RVF Rochester - History - Streets

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Frankfort Once Name For Brown's Square And Its Surroundings

Name Given In Honor of Francis Brown; Also Remembered In Name of Frank Street -- Territory Surveyed and Mapped in 1812—Brown Operated Famous Mill

"Frankfort" is a name that has little meaning for the present generation of Rochesterians, but there are still older residents who in conversation refer by this name to the territory about Brown's Square. A map of this territory was made by Benjamin Wright, a surveyor of Rome, in 1812, for Matthew Brown, Esq., Francis Brown, Thomas Mann, and Andew Park. This map was purchased in October, 1813, by the city from George A. Sherman who obtained it from George Washington. George A. Sherman was a leading real estate operator in Rochester and the original owner of the triangle of land now known as Anderson Park, at Main street east and University avenue.

The name Frankfort was in honor of Francis Brown and the name of Frank Street, which has not been changed, was also given in his honor. He gave his own name to the street, now known as Sartoga avenue. The street, now known as the line on the map as Court street, Jones street was named in honor of Chancellor Jones, who purchased lots Nos. 7 and 8, below Frankfort. Harford street, now Lytell avenue, was named in honor of Charles Harford who purchased lots Nos. 47 and 48, below Frankfort. In 1812, when the first mill was built, Harford street was known as Anderson Park street.

Edwin Scramon, a pioneer of Rochester, who played the harford mill as a boy has left the following description of it:

The main wheel was a three-inch wheel, in the top was inserted a piece of iron called a spindle. The stone that ran rested upon it so that, in raising or lowering the stone to grind coarse or fine, the whole monster, with the stone upon it, had to be raised with the bottom timber.

This was done with a monstrous lever which ran the whole length of the mill, tapering toward the end, which was managed by a leather strap put twice around and fastened to the timbers at one end, while at the other end hung a huge stone. The belt was carried from a screw made on the shaft under the stone, into which a wooden-cogged wheel was geared in a manner similar to an old pair of swifts. The ground meal, as it ran from the stone, fell upon a wide and ran over a wheel at the far end of the bolt. This strap ran in a box at the upper side, and, as it went over the wheel, the nut of the upper end of the belt was pulled, and the stone was raised.

The bolt was carried from a screw made on the shaft under the stone, into which a wooden-cogged wheel was geared in a manner similar to an old pair of swifts. The ground meal, as it ran from the stone, fell upon a wide and ran over a wheel at the far end of the bolt. This strap ran in a box at the upper side, and, as it went over the wheel, the nut of the upper end of the belt was pulled, and the stone was raised.
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Colorful Streets Of Rochester... By Amy H. Crouthton
No. 26—S. Clinton Named For Governor

Rogten house which stood until 1907 at southeast corner of Court and South Clinton Street on site of present Universalist Church.

Clinton Avenue South originally was a short street beginning at Main Street, in the outskirts of the village, and ending at the grove of first-growth elm trees given to the village by Eliza Johnson as a public square. It was a residence street and took its name from De Witt Clinton, governor of New York State from 1817 to 1822 and again from 1824 to 1829.

It was not until June, 1868, that the Common Council authorized the continuation of the street from Monroe Avenue to Jackson Street (now Capron Street). Later the street was continued along what was then Green Street. The Erie Canal had to be bridged before the street could go further; but this was done and Clinton Avenue was continued along what was then Cayuga Street. Thence it took to the open country until it struck the road then known as Pinnacle Road. Today, Clinton Avenue South extends beyond the Westfall Road.

Many Fine Residences

Despite the extension of the street, it remained a street of residences and churches until the 1890s. Even then it was dotted with character, not reluctantly, the fine old homes first being taken over as the offices of physicians and other professionals who then worked on the ground floor and occupied the home of Dr. George Lewis. Late this corner was purchased by David Copeland and the house built there was the home of members of the Copeland family until it was razed to make way for the commercial building which now occupies the site.

Old Roggen House

The house which was razed on the southeast corner of Court and Clinton in 1907 to make way for the new Universalist Church was built some time before 1825 and was occupied that year by Richard Van Kleeck, who came to Rochester from Albany. In 1833 Van Kleeck died and the house passed to Edward Roggen, a wool dealer. From him it passed to William Van Kleeck Lansing in 1833 and Mr. Lansing lived there until 1870 when the house was sold to Norman H. Galusha, who intended to move the house; but when the attempt was made it was discovered that it had double walls with a space between filled with limestone brick. The plan of removal was given up and the house was rented to Mose Galusha, when it came into the hands of the Van Voorhis family by whom the site was given to the Universalist Church in 1907.

Washington Square, at the southeast corner of Main and South Clinton. This building was remodeled in 1868 and in 1883 it was sold for $50,000 to the East Side Savings Bank which erected its own building and has occupied the site since that time. Stephen Seaman conducted a grocery in the block at the northwest corner of Main and Clinton South for many years.

Along both sides of the street to the south stood fine homes set back in well-kept grounds. There were the residences of Stephen Remington, Henry Brewster, Alva Hoag, Stowell, Norman Galusha, Abram S. Mann, Alton G. Whitecomb, Edmund Coombs, John E. Morey Sr., William Eastwood, Hobart P. Atkinson, John J. Howe, Nicholas E. Paine and James Sargent.

Theaters of Section

The next time you enter the Empire or Temple Theaters to see your favorite stage or screen star, "equate," give a thought to the historic significance of these two buildings in the growth of Rochester.

What a shock some of the forefathers would have if they could see such palaces of amusement erected on the grounds, where they formerly lived with their families.

On the spot where the Lyceum now stands, lived at one time the late James Sargent, a partner of Mayor Greenleaf, former general and congressman, who later organized the firm of Sargent & Greenleaf.

For many years, these two men made logs at the northwest corner of Court and South Street until increased business made expansion imperative.

Neighbors to Mr. Sargent were Alexander McLean, chief of police, and Moses Adler. The houses were torn down in 1888, when the theater was built.

Today the north end of Clinton Avenue South is one of the sections to which one goes for new clothes, new automobiles and new wrinkle in food and hotel accommodation. At the southern end of the street, where all was forest when Rochester was first settled, there have sprung up new residential sections which are among the most attractive in the city, that Clinton Avenue South, despite its annexation by commerce, has not all abandoned its claim as a residential street.
COLORFUL STREETS OF ROCHESTER

By Amy H. Croughton

COMFORTABLE residences look down upon the street from high laws, not conventionally terraced; but sloping with the natural rise of the ground. A spreading locust tree shades one lawn, and in the center of a vacant lot which has been retained by the occupant of the adjoining house to insure his home adequate "breathing space," is an elaborate stone foun-
dain whose water gushes from a spring at which the Indians used to camp before Rochester was even a settlement.

The street is Clinton Avenue North and the section just described is that between Clinton Avenue and Andrews Street as it was in 1888 and for a decade or two thereafter. By then the streets have disappeared and the hills on which they stood have been excavated to provide basements and eleva-
tments for commercial buildings. The locust tree has gone, too. Ac-
cording to tradition, it was used to provide clubs for the Roch-
ester police. The springs and wells have been diverted, though in some instances their sources have defiled efforts at control and occasionally bubble up in sub-cells.

First Church at Corner

One of the first things one hears about Clinton Avenue North is that Third Presbyterian Church held its organization meeting in a school house at Clinton Avenue and Mortimer Street on Jan. 15, 1827. Fifteen days later the trustees purchased from Enos Stone a lot at the north-
est corner of Main and North Clinton, for a temporary building for worship. A permanent building was dedicated Aug. 21, 1828, which one of the early Sunday schools was held in. This was the scene of many early Rochester amusements until it was burned down in 1867. It was rebuilt as the Empire Theater and thereafter the site was occupied by theatrical ventures. The names of Robinson's Musee Theater, and Wonderland. In 1865 the property and that adjoining it was acquired by the Sibley. Lind-
say and Curr Company whose store was then in the Granite building at St. Paul and Main streets. The firm expected to erect its new store at its present site, but the rise of the ground was such that the buildings were gradually raised and the nucleus of the present structure was built while "business was usual." the slogan.

Wonderland Theater at Clinton Avenue North and Main East on site of present Sibley store.

The East Side Savings Bank began a business in the Washington Block in 1839 and did not move to its present site at the southeast corner of South Clinton and Main until 1841. The Cooper Drug Store was also in the Washington block and Dr. George Peer, who lived in the fourth house north of the block, which formerly had been the home of Dr. Robinson and of Hiram Sibley, also had his office in the building.

Indian Camp Site

On the west side of Clinton Avenue North in 1858 there was a business block and then a succes-
sion of residences among which was that of Mortimer H. Green which he had purchased in the previous year from Mrs. Tiphia Benson and which was said to cover the site of an early camping ground of the Indians. At the corner of Clinton and Division Streets was the shoe shop of Leete and Elliston where many a Rochester debutante purchased her first pair of party slippers. At Clinton and Andrews streets was the Salmon Grocery which served the surrounding residen-
tial section including the aristocratic homesteads on Franklin Square. Just north of Mortimer Street where the Masonic Temple now stands was the home of Don Alonso Watson with its extensive garden and fountain.

On Dec. 12, 1881, a number of Jewish residents purchased the Barton residence in Clinton Avenue near Andrews Street as the home of the Eureka Club. A new building was erected on the site and was opened on Aug. 12, 1883. This building was sold to the Roch-
ester Lodge of Elks in 1908 and was further remodeled, being dedi-
cated to its new uses Jan. 4, 1909.

Land for the Gordon Theater which occupied the site where the Sibley store was located, was purchased by the Kuichling family. The Gordon was a temporary building erected in the Spring, being devoted to motion pictures and vaudeville. After the erection of the Piccadilly Theater in 1912 the Gordon Thea-
er was abandoned save for occa-
sional entertainments and meet-
ings. It stood vacant for some years before the site was purchased by the Keith-Albee interests.

The Masonic Temple was erected in 1902, concentrating all Masonic activities in Rochester at the northwest corner of North and Mortimer Streets. In the same year the Rochester Athletic Club erected its present building on the east side of Clinton.

The Y. W. C. A. building on Clin-
ton Avenue was erected in 1897 on the site of a house which its association had occupied for some time. Opposite the site of the Y. W. C. A. was old School 10 on the site of the present Stacey Candy Factory and south of the school were the drug store and home of the father of Dr. Louis Weigel who was later to bring fame to Roch-
ester by his experimentation with the X-ray—experiments which finally led to his death.

Old House Remains

There is still standing near the Y. W. C. A. building, a house which was built on Clinton Avenue in the 1840s by Dr. J. Howland. It is now occupied by a Chinese laun-
dry and is, exteriorly, somewhat dilapidated; but its framework is sound and staunch. Charles How-
land was a carpenter and cabinet maker who was employed on ear finishing in the New York Central shops. His granddaughter, Miss Mabel L. Webber, recalls the family tradition that Mr. Howland, after first building a shop on the rear of the lot in which he and his wife found shelter for the time being, sold much of the work of building the house in the evenings, his wife holding a kerosene lamp to illuminate his work.

Much of the property on both sides of Clinton Avenue North in the rear of Clinton Place and in the rear of Salem Church was owned by the Kenyon family. The tile and the Gersons also had homes on Clinton near School 10.

First Jewish Service

On Oct. 7, 1848, on the Sunday of Atonement, the first Jewish service held in Rochester took place in an armory at the southeast corner of Clinton Avenue North and Cumberland Street. In the succeeding quarter century several members of the Jewish race settled on Clinton Avenue North and adjoining streets and some of the first clothing factories were established by them on this street.

Central Station Built 1914

The erection of the present New York Central Station at Clinton Avenue North and Central Avenue in 1914 was arrived at only after years of controversy paralleling that between the city and the company in the years before the second Central Station was erected in the late 1850s which had elevated. A plan for beautifying the late 1850s shows the north end of Main Street leading to a New York Central station erected over the river bed. The courage was at last relinquished because of the cost in-
volved and in 1909 it was first an-
nounced that the station would be erected on its present site.

A house map of the city made in the late 1850s shows the north end of Clinton Avenue as farm property, though there was a small settle-
ment on a level with Carthage. Even in 1874 when the first build-
ing of St. Michael's Church was dedicated, the street was but sparsely settled beyond it. Now the city line crosses Clinton Avenue North at No. 2041 and the whole street is closely built up.

Avenue Puts ORGANIZES

Merchant-Property owners and business men of Clinton Avenue South are planning to form an assoc-
iation which would centralize the section in staging events, such as holiday decoration, street improvements and civic enter-
prises.

A meeting was held last week at the Seneca Hotel, with John Roche, advertising manager of the B. Forman Company as chairman. Assisting him are Fred Odenbach, John Connors, John Wegman, Walter Hart and Samuel Guggenheim.

COTTAGE STOOD ON LEWSIE

Still another theater in Clinton Avenue South, Leow's Rochester, at Eighth and Central Streets, had its beginning like the Lyceum and Temple Theaters. In 1860, Henry Brewster, one of the early settlers, purchased a small white cottage on the present site of the theater. It was formed by a local and Buffalo enterprise, but is now a member of the nation-wide Leow chain system.

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No other street in Rochester's bustling business section has shown such rapid strides in development over a period of twenty years as has Clinton Avenue South—a more or less unimportant thoroughfare in the downtown residential district in 1910; today, the very heart of the metropolitan shopping area. The view above was taken from Main Street East, looking toward Court Street.

Another important item in the history of Rochester and the avenue itself is the fact that the first white man's cabin of record was built by Enos Stone in the rear of No. 29 Elm Street, close to the present home of the B. Forman Company.

Within the last few years, the avenue has rapidly forged ahead until its merchants have established one block in Clinton Avenue, Rochester's largest hotel, coffee shop, furniture store, grocery and delicatessen, theater, and women's specialty shop, in addition to housing the city's only legitimate theater, built in 1888 and still playing to capacity houses.

THE FORMAN STORE

Mr. Forman, who is a veteran optician and the oldest Clinton Avenue business man in length of service on the street, came to Rochester from Boston and opened a small office at No. 15 Clinton Avenue South, in what is now the southern half of Odenbach Coffee Shop.

Luxury at $35 Per

He lived at the Whitcomb House and for $35.00 per month was able to get luxurious quarters—a spacious bedroom and bath—and three meals per day.

In the building in which his office was located, there was also a livery stable, where farmers from outlying towns hitched their horses while they did trading.

The only other business buildings on the street at that time between Main and Court Streets was the Hotel Hayward, now a part of the Hotel Hayward and the Lyceum Theater. On both sides of the street were beautiful trees and private homes, with carefully cut lawns enclosed by iron fences.

FARMERS BY SCORE

Previous to taking over the building by the Empire Optical Company, the office and adjoining storeroom were used by the Unnea Biscuit Company. On the site in still earlier days was a broken down shanty used for a veterinary and livery office.

Farmer's waggons with vegetables and fruit products lined both sides of the curb every Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday mornings until 10 a.m. and from improvised stands, sold their produce.
Colorful Streets Of Rochester... 
By Amy H. Croughton

No. 20—Cortland Street Much Changed

For many years the Unitarian Church on Cortland Street remained hidden away in the shadow of tall buildings which had sprung up around it. Today, because of the razing of these buildings to make way for parking stations, the buildings of the church and parish house, their gray stone mellowed with years and softened by masses of clinging vines, stand exposed to the passer-by on Clinton Avenue South and Cortland Street. Much as Rochester's first high school building erected on the same site in 1827 must have done. So by a freak of circumstances, a modern invention has restored a condition existing a century ago when anyone who talked of such a thing as horseless carriage would have been regarded with kindly but cautious sympathy.

The Rochester High School was incorporated March 15, 1827, and the building, 85 by 85 feet; three stories high, and of stone, was erected in the same year on Cortland Street, then called Lancaster. It faced a lane running from Clinton Avenue South and its site is known to have included that of the present Unitarian Church, although historians differ as to the actual site of the building which was burned in 1852. The "lane" was undoubtedly an unofficial extension of Court Street which on the maps of Rochester in 1829 is shown stopping at what is now Washington Square.

The Rochester High School in 1838

Named For Educator
Lancaster Street took its name from the educator, Lancaster, who had outlined a plan of higher education which was followed by the high school. The first trustees, who brought the high school into being were Levi Ward Jr., Obadiah Bush, David C. West, Ashley Sampson, Peckham Barker, Elisha Johnson, Enos Stone, Elisha Ely, Abner Wakelee, Isaac Marsh, William Alinson and Samuel Schofield. The first principal of the school was S. D. Moore. Dr. Chester Dewey, who was called from Williams College in New England to become principal of the high school in 1838, built the school up until it was one of the most notable in the state at the time of its abandonment after the destruction of the building by fire.

Dr. Dewey then joined the faculty of the University of Rochester with which he was connected until his death. The school site consisted of an acre and a half of land purchased from Enos Stone. It was meadow land surrounded by trees, when the school first was built, so that the students had abundant space for recreation. In Sept., 1836, the Common Council ordered that Lancaster Street be curved near its junction with Monroe Avenue, "commencing from the house owned by Samuel Price and running to the northeast corner of McBride's lot on the west side so as to leave the street two rods wide."

Used By Church
In 1854 the Third Presbyterian Church, which had fallen into financial difficulties and had been forced to sell its building at the northeast corner of Clinton and Main Street to the Second Baptist Church, transferred its services to the High School building. The Third Church erected another building on Main Street just south of Stone Street and when this was destroyed by fire on Aug. 17, 1858, the congregation purchased the High School site for $3,000. Temple Street was cut through from Lancaster Street to Chestnut in this year, dividing the lot into two small parts. The church building still standing on the south side of Temple Street was erected in 1859. The chapel was erected on the north side of the street and, in 1883, the Unitarian Church, which had sold its building and site at North Fitzhugh and Church streets to the federal government for $20,000 paid that sum to the Third Presbyterian congregation for the two buildings, the Third Church then moving to its present site at East Avenue and Melge Street.

The name Lancaster was changed to Cortland by an ordinance of the Common Council adopted Dec. 1, 1885.

In the days of the old high school Lancaster Street was a street of handsome, substantial residences, some of which persisted to recent years though they had fallen from their first estate and had become aged huddled.

EAST AVENUE AT MAIN STREET EAST

This busy downtown intersection has changed a bit in 123 years. It was in 1805 that five men, with the help of $50 appropriated by the town of Northfield, cut the road two rods wide from Ovington Stone's home near what is now Clover Street to the river. It was known in those days as the River Road.

The thoroughfare was later called Main Street. In the thirties an almost unbroken forest stretched beyond Chestnut Street, and beyond that lay a swamp filled with cattails and deep water, hazardous to cross. The present Main Street East having been named, Josiah W. Bissell tried in the late forties to induce the Common Council to change the name of what was then Main Street to East Avenue. Failing, he, with characteristic audacity, changed it himself by affixing signs with the desired name on every corner out to the city line at Goodman Street.

He also set out a full line of shade trees on either side of East Avenue and secured passage of an ordinance for its paving and grading, establishing on it a line of omnibuses, the first public conveyance in the city.
The above picture, the original of which was loaned to The Times-Union by Charles H. Vick of this city, shows the tavern and its surroundings as they were in the early 1860's. The race track, stretching back from East Avenue for a quarter of a mile, was built by Joseph Hall, a manufacturer of agricultural implements on Water Street, and Thomas Fletcher, in the year 1851. The tavern is of still earlier origin. It was not until the breaking out of the Civil War that the name "Union" was adopted.

In 1854 the tavern and course were purchased from Mr. Hall by James Vick, Rochester's pioneer florist whose home was in East avenue on the present site of Vick Park A and B, bringing the north ends of the race track into East Avenue at right angles and calling the new streets "Avenue A and Avenue B, Vick Park." The curve at the south end of the course was retained, but Mr. Vick added a gravelled road to the east and west, telling his friends that in time the Park Avenue car line would be extended to serve his new streets and thence on to Culver road in Brighton, a prophecy which, in due time, he saw fulfilled. Nor has the street car company ever found any means of eliminating the curve which had its origin in the old Union Race Course.

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Colorful Streets Of Rochester... 

By Amy H. Croughton

No. 11—Ely St. Was Cradle Of Rochester's Churches

HEREWITH there is presented one of a series of articles on the streets of Rochester. In this series, Miss Croughton demonstrates that even the most drab thoroughfare has a background of tradition and history if it can only be discovered.

Ely Street, like Johnson Street, today offers little to halt the searcher for Rochesterians who is unfortified by knowledge of historical tradition. Yet it was on this street that three churches had their beginnings and that one of the early theaters of the city flourished.

The street takes its name from Elisha Ely who came to the Village of Rochester in 1813 and purchased land, then forest, on the east side of what is now South Avenue. Ely built his house at what is now Ely Street and South Avenue and his farm extended back to what is now Stone Street. There is no doubt that Ely Street originally was merely a lane extending east into the forest. Elisha Ely's house was later the home of John Mastick, Rochester's first lawyer.

Ely Hall built in 1827

In 1827 the population of the village had grown to nearly 5,000, and in this year the corner-stone of a very substantial building was laid at the southeast corner of Ely Street and Minerva Place. This building remained as a landmark for a full century, being torn down last year to make way for the store and warehouse of George B. Hart, wholesale florist, by whom the property had been acquired some years before.

Few buildings in Rochester have had a more varied experience than this hall. It was used, in succession, for public meetings; for concerts; for the meeting of a colored congregation; for the services of a congregation of German Roman Catholics; for the services of a congregation of French Roman Catholics and for theatrical performances which varied all the way from melodrama to the cheapest sort of variety show. Following all this, the lower part of the building, with an addition on the Ely Street front, was utilized as a blacksmith's shop, and the upper floor for storage purposes. In the early years of the present century the cheerful clang of the blacksmith's hammer still rang through the street and the open doors gave a view of a flaming forge which threw queer shadows over the old walls and into the stable where the sleek sides of the big dray horses which stood to be shod.

Hall Used By Churches

The German Catholic congregation, later known as St. Joseph's Parish, occupied the hall as early as 1830, and early records state that the building so occupied had been "The Negroes' Church on Ely Street." In 1844 St. Joseph's congregation removed to a new church in Franklin Street. In 1847 the French Catholic congregation, now known as the Church of Our Lady of Victory, began its services in the Ely Street hall, remaining there until 1867 when it removed to its new church in Pleasant Street.

The Ely Street hall had a plainly marked corner-stone bearing the date of 1827 and when the building was razed, last year, Mr. Hart presented this stone to St. Joseph's parish as a relic of the building in which the congregation had held its early services.

In 1868 the hall was again taken over for theatrical performances under the impressive title of "The Ely Street Opera House." Its career was a short and sharp decline, however, for it could not compete with the larger halls and theaters that had been erected and it soon was given over to commercial purposes.

Today it is difficult to picture Ely Street even as it was in the '40s and '50s—a residence street between two other residence streets, South Avenue and Stone Street, its dirt roadway lined with trees and its houses surrounded by pleasant gardens.
W

The street soon changed. Besides the mills, which brought so much business to the merchants of the street, there was another event that helped it to its rise to fame. In 1817 a group of gray clad convicts from Auburn Prison arrived in Rochester to begin work on the aqueduct of the Erie Canal. When that was completed the added business it brought to Rochester insured the success of Exchange Street.

The era that began then was the beginning of the palmy days of Exchange Street. A visit to the city in those days would have shown it to be one of the most flourishing between New York and the West, and Exchange Street was the business center. Had you been a visitor then you probably would have been swept up to the city with the flourish and grandeur that can attend only a packet boat. No modern observation train gives the magnificent and comprehensive view of an approaching destination that mode of travel did. As you approached the packet office in Exchange Street you would see first the curious citizens crowded on the bridge watching your arrival. Loafers' Bridge it was called, but the sight of the packet boat arriving would have repaid anyone for thus spending a few minutes. When the boat passed under the bridge the crowd moved down to the dock to greet the arrivals.

It would be a mistake to think the arrival was less exciting than that of a train at a modern station. There were not only porters trying to claim the attention of those packet boats arriving but there were agents of hotels, cabmen and hackmen who added to the general confusion. There were no flat rates for anything. All prices were decided upon only after bickerings and brisk arguments, And in the midst of all there were greetings, handkerchief waving and excited exclamations about the size of the city. If travelers were staying at a hotel there was the imposing Rochester House,
standing in sight of the packet house, and was likely to be their choice. The new Times-Union Building now occupies that site.

The Rochester House was built in 1837. It had a long line of illustrious landlords, though none of them made it profitable. In fact most of them lost money. Aside from that minor economic difficulty, the Rochester House had a glorious history. It was considered a Beau Brummell by the women. None of them ever captured him (but apparently most of them made the effort) and he lived his days in bachelor bays at the Rochester House. Members of Congress, the State Legislature, the first Mayor, a presidential candidate and other celebrities the old hotel boasted as its guests. Political speeches were made from its balcony and in later years the ministers of the city preached there Sunday afternoons to canal men.

Beside the canal the old basin of the river, called Child's Basin, was for years a favorite recreation spot of the community. In the early days of the village lotteries went there to spend their Sunday afternoons. That was before a certain strict churchman moved into the vicinity. He broke up the Sunday gatherings. But later it became a favorite spot. Boys skipped stones on its waters and floated rafts on it (with occasional narrow escapes from being carried over the falls). It also became a bathing resort. In those days bathers did not go to Lake Ontario. That area was surrounded by marshes and it was only on rare occasions that one got a look at its waters, to say nothing of bathing in them.

Another important building on the river bank was the jail that stood on the Island now occupied by the Erie Railroad train shed. In good weather one might see prisoners out in the yard breaking stones. In the summer the river was low and it was easy to escape simply by walking across the dry river bed. Finally, when conditions reached the point that it was easier to get out of jail than to get in the city built a new jail.

The business section of Exchange Street in those days boasted at least six drygoods stores. If a customer wanted hardware he could be accommodated within a block by any one of three stores. There also were two drug stores, one hatter, one leather and shoe store, three stove and tinware stores, six or more grocery stores, the barber shop, two banks surrounding the houses and those on the east side of the street had pleasant gardens that sloped down to the river. But though the railroad came through along the river and the business section engulfed it the "Ruffled Shirt Ward" clung tenaciously, still maintaining much of its prominence as late as 1870.

But the real glory of Exchange Street as it was in those early times began to fade with the depression of 1836 to 1838. Many who had been engaged in speculative businesses failed and gradually the business section was deserted. The state enlarged the canal and the bridge in Exchange Street was raised. That act actually separated the north and south sides of the street, destroying the value of property. In 1853 the Rochester House was destroyed by fire and that ended the early glories of Exchange Street.

Could those early settlers see Exchange Street now they would not recognize it. The canal, which was the center of their world, is now Broad Street. When that street was being constructed in 1823, some of the old buildings of the first era of prosperity were torn down, but now without some resistance on their part. The workmen discovered the walls were three feet thick and of hand-hewn timbers so that even after a century of life they were still standing solidly. The Times-Union Building occupies the same place the Rochester House, imposing bank buildings have taken the place of one drygoods store and "Loafers Paradise" is now the busy Times Square.

Where it was easier to get in than to get out, the old jail on the bank of Genesee
Exchange Street as it was when the first street cars traveled the first car tracks in Rochester. Buildings familiar to the Rochesterians of today were there then, but the old rattling bridge that crossed the canal near the aqueduct has vanished.
Exchange Street as it is today, the Times Square district where business hums amid the memories of a glorious past that had their part in the upbuilding of Rochester.

By Amy H. Croughton

No. 1—Exchange Once Was Mill St.

No street in Rochester has a more interesting historical background than Exchange Street; and, save for its one block of bustling bank, business and newspaper buildings, between Main and Broad Streets, none, perhaps, makes a more drab impression on the casual observer.

Exchange Street began as a mill road paralleling the river on the west of the mill yard which occupied the present site of the Wilber Building. It was a rough road; for it ran over an outcropping ledge of rock, infested near the river, by rattlesnakes. There was no Erie Canal in those years and Exchange Street, then known as "Mill Street," ended in forest land not far beyond the present Broad Street. In 1827 the street extended no further than Troup Street, and in 1838 only to Edinburgh Street.

Home of Founder

In 1818 Col. Nathaniel Rochester, founder of the city, built his first home here at the southwest corner of Exchange and Spring streets. Until 1834 the house was occupied by Dr. Levi Ward. Then Colonel Rochester lived in the house until 1834, when he built what became known as the Rochester Homestead.
Colorful Streets Of Rochester...

By Amy H. Croughton

No. 20—South Fitzhugh Street Still Retains Old Homes

Seven Early Homes

The first of the seven houses south of Broad Street were built in 1826 for William B. Rochester, son of the founder of the city. It subsequently was occupied by Henry Gent, Jacob S. Gould, and now Harry V. Gould. The next house, now occupied by the Guarantee Abstract & Title Company was the home of Ebenezer Watts and was built in the late 1820s. The corner house was built in 1824 for Gen. Jacob Gould on a lot bought from Jacob Howe, Rochester's first baker, who came to the village in 1818 and camped at the northwest corner of Spring and Fitzhugh Streets, where he established his first bake house before moving to North Fitzhugh Street. The house built for General Gould by Capt. Daniel Loomis was of hand-made bricks from the yards in Brighton which supplied the material for the Cobb house at Monroe and Highland Avenues. The facing of cement, which still covers the bricks was the invention of a Frenchman who visited Rochester in the early 20es and died here, his secret dying with him. The cement is of unusual hardness and shows little deterioration.

The Gould house was one of the centers of social activity in the Third Ward and at one time President Martin Van Buren was entertained there. It now provides for a number of physicians.

These three houses south of Broad Street, once such imposing edifices, now seem to crouch in the shade of the lofty Terminal Building which has the distinction of being the first important building erected on Broad Street and comprises a strip of land which extended along the Erie Canal and was used as a smoke yard.

House of Editor

On the southwest corner of Spring and Fitzhugh Streets, a house was built in the early 1900s for Everett Peck, publisher of the Rochester Telegraph. William P. Peck, author of a number of histories of Monroe County and Rochester, was born in this house which is now an apartment house. The house next south is known to old residents for Benjamin Campbell, an early physician and philanthropist and also honored as "The Father of Rochester Savings Bank."

Another Notable House

Four notable houses mark the corners of Fitzhugh and Broad Streets. North is a landmark house in the form of a stone yard.

Jackson's Bake Shop

In the 1840s there stood at the northeast corner of Spring and Jackson Street in the neighborhood of the Third Ward, a bake-shop of Jesse Jackson, famed for his pastry and pound cakes which he furnished to the various churches and charitable institutions of the town. Subsequently a row of wooden buildings extended west of Jackson Street, which became the chicken market and cheap lodging rooms. This "Chicken Row" being displeased when it burned to the ground on the night after it had been built, solicited the Rochester Savings Bank to erect a new building. This configuration occurred March 30, 1853, and the Rochester Savings Bank Building was completed by 1857. The third
Canal Unwelcome

It may be imagined that the arrival of the Erie Canal at the doors of the First Presbyterian and St. Luke's Churches was not wholly welcome. Not only did the well-spaced admonitions of the canalboat drivers to their mules fall to blend harmoniously with the sermons from the pulpit; but the "hump" caused by the approaches to the canal bridge was a fertile source of broken bones to church members during the Winter months. This latter difficulty was somewhat obviated by the erection of a foot bridge which crossed the lower ground between the church and the sidewalk.

St. Luke's Church was partially protected from the noise of the canal by buildings which stood at the northeast corner of Fitzhugh and Broad Streets. These buildings were replaced in 1877 by an auditorium called Fitzhugh Rink where athletic exhibitions were given and where, in later years, motion pictures were shown. This has now been remodeled for commercial and restaurant purposes.

Fitzhugh Street was named in honor of Major Charles Fitzhugh, one of the founders of the city.

According to tradition, an exhuasted Rochesterian was found by a policeman, one early morning in the '80s, embracing one of the many telegraph poles to be seen in the above picture.

"Hey, captain," he beseeched the representative of the law, "Can you lend me a compass? I'm lost; lost in an impenetrable forest."

Sober Rochesterians in 1889, the time when this picture was taken by the Portland photographer, a sign to the effect that "Taylor for the Taylor" had recently moved to Rothenburg Exchange Place building. On the third floor was the office of C. E. Drake, grain and produce broker.

Individual telephones were comparatively few in number in Rochester in 1888, but there were many public stations and one of these was in the Wilder building, its presence being indicated by the square sign with the picture of the bell which may be seen on the telegraph pole at the southeast corner of Main and Exchange street. For some years the one and only exchange of the Bell Telephone Company was in the Wilder building.

On the left of the picture is the Reynolds Arcade, the Paine building, the Granite Clothing Company. The Granite building was not in existence at that time and one misses its tall bulk behind the picture.
Were you one of the crowd at the Four Corners on a certain day in 1871 when one of the "bob-tailed" horses left the track and blocked traffic for an hour or more until another, or was it "the" other, car came along and lent its horse to pull the first car back on the track again? West Main street looks a trifle unfamiliar without its present maze of trolley wires. But the Rochester Savings Bank building in the background looks natural save that it then lacked the third story and the guardian lions which are familiar to present-day Rochesterians.

Court House Square may be seen at the Court House itself is hidden and the Rochester Trust and Safe Deposit Smith's Arcade, the building which used to be a.

The Four Corners in the Early Days
The old Center Market, built in 1837, forerunner of the Haymarket building now being razed. All sorts of produce were handled here, and the old market was the Mecca for country folk for miles around. Peck's history refers to this building as a "magnificent market house." Front Street was Mason Street in those days.

Robert Purdy, No. 2550 Dewey Avenue, who knew the old Haymarket as a boy, is pointing to the record of the highest water that ever swept Front Street in the days when floods were a common occurrence in downtown Rochester. The record was set on St. Patrick's Day, March 17, 1865.

PRESENT 'FOUR CORNERS' WAS ROCHESTER IN 1814; SURROUNDED BY FORESTS

Descriptions of Events of Early Days Told at Pioneer Festival in 1874

By JAMES M. ANGLE

If all the avenues, street and alleys, with the exception of Main, Exchange and State streets, and South avenue, were eliminated from the map of Rochester, the plan which remained would be the profile of the city as it appeared in 1814. Main street, at that date, terminated east of Fitzhugh street and west of Stone street. South avenue merged into the forest a short distance south of Court street; the southern limit of Exchange street was north of Troup street, and State street was unsettled beyond Market street.

On the northeast corner of State street and Main street east was located the store of Hervey and Elisha Ely. Next east of the Ely store was the dwelling of Abielad Reynolds, next east of which was the harness and saddle shop of Mr. Reynolds, that also housed the postoffice. The building next to the postoffice was the tailor shop of Jehiel Scranton and, continuing toward the river, and in the order in which they are named, a house occupied by Wheelock, a joiner; the home of Aaron Skinner, school teacher; the house of David K. Carter, miller and carpenter, and on the shore of the river the blacksmith shop of James B. Carter. These were the buildings on the south side of the street.

A historic landmark vanishes from "the Bowery of Western New York," as Front Street has been called. The old Haymarket Building shown here is being torn down to make way for a gasoline station. Automobiles are to be parked, where for many years farmers' hay racks stood, row on row.
In the first and also the last issue of the new series of the Gem, its editor related the history of Rochester before its settlement, limiting its narrative to the actual colonization of the village.

The First Tavern.

On the east side of the river, on the west side of South avenue and near the corner of Main street, was the new house of Enoch Stone, the only building on the west side of South avenue, with the exception of the old saw mill of Silas Smith, located about where the West street store is now, and the other house of Orin C. Gibbs, M. D. The next side of Exchange street had no buildings.

South of Main street west, in the vicinity of the present Union Trust building, and some distance back from the street, stood the building of District No. 1, which was built in the spring of 1814. Northwesterly from the school house was a lime kiln.

South of Main street east, and south of the junction of Basin and Graves streets, were the residences of the pioneer families. On the northwest corner of the present Allan mill, and a short distance to the south of the old mill was the new mill of Harvey and Elizab. E. Ely, on the northwest corner of the old Allan mill, at the end of a roadway running south from Main street and between Graves and Aueduct street, was a log house built for the use of the contractor and his help while building the new bridge in 1812.

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DO YOU REMEMBER?

Four Corners In Year Court House Was Built

The above picture was taken on September 11, 1894, from the window of the Alpha Zeta Fraternity in Reynolds Arcade, and reveals many changes that have taken place on and about "The Four Corners" since that time.

Post's drug store and the cigar store which succeeded to the old street car waiting rooms, may be seen on the southwest corner, now occupied by the building of the Rochester Trust and Safe Deposit Company. On the roof of the old Smith Arcade building at the corner of Main street west and Exchange street may be seen a sign "Rundel Art Gallery," which marked the print and frame shop of Morton W. Rundel, who on his death left the bulk of his estate to the City of Rochester for the purpose of establishing an art building which should perpetuate the rather ambitious name under which his store had been carried on for so many years.

The picture has a particular interest, for it shows the present Court House in its half-completed state as it was in the fall of 1894. Beyond is the building of the Rochester Savings Bank.

On the lower right of the picture may be seen the sidewalk sign of "The Mighty Dollar Cafe," an institution which for many years was as well-known in Rochester as the Genesee Falls, but which suffered eclipse when the Eighteenth amendment rose above the horizon.

At the time this picture was taken, Main and State streets had just been paved with Medina stone blocks laid on concrete, with the crevices filled with hot sand and tar. How many times these blocks have been laid and relaid since that time it would be hard to say.

FRANKLIN SQUARE

FRANKLIN SQUARE, named in honor of Benjamin Franklin, was set aside as a square when this section of the city was laid out. And, in accordance with the style of an earlier period, it was fenced in and opened only on certain occasions.

Following the establishment of the Rochester Park Board in 1888, this was one of the numerous small squares about the city that was taken over by it and made a city park in 1890. The fence was removed, walks were laid through it and it was beautified.

Located near the center of the city, it is changing from a section of beautiful old homes to one which is expected to be increasingly used for business. But, in spite of the changes that may take place in the streets by which it is bounded, the park itself will continue unchanged.
Present Cleanliness and Order Far Cry from Old Rowdy Spirit of City’s ‘Toughest Thoroughfare’

A comfortable and clean dormitory in the Rescue Mission has supplanted the old East Street flop houses.

Sidewalk pushcarts, just like those in New York’s East Side, were the retailers’ stands in the old days.

Bringing the big to market, was a familiar East Street sight years old.
BY HOWARD B. KEMP

"The Bowery, its Bowery. I'll never go there any more."

Hey didn't call it jazz, but a piano player rambled over the keys of a much abused instrument. One who might have been a good mahogany ledge, at one end of the keyboard, stood haff-empty "scuttle of suds." It generally stood at the right end, because most piano players in those music halls were right-handed drinkers.

Beside him stood a long-haired member of the species. He was drawing a bow over the strings of what he chose to call a fiddle, the movements bringing forth a strange conglomeration of notes. As he commenced he held a half-empty glass which rested on the seat of his chair while playing.

In the center of the room was an open space hardly equivalent to that prescribed by the Margins of Queensberry. Here the feet of men and women shuffled about in two-steps and waltzes throughout the evening. Becoming tired of dancing and drinking, they departed to rooms upstairs.

Around this abbreviated square were seated the wallflowers, men and women, all seeking to satisfy their thirst. The women were brazen enough to smoke cigarettes in public. They even displayed history a wee bit above their high shoe tops. Trim ankles were safely concealed within leather footgear.

'Pull-in' Merchant

Out in the street, a merchant keeping late hours—those before any 8-hour day or 5-day weeks were even talked about—was pulling a prospective customer into his store. These merchants had a keen sense of human understanding. Their philosophy was: "Everybody needs something." If unable to persuade a prospect to enter by argument, they are said to have sometimes resorted to force. Anything to get him inside. This particular prospect had all the earmarks of a ruralite who had been to the Haymarket. And, as was the case with numerous others of this gentry, he was loath to return home that night, having spent a goodly share of his party's proceeds. He gave every evidence of being in search of a "flop house."

Men were men, even if the spaces were congested, as long as they had hair enough on the upper lip for a moustache or a beard. Fist fights were numerous, and the clang of the gong on the old horse-drawn patrol wagon added to the din.

The driver and crew of the Black Maria were due to make many extra trips through the streets on Saturday nights to pick 'em up as they were tossed through the folding doors of those establishments where the "biggest and coolest" drinks in the city were dispensed at 5 cents a man's size glass. The walks were crowded from sunset to sunset.

Toughest Street

That was night life on Front Street. Rochester's Bowery, back in its heyday. It was known from coast to coast as the toughest street between New York City and Chicago.

But you can't go there any more. You can't, because the old Bowery is passe. All that remains of the old order of things are the "flop houses." Even this institution has been modernized to such an extent that its former stand­ings seem entirely lost. In the good old days, these places were infested with rodents of huge proportions, and if one were lucky enough to wake up in the morning, he invariably found himself surrounded by filth.

The vermin was so thick they say the proprietors attached anchors to the bed posts to keep them in their proper rooms.

To have offered a guest a room with the privilege of a bath in those days would have been to insult him. Norwithstanding its abhorrence of water, the street generally took a good cleaning once a year when the old General went on a rampage. Back in March, 1865, Old Man River is said to have done a pretty good job of it. Old residents still delight in telling of having cruised home in a rowboat.

They say the old order changeth. It most certainly has as far as the Bowery is concerned. Business places, chiefly markets catering to the very best people and hotels in town, supplant the former music halls and saloons. If it isn't a market, it's a restaurant. Myers' shoe store, Dave Solomon's place and a few other stores that fit with the present scheme, survive.

Just One Policeman

Moved by a slumming urge, it was my experience recently to travel through this once notorious section. Only one policeman, Leo Davis, was found pounding the beat. Shades of old "Cap" Vaughan, Tony Gabriel, Jim Scott, Bill Henline and a few other veterans of brass buttons and blue coats! They worked the street in pairs and found plenty to occupy their time. Sometimes as many as 37 unfortunates were herded out of a single place for a ride to 137 Exchange Street.

Having heard that the farther down the street one went, the tougher they got, it was my intention to get the toughest one out of the way first. The American House, at 197, therefore, was my objective as a first stop. The "Bobby" located on the second
There was a moment's hesitation, and his voice throbbed as he finished.

And that was not all. He sorely missed his old friend, the late Peter (Rattlesnake) Gruen. Alex freely admitted he had plenty of work for brewers when times were good.

"He made a bet with me once," said Alex, "that I couldn't stop drinking for a month. He bet me 100, I won." When Pete heard of it, he hopped on his bike, and was away.

"So," Pete continued, "we've come accustomed to the light which continued to glaire into his face, the man replied. He explained he had a daughter in school and a son in Macedon."

"Where's your wife?" queried the policeman.

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"Where's your wife?" queried the policeman.

There was a moment's hesitation, and his voice throbbed as he answered, "She's dead."

God help you," comforted the policeman, who then talked to the man as a brother and extended friendly advice which the lodger promises to heed.

In another cot, in an adjoining room, a lad of 9 years. His work never missed his old friend, the late George quit peddling water to get rough, and we have to keep an eye on him.

The dormitory gives the regular routine of the lodgers. This includes coffee and eggs for breakfast, and two feet deep, having apparently gathered all the blankets from those beds in the place not occupied by his night. He was not disturbed.

That was all at 137, and we stepped outside. Sergeant Klein motored up to the curb, had a friendly chat.

"Alex Tries Blocks"

For the benefit of those who may not recall the name, let it be said that Alex makes his liveliood trimming off chopping blocks for butchers all through Western New York. He was born in a Canadian village and learned the art of trimming blocks with his trusty ax when a lad of 9 years. His work never fails to attract a throng, and he still recalls the day that Jim MacArthur came in to buy a block because the crowd that gathered about him was blocking traffic.

He has a particular liking for Front Street, for it was here that he made his record of daily wage, a trifling 358. No mean feat.

"But he isn't making that money these days. That was one reason why he was found in a backroom of the lodging."

Across the street, which was now deserted, with the exception of the policeman and myself, is a place where Alex has a thick customer list. He is a hardworking man, with plenty of coverings and kept him off the street for the night.

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Who Remembers These Front Street Characters of the Nineties?

TEDDY GRIMES
Frock Coated Vendor of Socks

Front Street Rich in Queer Characters
By Richard G. Smith

Front Street today is just a street. Its fame or notoriety, gained by its numerous "characters" in the nineties, is gradually fading behind the every growing number of high class markets there.

Once, Front Street achieved country wide attention as a "tough" section. Cheap rooming houses lodged hundreds of "transients" who came in on the brake rods of fast freights. Many were wanted by the police.

Farmers with creaking wagons, loaded with produce, came to market. Saloons with doors working both ways, were on every corner.

No one knows where Teddy Grimes hailed from.

But Teddy, in his swallow tailed coat, gray trousers, and battered derby, with an armful of "100 per cent" wool socks, stockings and "real" elastic suspenders, knew all the farmers, and sold them his wares.

Teddy was a salesman of the old school. If a farmer didn't want the wool socks, Teddy merely threw pair after pair into the farmer's wagon, and all went for a nickel.

Each day, Teddy was around with a huge bundle of his standard articles of sale. Where he got them was a mystery. He didn't make them. He was never known to steal, but he always had a large stock.

An injury to his spine left "Sawdust George," once the greatest of circus acrobats and clowns, without employment. He came to Rochester and set up a novel business which earned his sobriquet.

"Sawdust George," was without competition on Front Street. He sold sawdust to every saloonkeeper on every corner.

Early in the morning, a burlap bag under one arm, and a ribless umbrella under the other, "Sawdust George" took his orders.

Another mystery was the source of "Sawdust George's" sawdust. He always could get it and seemed to control an inexhaustable supply.

With these two, there also basked in the limelight of Front Street one "George the newsboy." George sold papers up and down the street.

Because he was slight and demented known as "queer," he was constantly teased.

The three died, all before 1900. They had no relatives, as far as was known.
Front Street, Now Busy and Respectable,  
One Time Rendezvous of Sporting Gentry

Beer was cheap in Front street. Liquor was somewhat higher, but not prohibitive. At E. B. King’s one of the famous resorts, Nos. 38, 49, and 42, it was possible to obtain a bowl of soup, a dish of beans, a pork chop, two pieces of bread, and a glass of beer for 10 cents. E. B. King’s was the haven for the apple pickers. It was the nightly haunt of scores of men who were able to subsist for days at a time on a pocket-full of change.

Hod Moody’s place, where Hall’s lunchroom now stands, the Empire, a famous concert hall and saloon, the Haymarket Hotel, next to the Haymarket, at the lower end of the street, Johnny Buckley’s famous resort, presided over by its equally famous proprietor, Tommy Dixon’s saloon, and dozens of others, all made Front street what it was twenty-five or thirty years ago.

At the northeast corner of Main and Front street the famous “Oyster Bay” was operated in the basement. This was one of the first oyster houses in the city. It flourished for a number of years, was the most generally popular of all of the Front street resorts.

The Rescue Mission, at the lower end of Front street furnished soup and a bed, as it does to-day. But the man who couldn’t pay his keep, worked it out. He cut wood part of the day, barreled it, and then was given a bed and supper check. The barreled wood was arrayed in front of the mission and sold to passersby.

Concert Halls Were Tough

The Front street concert halls were “tougher than the tough.” They were usually in the rear of the resorts. The performers appeared on a platform at one end of the room; the spectators sat at tables. At the conclusion of each turn, the performers joined the crowd at the tables, and usually, if the performer had won favor, several “rounds” were bought in his honor.

Prize fights were conducted in the basement of Johnny Buckley’s place, and this was the rendezvous of the tougher sporting element of the city. Buckley himself was a great sportsman and celebrated in his time for his wagers on sporting events.

There were several sausages places along Front street, and in the rear of each was a small beer garden. Some of these were places of considerable respectability, and the tougher element along Front street was not encouraged to patronize them.