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Edited by Ruth Rosenberg-Naparsteck

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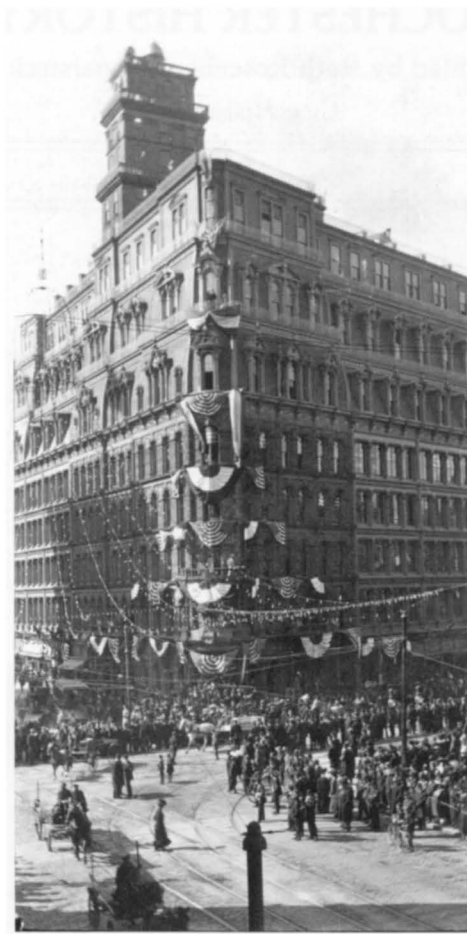
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No. 1

A Portrait of Rochester Through The Lens of Charles Zoller

*by Michael Hager, Rick McKee Hock
and Ruth Rosenberg-Naparsteck*





Spectators line the streets at the Four Corners in front of the Powers Building around the 1920s. The building is draped with banners and a fountain-shaped stream of lights flows from the front of the building to the balcony of the building across State Street.

Cover: Studio portrait of Charles Zoller (1852-1932) with camera outfitted for Autochrome photography. The photographer is unknown.

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Charles Zoller operated a furniture store at 224-226 North Street. Zoller is standing on the left.

The Photograph As History: The Work of Charles Zoller

Charles C. Zoller (1852-1932) was born in Rochester when photography was little more than a decade old. He grew up in Rochester, graduated from the Rochester Free Academy, and upon graduation, became a furniture upholsterer. By 1886, he opened his own furniture retail store on North Street. While still a young man, Zoller became an amateur photographer. Many of his photographs reflect his everyday life.

While in London in 1907, Zoller learned of a color photography process developed by August and Louis Lumiere in Lyon, France. Using a process developed earlier by Louis Ducos du Huron and Charles Cros, the Lumiere brothers patented the Autochrome, the first practical color photographic process, in 1904, three years before they made it available for sale. Zoller traveled to Paris in 1907 and bought a large number of the color plates for resale in America and for his own use.

Zoller was enthusiastic about the impressionistic effect the process gave to the images, though some photographers felt the Autochrome was inferior, for the large dots of color gave it an unclear appearance. Zoller, sometimes billed as the first to bring color photography to America, may not have been the first, but he was a pioneer in color photography along with such contemporaries as Alfred Stieglitz, Heinrich Kuhn and Edward Steichen.

In 1908, Zoller left the furniture business and began to give lectures and parlour talks, illustrated with lantern slides and autochromes. He traveled around the country with his illustrations and soon had a reputation that brought him requests by several prominent Rochesterians to photograph their gardens and homes while they traveled. He not only photographed George Eastman's home, but often attended special occasions at the home as photographer. In 1926, Mrs. Edmond Lyons called upon him to photograph Helen Keller in her home.

Zoller not only captured gardens and events, he photographed plant specimens for horticultural societies, seed companies, universities and the experimental agricultural station in Geneva, New York. Zoller was a pioneer in the use of the camera to document and record for science and advertising. He was, perhaps, unaware that many of the photographs of his everyday life would also become an historical record.

Zoller's photographs give us a sense of Rochester's past. We can read about a costumed Abraham Lincoln appearing at Washington Square Park at the turn of the century, but only a photograph can transmit every detail to our eyes, actually placing us at the scene nearly a century ago. Zoller's varied subjects take us through the streets of downtown Rochester, to the Erie Canal aqueduct (the present Broad Street bridge) and to Main Street the day the Ringling Brothers, Barnum and Bailey Circus paraded their elephants. We can see the crowded trolley bound for Seabreeze and children at play. We can browse through the Zoller Furniture Store or visit the early parks in our park system that is now celebrating its centennial year.

We can be with Zoller and other Rochesterians when President McKinley delivered his last speech at the Pan American Exposition in Buffalo just before he was assassinated. These images presented in this issue of **Rochester History** are only part of the invaluable historical record of our city left by Charles Zoller. When he died in

1932, he left more than 5,000 autochromes and several thousand black and white negatives. They are preserved in the collections of the International Museum of Photography at the George Eastman House and the Monroe County Parks Department.

The Autochrome Process

The Lumiere Autochrome process was one of the first practical color processes available to the working photographer. It was invented by August and Louis Lumiere in Lyon, France. Announced in 1904 by the brothers Lumiere, the process was made available for purchase in 1907.

The Autochrome process utilized a random mixture of microscopic orange, violet and green dyed potato starch granules having a diameter of approximately 25 thousandths of an inch. The dyed granules were spread evenly onto a glass sheet which had first been made sticky with an adhesive. A black and white, panchromatic (sensitive to red, green and blue light) emulsion was then coated over the starch granules. The finished Autochrome plate was placed in the camera with the starch granule layer facing the lens so that the image-forming light passed through the colored granules before reaching the light photographic emulsion. Each colored granule acted as a small color filter allowing only light of its own color to pass through. The plate was then processed to produce a positive image. The resulting image could then be viewed by transmitted light, the colored granules now acting as viewing filters.

In the hands of a capable photographer, the Autochrome process was able to produce a surprising palette of strong and subtle color.

Michael Hager is Negative Archivist at the International Museum of Photography at the George Eastman House. Rick McKee Hock is head of the Exhibitions Department there.

Copy edited by Hans Munsch.



Inside the Zoller Furniture Store, wicker baby carriages, rockers and iron beds line the showroom floor. Wooden kitchen chairs hang from the walls. Lamps hang from the ceiling.



Former black Civil War soldiers stand with an unidentified black man and woman at the Frederick Douglass statue for a ceremony at St. Paul and Central Avenue. The original image is a Lumiere Autochrome color lantern slide.



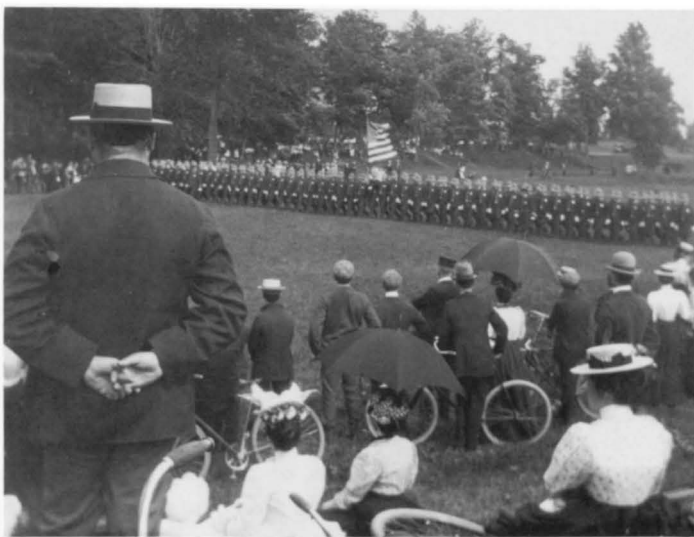
The Victory Arch at the intersections of Main Street, North Street and East Avenue. Note the bicycle racks on both sides of the street. Bicycle transportation was very popular at the turn of the century. A street car is approaching the intersection from the right. Note the cannons facing out from the Arch.



The deep snow made the 300 block of State Street near Brown Street nearly impassable to all but the street cars. The mounds of snow along the street are over five feet in many places. Sometimes fire engines were prevented from reaching a fire because of the snow.



Young men in the back yard of the Zoller home on Aldine Street give a glimpse of life in the early decades of this century. Note the bicycles and the lack of a driveway. Though many homes had carriage drives, driveways were not as common as today.



Near the turn of the century, the Rochester police paraded before the public. The site is unidentified.



A boy thought to be Zoller's son raises the American flag in the back yard of the family's home on Aldine Street.



Coast to coast travel by automobile in the early days was an adventure. Neighborhood children gather in and around a car that lists its travels from Los Angeles to Boston.



A timeless photograph of two children, possibly Zoller's daughters, taken by Zoller. Children's activities have not changed much in our history.



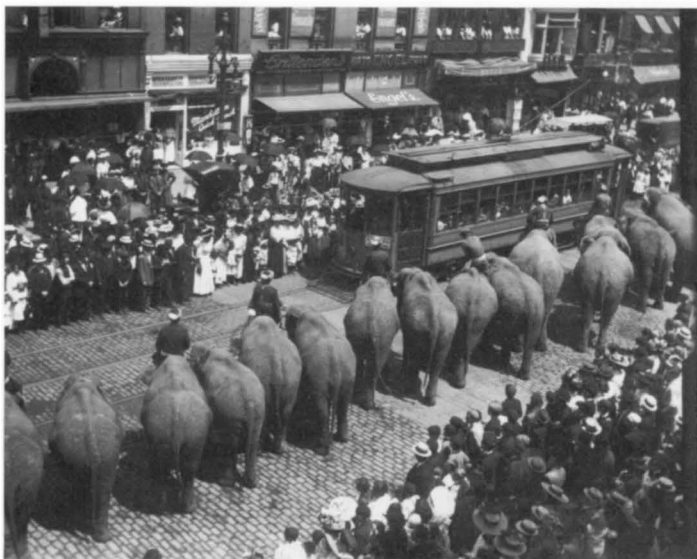
Zoller photographed John D. Rockefeller, Sr. leaving his chauffeured car. The purpose of the occasion and the location were not noted.



A father and his young sailor watch from the pier as



as the S.S. Ontario steams into the Port of Rochester.



When the circus came to town and paraded through the streets, hundreds of people gathered to watch. These elephants may be from the Ringling Brothers Circus. Notice the Manhattan Quick Lunch across the street.



Magnolias lined Oxford Street making the brick drive beautiful in the early 1900s. Notice the two bicyclists and the absence of cars.



Men wait at their wagons on East Main Street. Note the grocer across the street with the baskets of food and the stacks of mellons. Notice the street lamps with the mesh protectors over the globe.



On Sundays and holidays the street cars to Sea Breeze and other parks were crowded with passengers. The lake breeze was thought to be healthy, especially when the city became stifling in the summer.



This is thought to be a photograph of Achille Philion, a circus performer with Ringling Brothers, Barnum and Bailey Circus, famous for his balancing act. Twice a day Philion walked the ball down the spiral incline before a crowd of spectators. undated.



On hot summer days many families traveled to Ontario Beach to enjoy the lake breeze. Men and women fully clothed watch children wading on the shore. Bicycles seen on the left were very popular in the '90s when this photograph was taken.



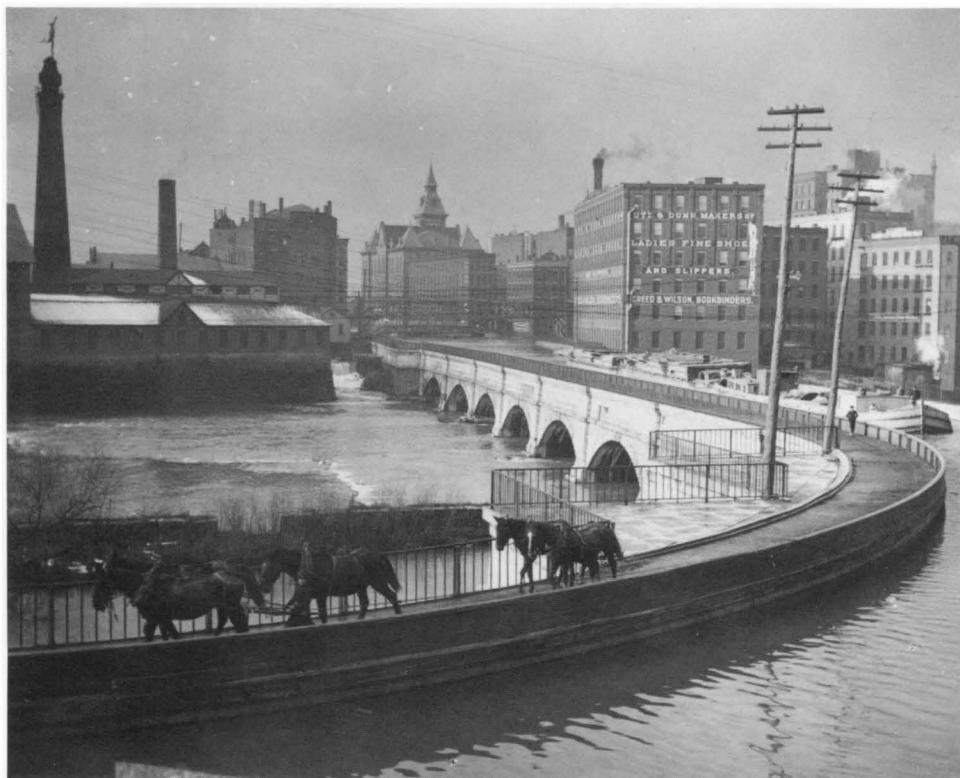
Sitting on the pier at Charlotte watching ships was a pleasant pastime in the early decades of the century.



George Eastman (between the flags) carries the American flag for "The Old Guard." The man on the left in the dark hat with the white mustache is possibly J.J. Bausch with Henry Lomb in the white straw hat in the forefront next to the flag. The original image is a Lumiere Autochrome lantern slide.



Zoller photographed many of Rochester's private gardens including George Eastman's East Garden. Zoller was often at the Eastman House to photograph on special occasions.



A young boy is captured by Zoller's lens walking horses from the canal boats along the path. The Erie Canal closed in 1919. The aqueduct was drained and a subway ran through its bed. Later a road was built over the top of the subway bed and it became the Broad Street bridge. Note the statue of Mercury on the top of the Kimball Tobacco Company building across the Genesee River. Today that statue stands on the top of the Lawyers Cooperative Publishing Company building across the Broad Street bridge in the building marked Utz & Dunn.



One year the snow was so deep it nearly topped the Plymouth Avenue street car. Three transportation workers stopped to have their photograph taken. The original image is a Lumiere Autochrome lantern slide.



Zoller photographed this driver of a Seneca Park water wagon. It is an original Lumiere Autochrome lantern slide.



A rare photograph of a moving horse-drawn fire engine on Rochester's city streets was taken by Zoller from his front yard on Aldine Street.



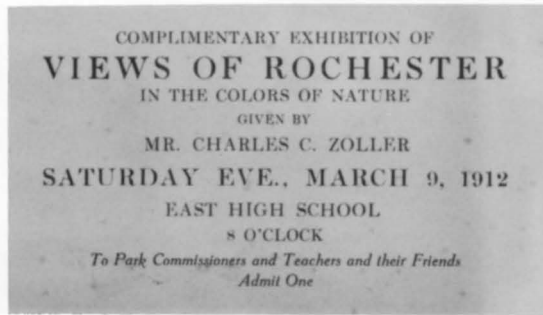
President McKinley spoke before a crowd at the Pan American Exposition in Buffalo in 1901. Charles Zoller photographed him not far from the speakers' stand shortly before his assassination. Notice the people on the roof, the press men in front of the President and the general lack of security common around a president today.



After the speech he gave at the Pan American Exposition, President McKinley was whisked away in this carriage. Zoller was able to get a clear photograph of the President's face in spite of the movement. The horses are blocked out by a piece of tape placed over the photograph by Zoller who wrote on it, "The last of McKinley."



A man dressed as Abraham Lincoln posed for a photograph at the base of the Monument to Soldiers and Sailors in Washington Square Park. A statue of the former president stands atop the monument. Many patriotic celebrations were held at this park.



*Back cover: An admission ticket for one of Zoller's lantern slide shows in 1912. Below, Zoller stands with his camera. His love of photography has left thousands of images, hundreds of which are of historical value. All photographs used in this issue of **Rochester History** are from the Charles C. Zoller Collection at the International Museum of Photography at the George Eastman House.*