walked with a cane. He was dignified and affable in ordinary intercourse, though somewhat austere to strangers.

The name "Rochester" was given to the village by request of Messrs. Carroll and Fitzhugh.

On October 30, 1811, Rochester writes to his partners: "Great quantities of wheat

are now going from Bloomfield, Charles Town, Hartford, Boyle, etc, etc., to the mouth of the Genesee river for want of mills to flour it and most of it goes through our village and more will as soon as the bridge is finished which will be by the middle of December unless winter sets in earlier than usual. . . . I have sold a few lots on Mill, Carroll and Buffalo streets at \$50. . . . and have no doubt but that a dozen houses will be erected next season. . . . I have raised all the unsold lots on Carroll and Mill streets to \$50 and sell the back lots at \$30. After next season when a mill and several houses are erected we can raise the price of the lots. . . . The lots sold and bespoken are Nos. 1, 2, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 32, 33, 35, 36, 37, 45, 59, 60."

The last payment for the mill lot was made on June 22, 1808; the lot was surveyed and its boundaries determined November 7, 1811; and a deed was given November 18th following.

To his brother-in-law, Elle Beatty, he writes under date November 19, 1811: "I have been to the falls of Genesee lately and laid out and sold some more lots say about twenty-five in all, and, for want of funds to build a good merchant mill there, I have leased a mill seat for ten years which will contribute very much to the improvement of the town and neighborhood. . . . Could I sell one of my mill seats there I would soon be settled at the falls myself. My business is very good here, but would be much more productive at the falls or village of Rochester."

The first lot sold was No. 26, to Enos Stone on November 20, 1811, for \$50. George L. Whitmore and Daniel Tinker, of Pittsford, on December 29, 1811, bought lots 37 and 38 for \$100; and on February 19, 1812, the third sale was made to Henry Skinner, of Genesee, who bought lot No. 1 (the Powers block corner) for \$200, and he was required to "build and erect a dwelling house on the said lot not less than thirty by twenty feet, with brick or stone chimney, said house to be raised and enclosed on or before the first day of January next (1813) and finished within six months thereafter."

This requirement was inserted in all the early contracts in order to secure the immigration of the purchasers and to prevent, as far as possible, mere land speculation. One can imagine the trepidation of Mr. Skinner when he agreed to erect so palatial a structure in the back woods, at a place where, only two years before, a member of assembly had said in debate that, if a bridge were placed at the falls, only the muskrats would use it. But the bridge was completed early in 1813 and results soon followed.

Mr. Skinner in 1813 built a residence

"with a brick or stone chimney" on the tract, and his friend Hamlet Scramton was its first occupant. In this year Francis Brown, Matthew Brown, jr., and Thomas Mumford laid out the village of Frankfort adjoining the one hundred acres on the north and soon had a grist mill in operation, but settlers preferred the neighborhood of the bridge and Frankfort did not begin to grow till after 1820.

In 1812, thirteen lots, in all, were sold by Colonel Rochester; in 1813, twenty-seven lots; in 1814 only one lot, largely on account of the pendency of the war of 1812 and the activity of British operations against the lake frontiers. (You will remember that on May 14, 1814, the village and its "suburbs" could furnish only thirty-three men to repel the British, and that there were then only twenty houses at the place). In 1815, thirty-two lots were sold; after which time sales became much more rapid.

In 1813 Elisha Ely had applied to Enos Stone for water privileges and Mr. Stone wrote to Mr. Rochester on June 13th.

"Dear Sir: At the request of Mr. Ely, the bearer of this letter, I would inform you that his wishes are to erect water works on your land at this village by a lease, if you think proper to encourage him. I think it would be an advantage to the settlement of the place if a dam from the west side of the race to the river was made, that mills might be built and not injure your principal mill seat. The wishes of Mr. Ely are such that he thought proper to call on you and, if you think proper, contract with him as Mr. Reynolds is acquainted with him. I think Mr. Ely would be a suitable man to engage and would help the settlement of the place."

An arrangement was made with Mr. Ely, the terms of which do not appear, and he immediately dug a race way, the first artificial one upon the tract, and built a saw mill which began running on December 14, 1813, though no actual business was done in it until April first, following. In 1814 and 1815, Mr. Ely built a grist mill on the tract and Colonel Rochester writes in a characteristic manner to Mr. Fitzhugh from Dansville, June 18th, 1814: . . . "I have been to the Falls since you left us and given Mr. Ely a lease conformably to your and Major Carroll's proposition to him. He will proceed to erect a good merchant mill. I did not mention, at the time you made the offer to Mr. Ely, that his erecting mills there would prevent me from doing it for some time, as his and Captain Brown's mills will be enough for that place for some time. . . . I knew you and Major Carroll did not suppose it would have the effect of frustrating my plans, because I have every reason to believe you would have preferred my

building the mills to his doing it from your uniform friendship of me for more than twenty years and because my removal to that place, and laying out six or eight thousand dollars there would have contributed fully as much to the advantage of the place as his laying it out, who is already an inhabitant. Should peace take place before next spring I shall probably settle in our village at that time."

And to Mr. Carroll he writes: "I went to the falls about three weeks after you left us and gave Captain Ely a lease for a mill seat agreeably to your and Colonel Fitzhugh's proposition to him. . . . The same sense of delicacy prevented my saying anything to you about it until the lease was executed to Ely, but it frustrates my plan of erecting a mill and removing to the Falls until a peace takes place, as Brown's and Ely's mills will be sufficient for that place until we have peace. Then I believe half a dozen mills will not be too many. I saw Captain Ely at the Falls on Thursday last; he had just returned from Massachusetts where he had been for carpenters, millwrights, etc. He intended commencing this day with about fifteen workmen and said he would have his mill at work by the 1st of December next. There is very little improvement going on at the Falls, not more than three or four houses building. If the war continues longer than next spring my present intention is to purchase or rent a mill in Ontario or Genesee counties in order to have something to do until the end of the war when I shall most certainly settle at the Falls if I live so long."

In 1814, Carroll and Fitzhugh made their first visit to the Genesee country since the purchase of the mill lot and then agreed with Colonel Rochester concerning an ultimate division of that property among the partners. In 1815, Mr. Carroll moved his family to Williamsburgh and in 1816 Mr. Fitzhugh followed him. But the labor of marketing the joint property had fallen entirely on Colonel Rochester, and to him belongs the greater part of the credit of founding this city.

He reported to his friends on July 28, 1816: "Our books show that I have been to the Falls and to Geneva twenty-three times on our joint business and most of those times when I resided in Dansville. I have done all the surveying except part of a day last summer when I had a surveyor. I have frequently been detained two and three days at a time and had to entertain many people (particularly when I resided at Dansville) who called on me to purchase lots, make enquiry about the village, etc., it is five years this month since I laid out about fifty lots."

In August, 1817, a partition of the One Hundred Acre tract was made and the different lots were distributed among the proprietors in severalty.

Some years later Colonel Rochester told the story of the founding of this city in a letter to his half brother, John G. Critcher:

"Rochester, State of New York, August 15, 1825. In the spring of 1800 having six children then living. I concluded that it would be best for them that I should remove to the west where more could be done for them, than in an old settled country. . . . I therefore visited the northwestern territory (now Ohio), Kentucky and Tennessee with a view to purchasing an eligible situation for my family. I returned in August with a determination to remove to Kentucky, but on my return home two of my neighbors and most intimate friends were about to visit this part of the state of New York which had been but recently settled. They prevailed on me to come with them. I then saw the great advantages this country had over the Southwestern states and we all purchased with a determination to remove here as soon as we could close our business in Maryland. They were very wealthy men and purchased 12,000 acres of the best land in the country and I purchased about 500 acres on which were several good mill seats. On our return home, the families of my two friends were very much opposed to removing to this country and I did not like to come within them. . . . until May, 1810, when I removed to this country and built a grist mill, paper mill and saw mill at Dansville, about forty miles from this place, where I resided five years, when I sold there and purchased a very valuable farm about twenty miles from hence where I resided during the late war and until seven years ago, when I removed to this place and rented out my farm. Two years after my first visit and purchase in this country, say in 1802, my two neighbors and friends and I visited this country again to see our first purchases, when we purchased 100 acres of land at the falls of Genesee river for which we gave seven hundred pounds. The whole of this 100 acres has been laid out in streets, allees, and quarter acre lots and pretty much covered with buildings, together with as much more adjoining, which is included in the village (what is called a town in the south). In 1811, the year after my removal to this country I laid out a village here and in 1812 several small houses were

built, but the war commencing and being rather exposed to the incursions of the enemy very few improvements were made until the close of the war in 1815.

Since then the village has had the most rapid growth perhaps of any place in the United States and now contains 5,000 inhabitants and is now improving more rapidly than at any former period. Not only the site of the village, but the country about it was all a wilderness in 1811, but is now a thickly settled country that turned out from ten to twelve thousand persons who met General Lafayette here on the 10th of June last. There can be no doubt but that Rochester will be one of the greatest manufacturing places in the United States. It embraces more local advantages than any place I have ever seen and I have visited almost all the states. The land for 100 miles in every direction is of the finest quality. The grand canal from Albany to Lake Erie runs through the center of the village. All the land carriage to the whole shores of Lake Ontario is but two miles. The Genesee river, which runs through the center of the village north and south is navigable forty miles to the south and the canal opens a water communication to all the shores of Lakes Erie, Huron, Michigan, and Superior, and their navigable streams; and within two miles of where I now write there are at least 500 seats for water works, a great number of which are now occupied for merchant mills, saw mills, fulling mills, paper mills, oil mills, cotton and woolen factories, nail factories, furnaces, etc., etc. All strangers are astonished at the rapid growth of the village and the quantity of business done in it. It is a thoroughfare for an immense number of travelers from all quarters, east, west, north, and south, and many from Europe, to see the canal, the aqueduct across the Genesee river and the Falls of Niagara and it is on the route from the New England states to the west and southwestern states. My third of the 100 acres of land purchased at this place is now worth one hundred thousand dollars exclusive of the houses thereon, but in order to get it settled I sold the lots very low."

Much honor is due to all those other sturdy men who developed the village of Rochester; but their history is not pertinent to the founding of the village or city, in the exact meaning of that word.

The village of Rochester was incorporated April 21, 1817, by an act of the legislature; and the founding of Rochester was accomplished.



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