

RVF - History - Historic Streets

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# ANCIENT MAP OF CITY CALLS UP OLD MEMORIES

Found by New Owner of  
Exchange Street Saloon.

*Apr. 26, 1917*  
CHANGES IN STREET NAMES

Part of State Street Near Main Was  
Carroll Street in Days Just After  
Village of Rochester Was In-  
corporated — Old Log House

How times have changed! And how Rochester has changed in the last fifty or sixty years! One never realizes just what vast changes are being brought about daily, until one turns back to years gone by and compares conditions as they existed then and now. It would make a person feel old, or perhaps it would make them feel young, were they to look at a map of Rochester dated before the Civil war. Alfred J. Barnett, of No. 45 Frost avenue, has in his possession just such a map, yellow with age and falling apart as the result of much handling. This map, which evidently was made in 1856, gives the names and locations of the streets of Rochester and also the names of the residents, showing just where they lived. Mr. Barnett found the map in a corner of his saloon, in Exchange street, when he bought it.

It was in 1802 that Nathaniel Rochester, William Fitzhugh and Charles Carroll, of Maryland, purchased the one hundred acre tract, or mill lot, of Colonel Williamson for \$1,750. In 1812 they surveyed it into village lots, and opened it for sale. In 1815 the first census of the village of Rochester gave a total population of 331; in 1818, 1,049; in 1820, 1,522; in 1825, 5,273 and in 1855, 43,877 inhabitants. In 1817 the village was incorporated; E. Brown, D. Mack, W. Cobb, E. Peck and J. Barnard, were the first trustees elected. H. R. Bender was chosen clerk, and F. Brown, president.

It is quite evident that, while the map printed in 1856, it is a reprint of a document of a much earlier period. The population of Rochester in 1855 is given as 43,877, certainly much denser than that indicated by the map. The date when Rochester was in the state of progress shown can be only problematical, but it may have been a few years after the village was incorporated, in 1817.

Troup Street on South.

According to the map, the south end of the city was bounded by Troup street, while Clinton street formed the boundary on the east side. There were strange names; unrecognizable names, even to the oldest inhabitants that are living to-day. Main street west then was known as Buffalo street. The Mill street of long ago was not the one now made famous by one snake expert. It was then part of Exchange street, stretching from Buffalo street to Troup. For a short distance, near Main street, State street then was called Carroll street, named after Charles Carroll, one of the founders of the village. Sophia street was the unsophisticated name given to Plymouth avenue. Caledonia avenue, then known as High street, formed the southwest boundary of the city.

There was no Monroe avenue, it then being known as the state road to Canandaigua, which proves that Canandaigua is an old town, if not a large one. Fitzhugh street north went under the name of Hughes street while Plymouth avenue north was known as Hart street. Church street was then called Ann street. South avenue was then known as river street, while St. Paul was Market street, and instead of running far out into Seneca Park, it joined Washington street, now known as Franklin. There was no bridge at Andrews street, the only one being at Central avenue.

Log Cabin Built in 1807.

The first log cabin ever built in the city limits was that one built on Front street in 1807. On the map it does not state who the owner of the cabin was. The homes of Judge Parker and W. Cobb, one of the founders of the village, were in Mill street. Rochester had a newspaper, even in those early days, the Rochester Gazette being in Fitzhugh street. Where the Court House now stands was the Engine house, and exactly the same ground which is now the site of the City Hall was used as a public square. So, Luke's Episcopal Church, which now stands in Fitzhugh street, also was in evidence in 1856.

As an example of the price of land in those days, the map shows a plot of land, extending from Caledonia avenue to Livingston park, and from Main street half way towards Troup street. This plot of land was sold for \$381. The North Side of the city was more thickly populated than the south side. West of Caledonia avenue was an unbroken forest, which extended to Churchville. In 1820, a large plot in the southwest part of the city was purchased for a cemetery, but which was never used for that purpose. There was, however, a cemetery at the corner of what now is known as Plymouth avenue and Spring street.

The first tavern to be built in Rochester was in River street now South avenue, about where the Osborne House now stands. In the same street, just past Court, lived Rev. C. Williams, the first pastor of a Presbyterian Church built in 1816. The home of M. Rochester was on the corner of Spring and Exchange streets. A. Reynolds, the first postmaster, lived in Fitzhugh street.

Two Surveys for Erie Canal.

Two surveys were made of the Erie Canal in 1819. One ran through Main street and Caledonia avenue making a straight southerly cut through a number of intersecting streets between Caledonia and Exchange street, and cutting through South avenue a considerable distance above Court street. The other survey made a direct easterly cut from Caledonia avenue across the Genesee river, south of Court street, where the aqueduct now stands. This later survey was adopted and was completed in 1824.

Rochester abounded in flour mills, even in those days, and her reputation as the "Flour City" had begun to be recognized. A flour mill was established in 1819 in the north end of the city, near Front street, by M. & F. Brown. The Cleveland Flour Mills, which also organized in 1819, were in Water street. There were also the Seythe Mills, on the opposite side of the river.

The map shows the picture of Nathaniel Rochester. He was born in 1752 and died in 1831.

## 84 YEARS AGO CITY SHOWED SOME CHANGE

*RVF - Rochester -  
Main - Street*  
GENERAL LAYOUT IN CONGESTED DISTRICT SIMILAR.

*Feb. 17, 1921*  
CHANGES IN STREET NAMES

*Feb. 17, 1921*  
City Had But One Railroad and Few  
Bridges, But Present Park System Had Been Started.

Rochester eighty-four years ago was much smaller than present-day Rochester of course, but it possessed then some of the landmarks which are familiar to the present generation. The map reproduced on page nine from the first edition of O'Reilly's sketches of Rochester, shows the city as it was in 1837 and a comparison with a present map shows but little change in general layout of what is now the congested district but some remarkable changes in the matter of details.

The area of the city then included that territory from present Lorimer street on the north to Glasgow street on the south. The western boundary was present Genesee street and the eastern Goodman street. The city fathers in those days, like the present, were planning for future development and much of the territory shown remained farmland.

Rochester had but one railroad eighty-four years ago, the Rochester and Auburn line. Contrast this with the network of lines in and about the city now. Of course, no one even dreamed of street cars here then, and a cobble stone pavement was deemed out of the ordinary.

Old Buffalo Street.

Some few Rochesterians may recall the time when Main street west was called Buffalo street as it was then, Central avenue was then known as Atwater street and the railroad crossing over the river was the only connection with State street. The east bank of the river north of Central avenue was given over to the Falls Promenade, and the industrial life of the city was centered along the west bank.

Brown square was almost in its present location, though one section south of the street from which it takes its name is now used for other purposes. The Court House, then small but adequate to the needs of the community, was on the site of the present building, now deemed inadequate to the demands of the rapidly growing county.

Washington square took up a block south of Court street then, as it does now, although this was very near the southern boundary of the city. South avenue was extended far to the southward to link up the city with the "New City Cemetery," present Mt. Hope. On the west side of the river, present Plymouth avenue was then known as Sophia street and paralleled South avenue. Caledonia avenue then was known as High street.

The Second ward then extended to the northern boundary of the city on the west side of the river and the Fifth ward on the east. Lake avenue was unheard of and State street extended to the city line, then a few blocks north of the present Lyell avenue intersection. To the northeast there was but little development beyond the present intersection of North street and Portland avenue, now deemed by many part of the congested district.

Honor Henry Clay.

In the southwestern district Hunter street is better known to most Rochesterians as Bronson avenue. Henry Clay was then in the heyday of his popularity, and it was no more than suitable to the newly-developing city by the Genesee that it have a street named after him. People of the present generation, however, know that thoroughfare better as Tremont street.

Rochester's own Riverside drive, to those sturdy pioneers would have been unrecognizable as East avenue. They suitably elected to designate it as Pittsford street and many of the present day motorists will agree as to the propriety of the choice.

Even in those days Rochester had need of a jail, though Saturday night raiding parties may not have been in vogue and the city's calaboose was on an island made by the river and the race intake, south of the present Erie station.

The Rochester hotel then was at the intersection of Exchange and Spring streets and a bit northward on the west side of Exchange street.

was the Bank of Rochester. The Universalist church then was on the north side of Court street, facing Washington square, within half a block of its present site.

Present University Avenue.

University avenue was unknown then. The one block between North and Scio street was known as Riley street perhaps in appreciation of some early immigrant from Erin who may have pastured his goats in that section.

The extension of Central avenue east of North street bore the somewhat attractive designation, Tappan street. Just why seems hard to determine. Weld street the next street to the north had its present designation eighty-four years ago, but present Woodward street was known in the early days as Emily street. Then it was renamed Kirk street and finally given its present designation.

Two little thoroughfares off Ward street gave some hint of the origin of the dwellers in the district by the names Cork and Emmett streets. Emmett street survives to this day, but Cork has been renamed Gordon park.

Present Allen street was known then as Fish street. Commercial street west of State street was then known as Ann street, but John street retained its name to the present.

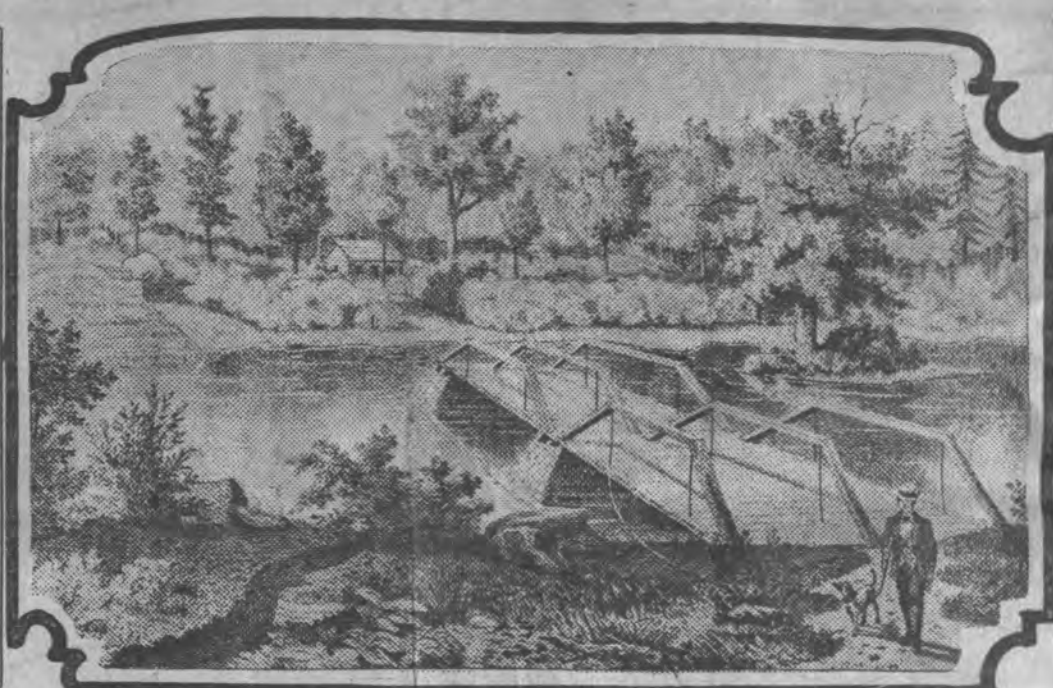
If reincarnation were possible and the Rochesterian of eighty-four years ago might return, he would have no difficulty in finding his way about what probably he regarded then as a large and model city, provided he kept his course through the downtown district. Many of the old landmarks would be gone from him but the general topography would be the

same. If he became ambitious, disaster might be in store for him for that territory which perhaps he was wont to regard as "wild" has become densely populated in the course of the four score and four years and the end is not in sight.

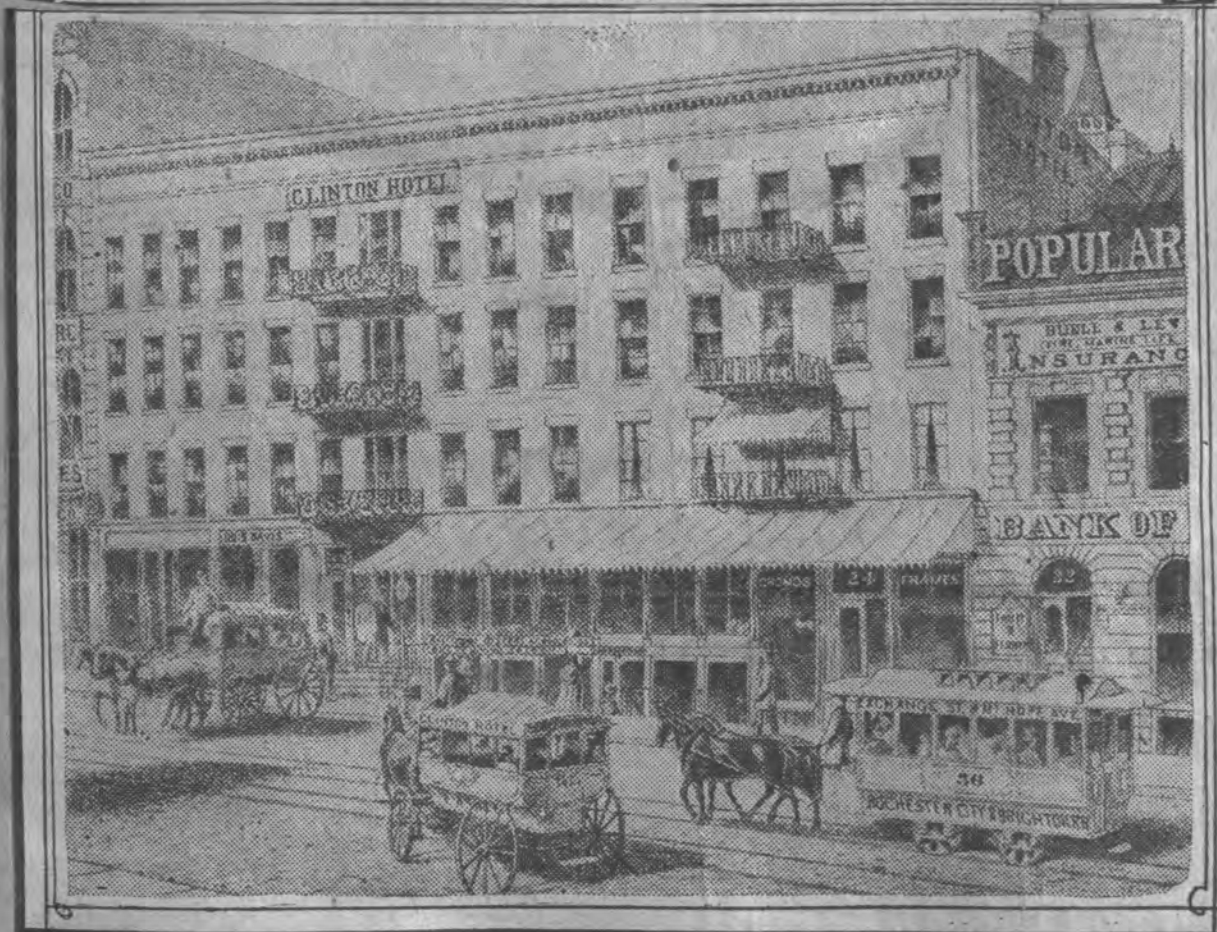


# Scenes Which Were Common to Earlier Generations Are Amusing Now

Feb. 5, 1922. D. & C. FEB 5, 1922



TWO VIEWS OF MAIN STREET LOOKING FROM EAST SIDE OF RIVER.  
 RIGHT - AS IT WAS IN 1812, LOG CABIN MARKING PRESENT SITE OF POWERS BUILDING.  
 LEFT - PICTURE SHOWING SAME PROSPECT AS IT APPEARED IN 1877.



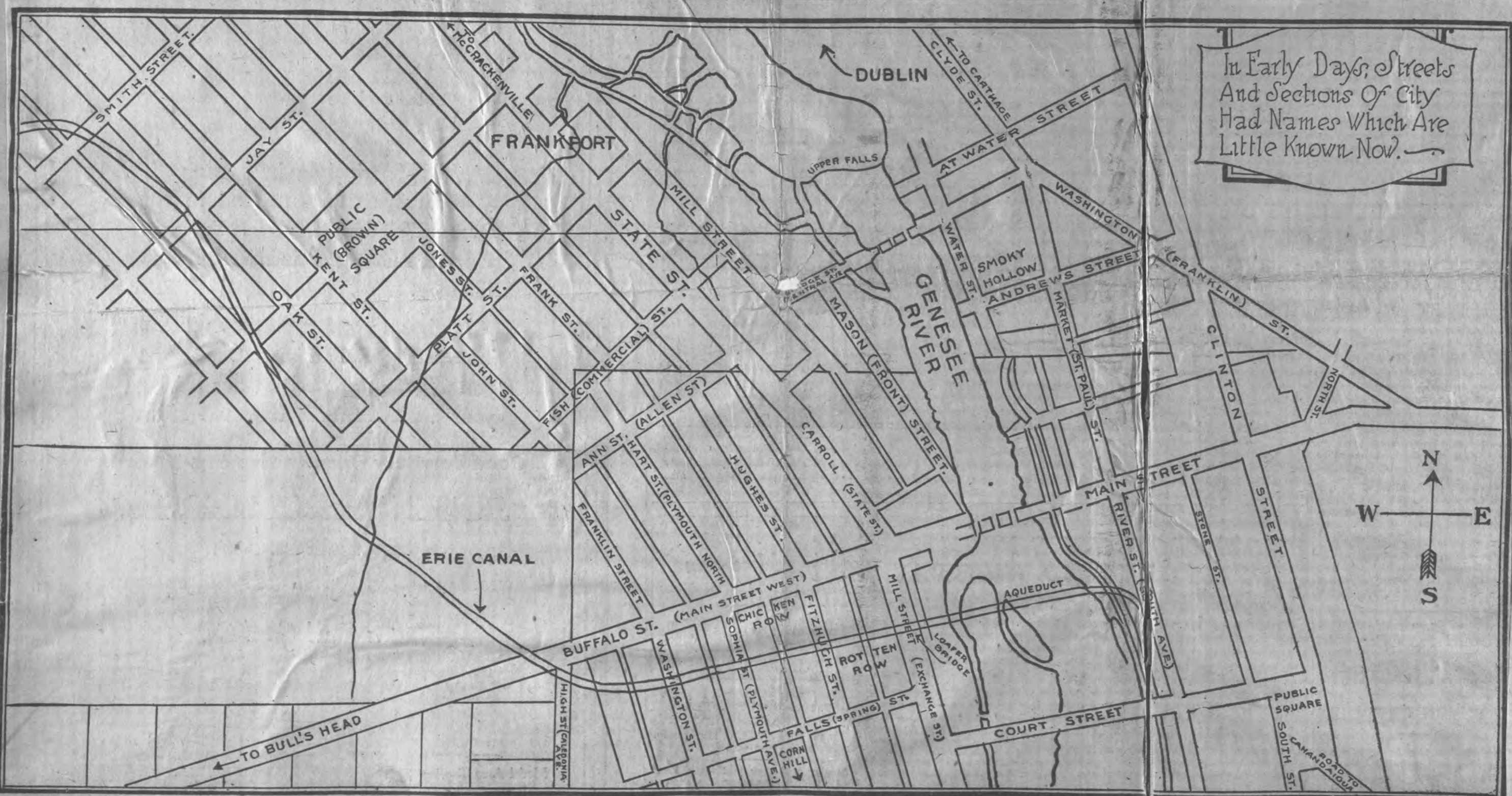
OLD CLINTON HOTEL IN EXCHANGE STREET, SHOWING AT RIGHT THE HORSE CAR OF YESTERYEAR



Rut Rochester History Street

ROCHESTER, N. Y., SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 1922

# WHAT ROCHESTER WAS LIKE WHEN CITY WAS YOUNG



In Early Days, Streets And Sections Of City Had Names Which Are Little Known Now.

## Rochester of Yesteryear Has Vanished Except in Lore That Older Generation Hands Down

Streets, Sections, Persons and Places of City in Earlier Years Were Different from Those Known to People To-day.

Where is the Rochester of yesteryear—that thriving but now laughable little village of dusty lanes, gas lamps, buzzing mills and horse cars which grandparents can recall but which to the younger folk is as vague as mythology? A few scarce books yield a few hints of its character and substance and a few scattered pictures afford conjectural visions, but only the life-and-blood recollections of the older generation can give access to the real spirit and personality of the community of that departed day.

It is easy enough to dig out the dry-as-dust facts of this city's history, which in the rapid flight of time is but a short one, but to delve deeper for the really interesting facts about Rochester—about the obscure people who obscurely trod the budding city's streets and added their obscure bit to the community's character and progress—that is more difficult. Yet pieces of these facts are falling every day, as they have fallen for years, from the lips of the older generation of Rochesterians. And it is feared that they are heard to-day and forgotten to-morrow, so that when that generation passes upon whose minds these facts are written, perhaps the facts, too, shall pass away.

**Flood of Recollection.**  
To the citizen who has a real affection for Rochester because of all that the city is, has been and will be, much which may be learned to-day of the real personality of old Rochester should be intensely interesting. In fact, there can be no doubt of its genuine interest to many. The flood of communications, which ceaselessly comes to the "Over the Percolator" column of the Democrat and Chronicle offers proof that many older citizens still ponder and smile and chuckle over their recollections of old Rochester. The "What Do You Remember?" department of the daily column has become an apparently inexhaustible fountain of interesting memories.

Anyone who remembers hearing Jenny Lind sing in the old Corinthian Hall "some seven or eight years ago," as M. A. C. does, according to a contribution, should know a deal more about Rochester than as a source of written history yields. Recollections from many contributors bring stories of rare human and civic interest, from incidents connected with the well-remembered "hack-stands" at the Court House and the Eggleston Hotel and elsewhere, to intimate details of the city's early scandals, foibles and pleasures.

When one reads some of these intimate recollections about places which people frequented and persons whom everyone knew half a century and more ago, one is inclined to respond with the poet, "All, all are gone, the old familiar faces." A contributor who signs himself A. B. C.:

"I remember Bracket's china and glass store on State street, where the Wisner block stands, and also Thompson's china store, later Goodale & Pell's. Pell's."

"I remember Edgel's general store on the corner of Plymouth avenue and Spring street, where an apartment house is now."

"I remember James Norris's ice cream parlors under Corinthian Hall, to which it was the swell thing to invite your best girl after an entertainment. Yattan's billiard room was above it, and George Slosson, afterward champion, tended bar there. When Yattan retired the rooms were occupied by Doran & Thompson, who opened the first bucket shop in Rochester."

**History Clings to Arcade.**

"I remember Hoyt & Seelye, tailors in the Arcade building. They made a specialty of ministers' clothes."

"I remember the flood. In company with Dellon M. Dewey, Jr., and 'Andy,' who is still alive, we worked all afternoon bringing stock up from the basement of Dewey's book store in the Arcade. When supper time came the water was too high and swift to venture out on Main street, so we remained all night in the balcony."

"I remember O'Brien's candy store on State street. He lived in an old brown clapboard house on the corner of Main and Lancaster, now Cortland street. Opposite the corner was Newton's grocery store, from the top story of which we used to view the fireworks in Palmer's garden, which was a few doors above."

"I remember when elections of the Rochester Athenaeum were held in the Arcade."

**Old City's Personalities.**

"I remember Warnsley's big millinery store and Gordon's drygoods store, also Bush & Bull, all located where Edwards & Sons are now. Mutchler's china store was a short distance east."

"I remember Fleming's candy store on Main street bridge opposite Ocumpaugh's 'gents' furnishing goods.' Mrs. Fleming was called the handsomest woman in Rochester."

"I remember Pierce's saloon, where the Eggleston Hotel now stands, and Joe Pierce, whose breadth and height were equal, always sitting in the summer time in a large chair in front, with unbuttoned vest and vigorously using a large palm fan."

"I remember the Whitcomb House, in front of which the men were accustomed to sit with their chairs tipped back against the building."

"I remember the billiard room in Washington Hall, with its bright red carpet and eighteen tables. It was kept by Elijah Warren. Under it was Cooper's drug store. I saw Washington Hall burn. The scuttle had been left off and burning faggots from Palmer's building ignited it."

**Dinner Gong in Main Street.**

"I remember the Methodist Church opposite, with its large white pillars. Next east was the Carson home, the front yard filled with flowers. Then Moore's flour and feed store, Belmont's saloon, Weiniger's harness shop and the Newton grocery. Opposite was the Avery bake shop, where we used to buy broken stick candy."

"I remember Farmer's Hotel, corner of Main and Elm, with its broad white porch three steps up, upon which the porter used to beat a gong at noon, as a

notice that dinner was ready. It could be heard down to Clinton street. On the opposite corner was the Osburn home, with its round white picket fence and box-bordered flower beds. Then the Almy home and the Cornwall home. Mr. Cornwall was one of the best and most noted drivers when the avenue was Rochester's winter speedway."

"A white frame house stood next, with circular steps leading up to the front door. Here lived Mrs. Conkey, one of whose daughters became Mrs. Stoddard and one Mrs. Sibley. A low, brown house which stood next was occupied by Elijah Warren, who kept the billiard room afterward owned by Christopher Amsden. Three brick houses, identical externally, were occupied by Andrew J. Bracket, H. E. Ives, an attorney, and Hubbard Haines. The Bracket House was sold to a Mr. Hart."

"I remember the Alert Hose ball, which with the Maennerchor mask, were the chief winter social events. I used to sell tickets in Corinthian Hall for the lectures of Wendell Phillips and John B. Gough."



"Opposite the Osburn home was a two-story brick building extending from Main to Stillson street. Its wooden awning extended halfway across the sidewalk. On the Main street corner was Langle's coal office, with a huge piece of coal standing on the sidewalk as a sign. On the Stillson street side was Hall's produce store, with heaps of onions, potatoes, etc., on the floor.

"I remember Peck's school for boys,

a three-story brick building with stairs leading from street to first story and balconies across the front. This afterward became the Moulson, of soap fame, block. Then came Colonel Aaron Newton's small white house, which was reputed to be the second house built on the east side of the river. A stone in the sidewalk bore the figures 1814. I passed as the house was being demolished to make room for the Cutler building, and noticed the timbers were unbewn logs, which seems to substantiate the claim. The stone is now in the corner of the Cutler building.

#### East Avenue Speedway.

"Earlier Main street did not extend beyond East avenue, and when it was extended it was cut through what formerly was Clonel Newton's farm. Next door lived George Walbridge, a noted horse lover, who vied with John Cornwall for supremacy on the East avenue speedway. Then the Rev. Mr. Bloss's home was situated quite a distance back from the street. I was personally acquainted with Mr. Bloss and bear to-day the marks of a pugilistic encounter with his son, Joe Bloss, who is still with us. The encounter arose from my stealing sweet apples from the rear of the Bloss yard.

"I remember the brick house of Dr. Charles Dally adjoining, then a frame house occupied by Mrs. Nevins and her two daughters, one of whom was drowned while boating on Irondequoit bay. The Cheeny residence and the D. M. Dewey home came next, then the Holbrook house, which stood on quite a hill and was surrounded by lilac bushes. Mr. Scott was school superintendent. Scott W. Updike, manufacturer of Updike's sauce, purchased the house and lived there. His son, Billy Updike, and Johnson Brown became quite noted for their double clog dancing, which they did in spangled knee breeches and wooden shoes. Johnson Brown was quite a noted bean around the town.

#### Lower East Avenue.

"On the opposite corner of East avenue and Gibbs street was a vacant lot where Mart Hart, Dellon Dewey, Harry Ives, Willie Webb, Cliff Parsons, George Ward, Charlie Newton, Andie Brackett and others played baseball in summer and coasted down the hill, across East avenue, in winter. Chauncey Woodworth purchased the property and built a residence there, which was demolished for the present apartments. The Carter Wilder residence came next, now the Rochester Club and but little changed.

"On the opposite corner of East avenue and then Cherry street, now Swan, was the Pardee home, the Martin Breck homestead, father of George Breck, and Mesdames Kelly, Hoyt and Clark, followed by the palatial residence of the Dunlaps. Beyond Scio street came the homes of Sabey the hat man, Force the pump man, and Disbrow the tobacconist.

East avenue then was lined on both sides with stately horse chestnut trees.

"I remember the old pottery, on the corner of East avenue and Mathews street, and across the street the Winn home, where Herbert J. Winn lived, whose father, the whip man, I knew well. In front of the D. W. Powers homestead on East avenue there is still a flagstone in the sidewalk with a hole in it, to which we boys used to go and play marbles, 'roll in the hole.'

#### Why Park Avenue Curves.

"I remember Joe Hall's half-mile race track out in the country, afterward Vick's and later developed, I think, by Traders Bank into Westminster and adjoining streets. The circular part of Park avenue, between Rutgers and Dartmouth, is occasioned by its being the turn of the race track. It was not straightened when Park avenue was extended eastward. In former times it was called Vick circle.

"I remember when the Alerts and Protectives, responding to an alarm of fire, used to pull their cars through Main street on the sidewalk, compelling pedestrians to run into store or roadway to prevent being knocked down. Grocers then displayed their goods on the sidewalk, and the carts would knock them in all directions. Bicycles were then permitted on the sidewalks.

"I remember the old ballclubs, Excelsiors and Aerials. Elroy Sabin, Eugene Kimball and William Kingsley were local stars. And the Riverside Rowing Club, with Theron Parsons, Julius Wile and Curtis Haskins.

#### Old Main Street Bridge.

"I bought grated horseradish from Curtice Brothers, founders of the Curtice Canning Company, when they were selling it from a room over Cork's grocery, adjacent to Millman's in East Main street, where we used to go for Canandaigua ale.

"I remember Ward's grove, bounded by Gibbs, Selden, Cherry and Main streets, with its broad gravel walks leading up to the Ward home, and the wonderful chestnut trees it contained."

So few Rochesterians realize to-day that when they traverse Main street east they cross a bridge over the river, that a recollection of the old Main street bridge, before buildings blocked the view of the river on either side, is interesting. W. R. H. writes:

"I remember that when we crossed the river on Main street bridge looking north we could see the famous Genesee Falls and the wonderful gorge below the falls. Again looking south from the bridge we could see the marvel of that age, the famous aqueduct. Beyond that the land between the river and the canal, where the Lehigh Valley depot was formerly located, was called Crouch's Island, on which was a large lumber yard and a large plant for building canal boats. Many of these were equipped for carrying passengers."

#### Those Old Horse Cars.

Who that has heard recollections of old Rochester does not know a dozen amusing stories which concern the old horse cars? C. O. De L. writes from Philadelphia as follows:

"In 1880 the highest numeral painted on a car of the street railway was, if I am not mistaken, 52. Cars numbered from 1 to 7, or 8 were not used except occasionally because they were 'double-enders,' requiring a two-man crew and a team of horses. There were two or three open summer cars — I forget their numbers but I think they were 21 and 22 — which were used on the North avenue line to connect with the old Bay Railroad to Sea Breeze. These cars required two horses and two men to operate them, but all the other cars were 'bob-tails,' one horse and its driver being sufficient.

"Those old bob-tails were certainly curious affairs as compared with a modern electric car. The vehicle was so

light in weight that it frequently left the track if a stone or large stick happened to be in the way. Two men could lift one end back on the track, however. The front end of each car consisted of a semi-circular space inclosed by a sheet-iron dash. There was a hand brake, a snow-plow lever, a handle to open and shut rear door for passengers, two small levers to operate the cash box for receiving fares, a trap door in the front door for making change 'to the amount of two dollars,' a long tin box filled with envelopes containing change for 10, 25, 50 cents and one dollar, and a small stove to heat the car, all in the driver's end of the coach.

#### Would Stop Anywhere.

"Passengers were taken on and discharged anywhere along the line, at the middle of a block or the corner of an alley, no matter where. Skip-stops had not been invented. A few cars had straps on the sides where small boys could reach them. Of course, the boys always insisted on pulling the strap when riding in one of those cars — numbers 40, 41, and 42. Well do I remember them as they were on the Mount Hope avenue route.

"Before the stoves already mentioned were introduced the one system for keeping the passengers warm was straw on the floor of the cars. Each car was cared for by its particular driver and great care was exercised in cleaning out the straw after each day's run because there was almost certain to be more or less money in it, dropped by passengers in paying their fares. Tickets were sold eleven for 50 cents and half-grown children half-rate. Two-cent pieces, then in circulation, were frequently offered as

payment for a child's fare by thrifty mothers and accepted by the drivers usually, as of course it was impossible to pay exactly two and a half cents, a half-fare.

#### Four Corners Waiting Room.

"The seven different lines of 1880 had grown into a system of seventeen or perhaps eighteen lines when I left the city in 1894. One institution of the horse-car period which is worth mentioning

was the old waiting room at the Four Corners. This was a favorite place to meet almost anyone, especially after supper on a wintry Saturday night. Everybody and their grandmother 'went down street, on Saturday night. Stores were kept open until after 10 o'clock. Horse cars all came to the Four Corners, where they were hauled on a turntable and started back toward the distant ends of their respective lines at intervals of fifteen or thirty minutes. The last car

on all lines, 'departed at 11:45 P. M. Patrons in the waiting room would pick out their cars in the daylight by their distinctive colors and at night by the color of the bull's-eyes on the front and rear of each car.

To help cars up Main street and Exchange street hills, the street railway company had a flock of a dozen or more strong horses on hand. There were hills in two or three other parts of the town where a single horse was stationed with its driver to keep traffic moving."

#### When Canal Travel Was the Thing.

The old Erie canal, when its history was still young, was a source of vital interest and concern to the people of Rochester. Its ramified associations are rich with lore of the early days, as many an old-time story indicates. The following is contributed by E. T. M.:

"When the Erie canal was built the land north of it from the river to about Pindle alley was lower than the bottom of the canal. This made it necessary to build a strong retaining wall along that distance. I therefore remember a row of one-story structures reaching from Exchange street nearly to Pindle alley on this low land next to the retaining wall. These were occupied as saloons, restaurants, dining rooms, etc. Steps ran up from these to the berme bank of the canal.

"The 'rapid transit' of that time was by long, narrow packet boats of so light draft that they sat like cockle-shells on the water and were drawn by three fine horses hitched tandem. They docked at the berme bank mentioned above. These packets had two cabins, one for general use and one with berths that were turned up out of sight during the day. The boats were made as fine and attractive as they knew how to in those days. They were painted pure white outside with slatted blinds painted a bright red on one side and green on the other.

"As the boat neared the city the driver riding the rear horse would blow his bright brass horn and there was always a crowd of people on hand to witness the arrival. Sometimes there was competition which at times was so strong that I have known captains to pay people to go on their line. The coming of the railroads put an end to this in many ways attractive way to travel."

What was child life like in old Rochester? J. S. R., M. D., of this city, answers the question to some extent by giving his own reminiscences of old No. 3 School, which follows:

"From 1870 to 1878 I attended old

No. 3 School. I remember the names of the following boys who went from grade to grade with me, and all made good: John Gregory, George Keyes, David Bruce, Lee Richmond, Charles Carson, Elihu Bronson, George Mumford, Henry McVean, Steven Fay, Henry Grieve (a letter carrier), David Cory (brother of Harvey Cory), Seth Terry, Willie Barber (the noted bicycle rider), F. Judson Hess. The following are dead: Cameron Hyde, Harry Hathaway, Howard Hart, William Derrick.

"The parochial school of Immaculate Conception Church was opposite the schoolyard of No. 3. Daily during recess there were fights between the 'kids' of the two schools. Many of these boys of No. 3 attended Sunday-school at the Emanuel Chapel, whose mother church was the First Presbyterian. These boys were in a class whose teacher was a Mr. White, who lived in an octagon-shaped house in Plymouth avenue. He was elderly and very pious.

"Herb Pierce, Charles Owen and, I think, Judge Gillette were in a class a year or two later. 'Jimmie' Cook was our principal and he had the happy faculty of coming upon a boy from the rear, catching him under the chin and pushing back his head until the spinal column in the cervical region nearly snapped. At least, we thought it would snap.

#### Swim at Feeder Locks.

"We all went swimming at the feeder locks. Our great stunt was to tie a boy's clothing in hard knots and shout in great glee, 'Finger mutton and chaw beef!' Winters we would skate on the river, the favorite point being at Clarissa street bridge. Most of our skates were fastened by means of straps and buckles.

"Hunt the hare was the game we played Saturdays. Often a woman would come out and threaten us with dire punishment for jumping over her fence. That was enough. We took especial pains to jump that particular fence the following Saturdays.

"There is a short hill at the east end of Adams street, which was then called La Fayette street. Down this hill we used to slide afternoons and early evenings during the winter. The well-to-do boys had a sleigh called a clipper. No boy had a sleigh of the modern type.

"Many of the kids collected election tickets. Each candidate had a ticket of a certain color and a fancy drawing on the back. I remember seeing Alfred Ely, former congressman, the first time when I was quite a young boy. I had seen pictures of Uncle Sam and I thought Alfred Ely was Uncle Sam.

"I carried papers, as did other boys, for the Democrat and Chronicle. Among the boys who had routes at that time were the Gommenginger brothers, one of whom is now a priest and the other a fireman. Thomas Swanton and Ed Fonda were in the mailing department. George Oakley was superintendent of carriers. I received \$1.50. Later, when the Sunday edition was published I had my salary increased in the sum of 25 cents. We were supposed to start not later than 5 o'clock.



"No boy or girl went wrong in those days. Our pleasures were few and simple. Occasionally we were invited to a party at some girl's home. We were permitted to stay not later than half past 10, at which time it was 'Home, Sweet Home,' for all of us."

#### Landmarks of Time.

Sometimes it takes but a magic word to conjure happy memories. So those whose memory ranges over many years may have their recollections stirred by the enumeration by E. J. K. of the following marks of the old Rochester which he said he remembers:

"The racer engines 148 and 149 on the Central Railroad.

"Peanut Joe and his boat at the corner of Main and Water streets.

"The canal basin in Aqueduct street.

"Parson's saw mill at the Upper Falls.

"The sheep market in Front street.

"Anderson's candle factory in Exchange street.

"The steamboat Falling Waters which ran to Charlotte from the Glen House in 1870.

"Dan Rice's circus at Falls field.

"Blind Tom, the newsboy.

"Another Blind Tom, a musician.

"When street cars went through Ward street to Clinton, and also out Mount Hope avenue from South avenue at the canal bridge."

# Names City Has Forgotten and Places One No Longer Hears of Were Important Few Years Ago

Interesting Recollections of Persons Who Can Tell What Young Rochester Was Like Form Intimate and Amusing History.

## QUEER OLD NAMES OF PARTS OF CITY

By J. M. ANGLE

In the early days of Rochester's history it was customary to bestow upon localities names by which they could be identified in a general way. Among the older, and possibly the oldest of these local designations, is Corn Hill, a name still in vogue in reference to the Third ward. Various reasons have been assigned for applying this name to the locality, all of them more or less possible; but the fields of corn grown there appears to be the most probable.

To the locality on either side of State street and extending to the vicinity of Jay street was given the name of Frankfort. This was one of the recognized localities, and in 1920 property was described in conveyances as being in that part of the village of Rochester formerly called Frankfort, the property in one of the conveyances being located on State and Mill streets. To the northward of Frankfort and in the vicinity of the Lower Falls was a territory known as McCrackenville, the name coming from the large land holdings of the McCracken family.

#### Legend of Hopper's Hill.

On the west bank of the river, opposite the Kodak works, was Handford's Landing. North of this locality, where the road to Charlotte crosses the New York Central tracks, the rise of ground just south of the railroad was known as Hopper's Hill. Tradition made this locality the haunt of the ghost of a peddler whose dead body was found there many years ago, and the place was also noted as the gathering place, in the spring and fall, of large flocks of crows.

On the east side of the river across from Frankfort was the territory of Dublin, which took its name from the number of Irish who settled there.

North of Dublin and approximately opposite Handford's Landing was Carthage, a rival of the landing in the way of a port for the lake traffic and, at an early day, a competitor of the village of Rochester.

In the southeastern part of the city and to the southward of the Erie canal was a thriving settlement called Lockville.

Bull's Head, a name not infrequently used at the present time, indicated the immediate vicinity of St. Mary's Hospital. The tavern located there was a favorite resort for the sleighride parties from Rochester in the '50s. It was then in the town of Gates, and was not within convenient access to the city until William Hubbard established a bus line. The first trip was made September 16, 1854, and the Daily Union of that date said:

"Mr. Hubbard's new omnibus commenced running on Buffalo street to-day, between the corner of State street and Field's tavern in Gates. It is a nice establishment."

#### Chicken Row Unwelcome.

Chicken Row was located on the south side of Buffalo street, and extended westerly from the corner of Fitzhugh street. It was a conglomeration of old and dilapidated frame buildings, and harbored the most undesirable of the population. It was an abomination for years. The Daily Democrat of December 17, 1838, said:

"The fire last evening was in the rookeries corner of Buffalo and Fitzhugh streets, opposite the Methodist chapel. The fire was unfortunately extinguished before the buildings burned down."

The "Row" was the scene of frequent fires, but was so closely tenanted that the

fires had no chance to spread. In 1853 the land was bought by the Rochester Savings Bank for the purpose of erecting a bank building, and on December 30th the buildings composing the "Row" were sold at auction for \$61. The following morning the buildings were discovered to be on fire. The fire department was prompt in responding to the alarm, but in spite of their endeavors only two of the buildings were saved, and these, later in the day, suddenly and mysteriously burst into flames and were destroyed.

#### Rotten Row Aptly Named.

Rotten Row was located along the south side of the Erie canal, between Exchange and Fitzhugh streets. The American of August 11, 1856, said of this locality:

"Drunkness, profanity, obscenity and all manner of vice prevail here to a disgusting extent."

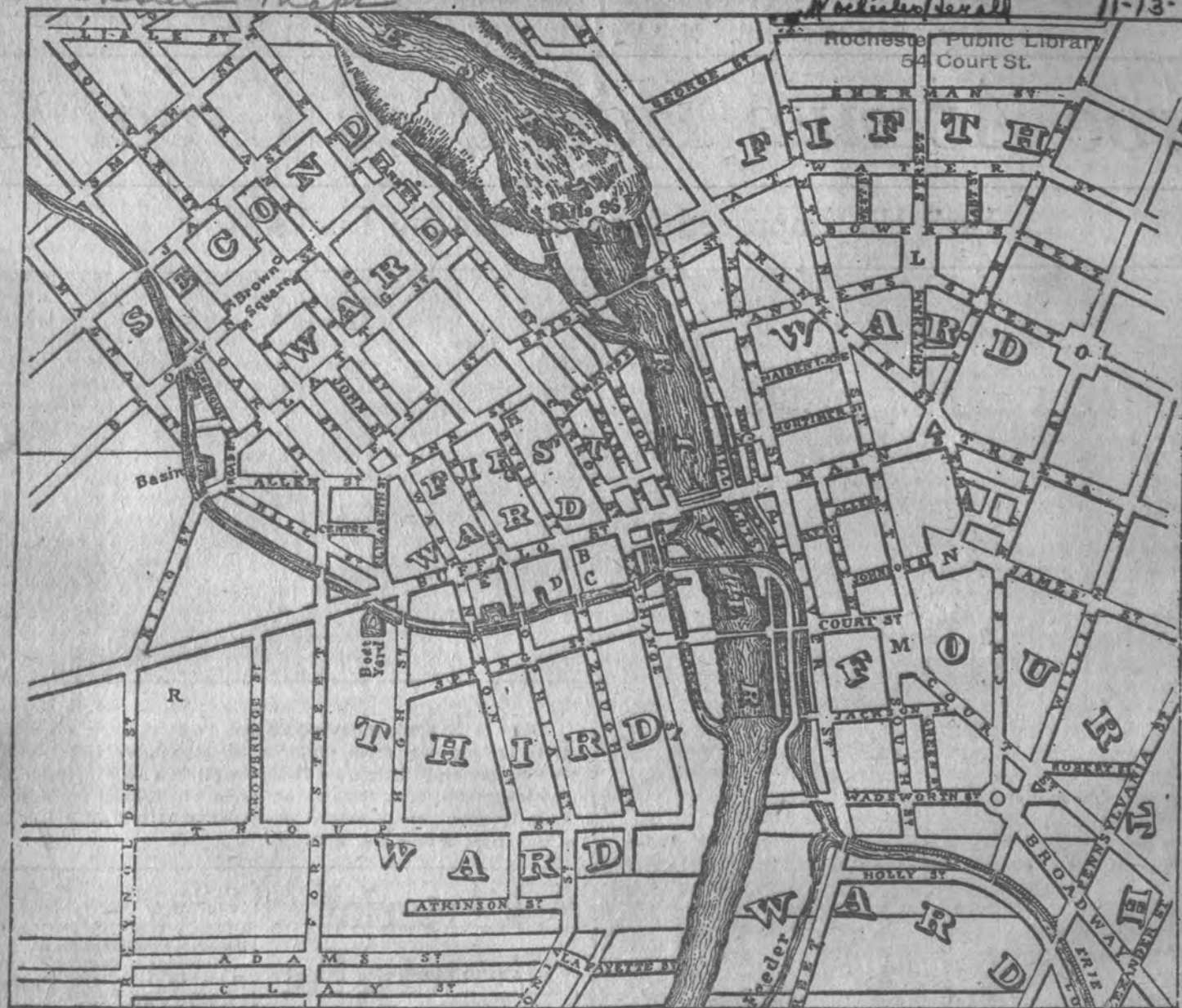
Loafer Bridge was the name given to the bridge across the canal at Exchange street. The same name was also applied to the river bridge at Court street.

To the locality lying north of Andrews street and between St. Paul and Water streets several unpleasant names were given, the least disagreeable one being "Smoky Hollow." The houses were built on either side of a narrow road known as Carthage alley, now dignified by the name Carthage street. Some of the dilapidated frame houses are still standing.

Rattlesnake Hill. At an early day an outcropping of limestone ran from the river across Exchange street. The ledge continued westward to beyond Fitzhugh street, and was highest about where the Court House is located. It was infested by rattlesnakes, from which the ridge took its name.



# Monroe Avenue Was Court Street on 1827 Map



Back in 1827 according to a map of the city, Monroe Avenue was known as the Court Street extension. It extended only to Alexander Street in that time. First mention of Monroe Street was made in 1838 records. Monroe Avenue was used in the 1869 directory. This map shows Main Street West as Buffalo Street. The letter M designates Washington Square. South Avenue was known as River Street. Back in 1820, Monroe Avenue was called the road to Canandaigua. The above map was made January 1, 1827, by E. Johnson. At that time the population of the city was 7,669.



# New Streets in Rochester Laid Out Through Forests in Fast Time Century Ago

*D.C. June 12 '27 - R.V.F. Rochester*  
By JAMES M. ANGLE *History - 86*

Captain Basil Hall, of the Royal Navy, in his "Travels in North America, in 1827 and 1828," states:

"On the 26th of June, 1827, we strolled through the village of Rochester, under the guidance of a most obliging and intelligent friend, a native of this part of the country. Everything in this bustling place appeared to be in motion. The very streets seemed to be starting up of their own accord, readymade, and looking as fresh and new, as if they had been turned out of the workmen's hands but an hour before, or that a great host of new houses had been sent by steam from New York, and tumbled out on the half-cleared land.

"The canal banks were at some places still unfurfed; the lime seemed hardly dry in the masonry of the aqueduct, in the bridges, and the numberless great sawmills and manufactories. In many of these buildings the people were at work below stairs, while at top the carpenters were busy nailing on the planks of the roof. Some dwellings were half painted, while foundations of others, within five yards distance, were only beginning. Several streets were nearly finished, but had not as yet received their names; many others were in the reverse predicament, being named, but not commenced—their local habitation being merely signified by lines of stakes.

## Streets Crowded

"I need not say that these half-finished, whole-finished, and embryo streets were crowded with people, carts, stages, cattle, pigs, far beyond the reach of numbers; and as all these were lifting up their voices together with the clatter of hammers, the ringing of axes and the creaking of machinery, there was a fine concert I assure you. But it struck us that the interest of the town, for it seems idle to call it a village, was subordinate to that of the suburbs. A few years ago the whole of that part of the country was covered with a dark silent forest, and even as it was, we could not proceed a mile in any direction except that of the high-road, without

coming full-blown against the woods of time immemorial. And it actually occurred to us, several times, within the immediate limits of the inhabited town itself, in streets, too, where shops were opened, and all sorts of business actually going on, that we had to drive first on one side and then on the other, to avoid the stumps of an oak, or a hemlock, or a pine tree, staring us full in the face.

"After we had gone about a mile from the town the forest thickened, we lost sight of every trace of a human dwelling or of human interference with nature in any shape. We stood considering what we should do next, when the loud crash of a falling tree met our ears. Our friendly guide was showing off the curiosities of the place and was quite glad, he said, to have the opportunity of exhibiting the first step in the process of townmaking. After a zig-zag scramble amongst the trees, which had been allowed to grow up and decay century after century, we came to a spot where three or four men were employed in clearing out a street, as they declared, though anything more unlike a street could not well be conceived. Nevertheless, the ground in question certainly formed part of the plan of the town. It had been chalked out by the surveyors' stakes, and some speculators having taken up the lots for immediate building, of course found it necessary to open a street through the woods, to afford a line of communication with the rest of the village.

"As fast as the trees were cut down, they were stripped of their branches and drawn off by oxen, sawed into planks, or otherwise fashioned to the purpose of building, without one moment's delay. There was little or no exaggeration, therefore, in supposing with our friend, that the same fire which might be waving about in full life and vigor in the morning, should be cut down, dragged into daylight, squared, framed, and before night, be hoisted up to make a beam or rafter to some tavern, or factory, or store, at the corner of a street, which twenty-four hours before had existed only on paper, and yet which might be completed, from end to end, within a week afterwards."

## The Rochester Observer

During the century which has elapsed since Captain Hall recorded his description, all of the industrious inhabitants of the village have gone to their well-earned rest; the buildings they raised have gone; the forests which surrounded them have faded into the past. The links of history which unite the early days of the village with the prosperous city of the present are few in intimate details and fragile in recorded facts.

The Rochester Observer was published in January, 1827. The first number found in the files of the paper which have been preserved is that of No. 4, dated February 17. The paper was printed by Luther Tucker & Company, for George G. Sill. It was "published every other Saturday, at \$1.50 per annum. The publisher in submitting his proposal to the public, would observe, that no pains will be spared to make this paper useful and interesting to the friends of religion in this part of the state."

The first Directory of the village was published March 1, 1827. Bound with it was a "Map of Rochester, by E. Johnson." This map, while affording much valuable information, is not, if contemporary records are reliable, wholly dependable, and a prophetic perception of what was going to be appears to have dominated the author to some extent. In the Directory the residents of the village are divided into two classes, the "householders," with their occupation and residence, and the "boarders" with their occupation and the names of the householders with whom they boarded, and names are classified under the wards in which they resided. An appendix contains much information in the form of "annals of the leading circumstances connected with the rise and progress of the village."

The Observer, on March 3, 1827, announced:

"A third Presbyterian church was constituted in the village on February 28, by a commission of the Presbytery of Rochester. This church is located on the east side of the river, and at present occupies a temporary building, 24 by 60 feet, as a house of worship." The same paper noted: "In consequence of a resolution to exclude religious meetings from the court house, passed by the late session of the board of supervisors, the Baptist Society has

obtained the Long Room, in Col. Leonard's Merchants' Exchange, Exchange street, for their future accommodation."

## 1827 Village Election

The annual village election was held on the first Monday in May, 1827. Frederick Whittlesey, Ezra M. Parsons, Jonathan Child, Elisha Johnson, and Andrew V. T. Leavitt were selected trustees. John B. Elwood was elected treasurer. At a meeting of the trustees of the village, on May 15, Gilbert & Trowbridge presented a petition praying for a license to play in the theater. A license was granted for five nights in a week, Saturday and Sunday nights excepted, at \$4 per week." The Directory for 1827, in a notice of the theater, said:

"Of the influence of theatrical exhibitions upon the morals and habits of a young community, it does not become us to speak; but we are constrained to say, that the character of the theater has not generally been such as reflects credit on the taste of our citizens."

The first performance opened with an address, in verse, written by Chancellor Whittlesey. The dramatic part of the entertainment consisted of "The Honeymoon," followed by the comic opera of "The Poor Soldier." Another theater had been opened in the village on April 8, 1826. Its location was on the north side of Buffalo street, now the northeast corner of Main street west and Montgomery alley. The managers, Smith & Davis, announced:

"That it is their wish and intention to establish a permanent and respectable theater worthy of the rising greatness of this splendid and flourishing town." The opening bill was "Richard III." and "The Rendezvous." The wish and intention of the sponsors of the enterprise to establish a permanent theater was not accomplished, the theater closing three months after its opening.

On May 22d, the trustees passed a resolution for the opening of a street from the High School lot to Chestnut street. The street is now known as Temple street, and the site of the High School is now occupied by the Unitarian church. The committee to whom was referred a petition for removing the cemetery at the Catholic church, reported to a meeting of the trustees, on May 29th, "that the trustees of the church will consent to the removal of the same on condition that they are furnished with ground for a cemetery out of the village." The trustees resolved, "that the church be offered sixty lots in the southwest corner of the village cemetery." The cemetery which was to be removed was adjoining the church on the site of the present Cathedral, on the northeast corner of Frank and Platt streets. At this meeting of the trustees, Gilbert & Trowbridge petitioned for a license to play in the theater on Saturday nights. The petition was denied.

## New Street Opened

"A meeting of the village voters was held on June 8th, and the following taxes were directed: \$1,000 for local improvements; lighting bridges; night watch; contingent expenses. The sum of \$1,200 was voted for a fire engine and necessary apparatus, and \$1,000 for the redemption of the market stock. The trustees recorded their consent to the alteration of the "highway called Main street, so that the north line of the street from the center of the river shall be on a line with a line from the corner of the stone store occupied by Abraham Plumb, on the west side of the river, extending to the southwest corner of the brick store on the east side of the river occupied by P. S. Stoddard." This action was taken so as to straighten the north line of Main street from the corner of the present Water street to the corner of the street now known as Front street.

One hundred years ago to-day, June 12th, 1827, the trustees passed a resolution for the opening of a street from Main street south to the High School lot. This street when opened, was named Lancaster street, the name being given to perpetuate the name of the Lancasterian School, which had become the High School. Years later, the location on the street of several places of unpleasant repute gave a disagreeable tone to the locality. Instead of removing the causes of the disrepute, the name of the street was changed to Cortland street. On June 26, the trustees passed a resolution to extend Court street from Johnson's Public Square (Washington Square) to the eastern boundary of the village, Pennsylvania (Union) street then being the easterly line of the village.

The street commissioner reported to the trustees, at their meeting on July 3, 1827, "That the north bridge over the river, the bridge over the race in Main street, and the bridges over the canal on Buffalo street and on Exchange street are out of repair and in a dangerous situation." The north bridge over the river was the toll bridge built in 1819, crossing the river a short distance south of the present Central avenue bridge. The trustees, at this meeting, passed a resolution: "That the militia companies of the village on the celebration of the 4th inst. have liberty to discharge fire arms and cannon in the village of Rochester, under the orders of their respective officers, in such places as shall not endanger the lives of the citizens or injure any building. And, also, that cannon and fire arms may be discharged in like manner on the 5th inst., under the committee of arrangements." It was also resolved: "That the street commissioner be directed to take the proper level of Carroll street and sidewalks thereon, from Hart's corner (northeast corner of Main and State streets) to the north line of Christopher's Mansion House (now Market street), and that the said street be paved between those two points with round flint stone, and that the sidewalks on each side of the street between those two points be



flagged with smooth square stone, similar to the Lockport stone, or with brick, and that the platform in front of the buildings on the street between those two points, be laid five feet in width, and the sidewalks from the termination of said platform be laid ten feet in width." The expense of this improvement was \$1,764.92.

#### Well Built

A comparison of making a pavement of "round flint stones," in 1827, with the 1927 improvement now going forward in Main street, is a conspicuous illustration of the changes a hundred years has brought. On July 17, the trustees decided to continue Hart street (Plymouth avenue, north) from Ann (Allen) street to Frank street. The records of the trustees' proceedings for July 31st show:

Blossom's tavern, on Main street (south side of Main street east, a short distance east of the corner of South avenue on Main street); and the small engine, to be called No. 3; be placed near the intersection of Platt and State streets." On November 22, the trustees directed "that the sum of \$250 be applied to the erection of two fire engine houses; that a village watch be organized for the ensuing winter, and that ten suitable watchmen be employed for that purpose, to be on duty one-half of the night each, and to be allowed \$10 each per month."

The trustees, on November 27th, named persons who "are hereby appointed Bagman for the village of Rochester, whose duty it shall be in cases of fire to take charge of and assist in the preservation of property exposed to fire, under the direction of the trustees."

The proficiency of the mail service in 1827, is shown in an item in the Observer: "The rapidity and regularity with which the mail has arrived from the east for some time past, is worthy of remark. The Albany papers, for instance, of Tuesday were here and distributed a little after sunrise Thursday. This is six or eight hours quicker than the quickest trips heretofore performed."

"Mr. Wilder presented an account of \$4.50 for one day up the river looking for paving stones and expenses, and for repairing logs at the corner of Buffalo and Carroll streets."

On August 7th, the trustees appropriated \$100 for constructing a public well at the corner of Main and Clinton streets, to be constructed by the street commissioner. On which corner of the streets the well was to be constructed was not mentioned in the resolution. On August 14 a petition for the construction of a public well at the corner of Washington and Atkinson streets (which corner not stated) was granted by the trustees. The record of the proceedings of the trustees on August 17th, state:

"Mons. Emile Guilledeau petitioned for a license to exhibit the 'Grecian dog, Apollo,' for four days. Resolved to give him a license without charge."

John Pringle presented a petition to the trustees, on October 18, "representing that he had completed a public well at the corner of Court and Exchange streets, and contemplated putting a pump in the same, and praying that a part of the expenses which he had incurred be refunded to him. Resolved, that on his completing said pump to the satisfaction of the street commissioner, the clerk draw an order on the treasurer, in favor of said Pringle, for \$20." At this meeting a resolution was adopted, "that a census of the village be taken, to be completed on or before November 1, next." Oshea Wilder was appointed to take the census.

#### Mail Service Proficiency

The village trustees, on October 30th, resolved: "That fire engine No. 1 be located near the First Presbyterian meeting house, or on the court house yard; that the new engine, to be called No. 2, be located near the blacksmith shop, nearly opposite

## Frankly Speaking --

Rochester Public Library  
By Paul Benton 54 Court St.

THERE always has been something about the nickname "Bull's Head" for the section around Genesee Street and Main Street West which caught my fancy. It sounds a bit like the names of some streets or sections in English cities, such as "Poultry" or "Cheapside" in London. Most of these old names have a definite meaning if the curious will go back far enough to find it.

\* \* \*

"POULTRY" for example was a poultry market and "Cheapside" a street devoted to bargains. For more than a century neither name has had any significance so far as the business of the locality is concerned. In the same way, "Bull's Head" meant, a hundred years or more ago, a well known tavern, situated at the junction of two country roads, now Main Street West, then the Buffalo Road, and Genesee Street, so

called because it ran south from the Buffalo Road to the Genesee River.

\* \* \*

ONCE upon a time, at about this same period, there was a more definite reason for the name as a group of enterprising men attempted to establish a big cattle market where St. Mary's Orphan Asylum now stands. The venture was a failure. Anyway the old tavern has passed its name down to posterity, although it is born by no structure or street sign today.

\* \* \*

GENESEE Street was a deep rutted country road of the period, more or less impassable in the rains of the fall and spring, snow drifted in winter and ankle deep in summer dust. It ran down to the river to a small settlement where the river flat-boatmen, who ferried the produce of the upper

valley down from Genesee and Mt. Morris before the building of the Genesee Valley Canal used to make merry.

\* \* \*

THERE were but two buildings on Genesee Street then, a small log house near the Buffalo Road and farther along a farmhouse belonging to one Ballantine. Dense woods covered the entire area with the exception of a few farm clearings.



## Only Fido Unchanged in Changing Scene



Pipe the lid on "Willie off the Pickle Boat" and the shawls on the lethargic dames giving the "go-by" to the open air beef suspended in front of a butcher shop. They give a fair hint this picture of Front Street was snapped some years

before WPA launched its street paving projects. But Fido's mournful gaze in the direction of a chicken being shorn of its feathers is as modern as the clattering pneumatic drills with which relief workers while away their hours of toil.

## Front Street's Last Link With River Doomed

Within a few weeks WPA workers will have destroyed one of the last tangible reminders of the days when the Genesee River was Front's Street's best friend—and its worst enemy.

Early in the 19th Century, when the street was just a lane with a few buildings on the west side and a sandy beach on the east, the river meant a great deal in Front Street's life.

The few residents lived in fear of spring freshets. Boys lived for the time when the water would go down so they could hunt

crabs on the beach. And the housewives depended on river water for many purposes in those days when cisterns and pumps were none too common!

### Stalls Built Over River

Then the street became a market center, with stalls built out over the water where farmers could sell produce. In 1937 a fine new frame market building was erected—and the merchants cited the nearness of the river as a big advantage. It simplified the problem of flushing out stalls and floors.

Eventually this unique water system was supplanted by a more carefully planned one, and a flume was built to divert part of the river into a reservoir. Abandoned for many years now, this flume

will be torn out when laborers begin to wield pickaxes on the surface in preparation for repaving.

The wide, modern road will stretch from Main Street to Central Avenue, a sharp contrast to the pictures old Rochesterians conjure up when Front Street is mentioned. A very few residents can remember how it bustled in Civil War days, with markets and stores and saloons and with police quartered in one wing of the City Market.

### Big Flood in 1865

Perhaps some can remember the slimy mess left when flood waters receded in March, 1865, and how after the street was mopped up and aired out they decided to raze the City Market.

More common mental pictures, however, are those of the post Civil War days, when hucksters wagons lined the street by day, while by night respectable women avoided it like a plague, for it was the "Little Bowery" and one of the toughest streets in the country.

Practically every other door was a saloon or a cheap lodging house, and policemen walked that beat



Front Street Today

in pairs—they never knew what they'd meet. In the 1880's a mission was opened, and in 1889 the Rescue Mission, which still operates there, opened its doors.

### Provision Prestige Upheld

Yet despite its sinister reputation, the street never lost its prestige as a provision center. Thanksgiving and Christmas weren't properly observed in most homes unless the turkey or goose came from a Front Street huckster's wagon. The first oyster shop in the city was at the corner of Main and Front, and in one of the fish markets Seth Green, later famous for his work in the artificial propagation of fish, made his first experiments in hatching fish spawn.

Until comparatively recent years the river was a menace to the street's existence. In 1913 another flood ripped up the pavements and soaked the stores.

Flood control work has since halted the fear of the river and the street has rapidly become just another business section — still specializing, of course, in provisions. And the new pavement will further obliterate its past.



# Mysteries Challenge Steam Shovels in Front Street Repaving

## Engineering Relics of Past Century to Be Uncovered

By ROY ELLIOTT

Front Street got into the fifth week of its second century yesterday with a face lifting operation—and considerable mystery.

Into Front Street's conglomeration of discordant noises moved a steam shovel, a battery of compressed air drill operators, WPA signs went up and the long-awaited repaving project got under way. By nightfall a half portion of Front Street extending from Market Street southward nearly to Corinthian had been ripped up—and Front Street was discussing its newest mystery.

"What will those compressed air drills, those steam shovels—there'll be a second one in action today—find under ancient Front Street's pavement?"

### Laid 39 Years Ago

It has been 39 years since the street's present Medina block pavement was laid, but at that time the street's surface was delved into only to foundation depth. Below that are known to be relics of engineering feats of the past century.

There's an old 24-inch steel flume buried down there somewhere, a flume that long before the turn of the century was used to bypass water from the Genesee River for Front Street's power and in some cases washing activities. It runs from somewhere near Main Street down to Andrews or beyond and it is to be removed now. Caving in of this flume is believed to have caused at least some of the mountainous characteristics of Front Street's pavement.

Others doubtless were caused by cavernous washouts the steam shovel may uncover, washouts caused by rampages of the Genesee River in its flood tides. Until the river deepening project was completed about a score of years ago, Front Street always was river conscious, and yesterday as the digging got under way again, conversation on the street again turned to the floods, the last big one in 1913.

### Always Flood Victim

Prior to that Front Street was always talking about floods, for if the river rose, Front Street flooded. Yesterday the street's sages—Front Street has them—even talked back to the time when there were only a few buildings on the west side of the street, and the east side was a sandy river beach. They couldn't remember it, but they had heard tell.



What picturesque Front Street may be like when its new face-lifting is completed is the thing that interests motorists, but

what workers may find beneath its ancient cobblestone interests old timers just as much. Repair work got under way yesterday.

It was Market Street then—back more than 100 years ago—so named because of its development into the marketing center it has remained to this day. Prior to that it had been called Mason Street in honor of Ezra Mason who in 1811 built the first building on the riverbank wilderness that was to become today's Front Street. The name Front Street was adopted in July, 1837.

And yesterday's steam-shovel-inspired gossip reviewed the Street's "Little Bowery" days, when it was known as the toughest, roughest street in the country from New York to Chicago, of the days when cops had to travel in pairs for self protection, of the Civil War days when the street housed barracks for Union soldiers, of the advent of the first mission in 1880

and the Rescue Mission in 1889.

Front Street talked of the past, but Public Works Commissioner Thomas J. Morrison talked yesterday of the work in hand.

### To Inspect Pipes

"We're going to take out that old flume. We're going to dig down and uncover every water and sewer pipe. All will be inspected to be certain they're in first class condi-

tion. The Gas & Electric Corporation will inspect all its mains and connections. What else we'll find? That of course remains to be seen."

With traffic shut off most of the street, Front Street's merchants

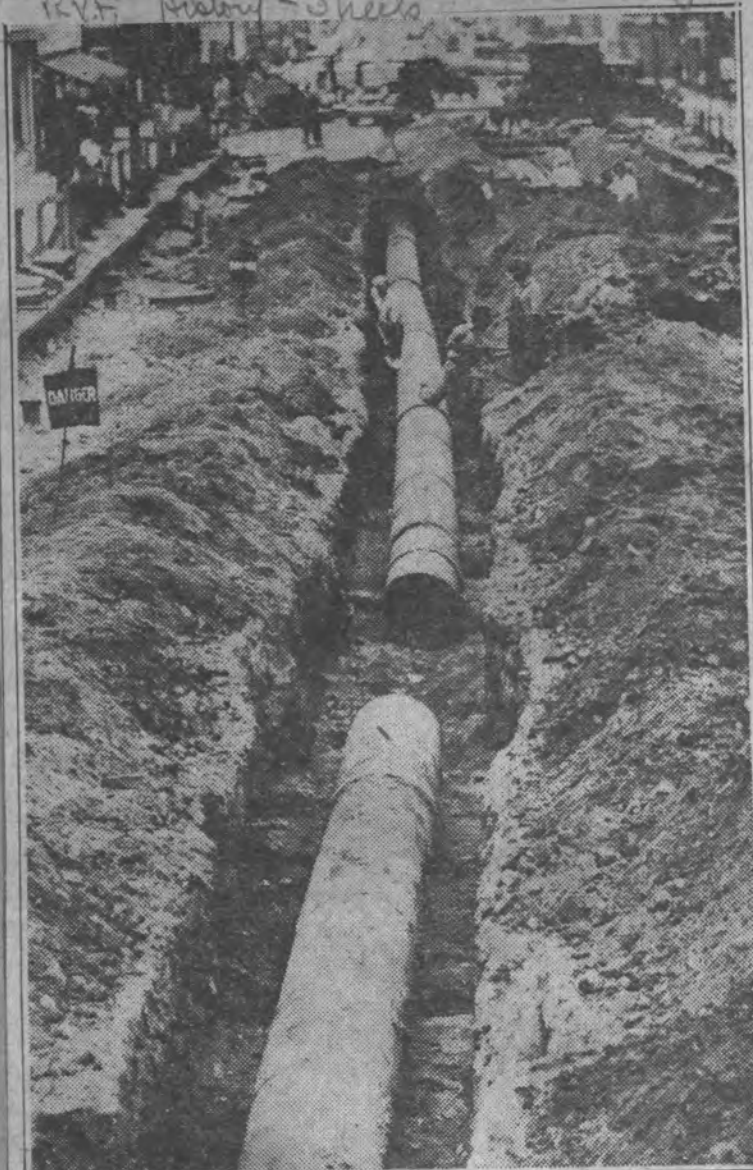
watched the start of operations reflectively. To them it means three months, until the latter part of November, before traffic is fully restored. To the property owners it means an outlay of about \$22,000 in assessments. The city will pay \$29,000 and the federal government \$31,000, a total for the WPA project of \$82,000.

Some of Front Street's habitués looked upon the proceedings with disgust. As one spokesman for a group—he said his name was Treadway Jones—put it:

"Bah! Swell time for us guys to have somethin' like this startin' up. Here it's fruitpickin' time when us residents go out and lay up a few bucks for the winter, and they have to start this. And we haven't had anything to watch for years."



# Front Street Workers Uncover Old Flume



The old timers were right again. "Dig up Front Street and you'll find an old water flume," they told workers on the paving job there. And surely enough, the workers uncovered it yesterday. How long was it there? Records don't reveal.

D. & C. SEP 8 1937

## Pipe Supplied Water To Market Stalls In Former Days

Buried many years—even the records are vague on its history—the old flume that used to supply Front Street with its water was uncovered yesterday.

They didn't know just where they would find it, but WPA workers excavating for Front Street's new pavement project uncovered it almost smack in the middle of the street, about four feet down. And it was in surprisingly good condition. Thomas J. Morrison, commissioner of public works, admitted that as he looked operations over yesterday afternoon.

"I expected we'd find it pretty well broken down or caved in in places, but that's in good shape," he remarked of the section revealed yesterday between Corinthian and Market Streets. "That's of wrought iron construction. Notice the riveting in those sections, and the 30-inch sleeved and leaded joints."

The bystander got the impression it was a pretty good job.

Front Street probably thought it was a pretty good job also several score years ago when its construction marked the end of carrying water from the river or from wells in the vicinity. The 24-inch tubing was designed to bypass water from the river and it saw heavy duty back about the middle of the last century when, among other uses, it supplied water to clean out the many stalls of Rochester's early hucksters who first brought to the street its marketing reputation.

As WPA work in Front Street took its historical bent yesterday, Rochester Gas & Electric workmen moved in to go about their more modern duties. Every gas and electric connection, every water and sewer pipe in the street is to be uncovered, repairs made where necessary, unserviceable items ripped out.

## Plea for Nature

Editor, The Times-Union: May 10, 1935

WHEN Bernhard Huck, pioneer grandfather of the writer, came to the Genesee country in a packet boat on the Erie Canal from Albany 108 years ago he found a wilderness country.

His little boys and girl used to walk to Plymouth Ave. near the present Flint St., where Indians still lived, and would bring them clothing in exchange for willow baskets, Indian made. The little girl used to pick mandrakes, violets and trilliums in the near woods.

Now Plymouth Ave. is solid cement from lot boundary on one side of the street to lot boundary on the opposite side, from the bridge over the Pennsylvania Railroad to the edge of Genesee Valley Park. All the little animals and birds that found homes there have long since had to seek food and shelter farther on, or have lost out in the battle of life.

The white man's encroachment on the wilderness domain has destroyed, in this area, native trees, wild flowers, birds and animals. Much has been unavoidable, but much was needless and some was wanton destruction. Now one must go far afield to find a woodlot supporting spring beauty, bloodroot, dogtooth violet.

The old-time rail fences on farms furnished sheltered nooks for flowers, trees and birds. Asters, goldenrod, huckleberries could be found in abundance. In one such spot stands a fine specimen of hawthorn, self-sown 60 or 70 years ago.

May we make a plea for more consideration of nature's artistic arrangement of her flower children in remaining wild areas, and consideration for the native birds that make their homes among them?

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