

ROCHESTER HISTORY

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NOS. 2 AND 3

Old and New Landmarks and Historic Houses

BY BLAKE MCKELVEY

Mark Twain once complained, while on a lecture tour in the 1870's, that every miserable town he visited insisted on bundling him into a carriage and driving him about to see the local academy, court house and jail, the mayor's mansion, and any number of other sights in which only a local committee could take pride. Times have changed and we have so generally forgotten this old custom that curious visitors who pause today before a half-hidden marker in an effort to grasp some of the historical lore of a strange community are often buffeted by a stream of preoccupied residents hastening about their immediate affairs. Only when a long familiar landmark is threatened does the modern citizen pause to evaluate and defend cherished community symbols.

Rochester's Skyline Symbols

The present uncertain fate of the statue of Mercury has aroused much concern in Rochester for its preservation. We have become interested in its history—who built it and when, and why it was placed on that lofty smokestack near the center of town. We cannot say just what it signifies, except that it has stood there as long as most of us can remember and has thus become a part of Rochester. We like it, every one of us, and that should be sufficient to prompt the authorities to secure it a new and equally commanding perch when the old site is cleared for the Community War Memorial.

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1*

Perhaps there are still a few old-timers who can recall when the statue was erected early in 1881. Standing on the "breath of Boreas" 162 feet up from the base of the tower and rising 21 feet more from toe to the tip of its raised right hand, Mercury—whether viewed from the roof of the Powers Block, then seven stories high and the tallest in Rochester, or from the deck of a canal boat gliding slowly through its shadow in the canal below—must have seemed even more lofty in the early eighties than it does today. Gurnsey Mitchell, a young sculptor recently returned from study in Paris, designed and built the statue on a commission from his brother-in-law, William S. Kimball, as a decoration for the sturdy chimney of the latter's new tobacco factory.

Described as the largest copperplated statue yet executed in America, Mercury quickly won a place in Rochester's heart. Critics who had protested the artist's plan to substitute a bag of gold for the herald's staff traditionally held in the Greek god's right hand were silenced by the quotation of Roman authority for the change. Nothing but praise was heard when the statue was unveiled amidst elaborate ceremonies on January 29, 1881. Indeed it is quite possible that the graceful figure added a measure of respectability—sorely needed during the eighties—to the cigarettes manufactured in the Kimball tobacco factory.

Mercury's vigil has continued uninterrupted, although the production of cigarettes gave place to that of linen collars when Cluett, Peabody & Company acquired the building in 1905. Two decades later, through the generosity of George Eastman, the property was presented to the city as the nucleus for a civic center. For almost a quarter century the old building has served as a City Hall annex, housing numerous public functions including the central branch of the public library prior to the opening of its fine new home across the river in 1936. Though few will protest the utilization of its site for a Community War Memorial, many will mourn the passing of this attractive old building, and all will agree with an old citizen who called this writer shortly after the Memorial plans were announced to insist that Mercury must be assured a new perch.

2

Rochester has not always been sufficiently careful of its community symbols. Perhaps the preceding favorite was the old Liberty Pole
*Note. See the Historical Site Map, p. 12.

which stood for nearly half a century on the triangle at the junction of East Avenue, Main and Franklin Streets. Again, few citizens, even in 1889 when it was finally blown down in a great wind storm, recalled the details of its origin. Diligent research still leaves many questions unanswered, but we do know that two poles (perhaps three) stood successively on that site. One reminiscent account alludes to a pole erected there in the 1830's, and while this is probably incorrect, the activity of local political clubs in erecting hickory and ash poles as symbols of their strength was widespread. Rochester had at least ten such poles in the early forties, but apparently all of them were taken down after the election of 1844.

As clearly as can be determined, the first authentic Liberty Pole was non-political in character. Erected early in July, 1846, by the "East Side boys" as a patriotic symbol for the celebration of the Fourth, it stood 118 feet above ground and was surmounted by a massive gilded ball. A banner 25 feet in length was run up for that celebration, and similar use was made of it on later occasions, especially in connection with local jubiliations over Mexican War victories. The first Liberty Pole stood its ground until March, 1859, when a severe gale loosened its foundations and the authorities cut it down to avoid serious accident.

While the old pine pole was being chopped up to supply firewood for the Industrial School, a subscription was started to assure its replacement. A second pole, 120 feet in length, was soon found and hauled into the city. For months it lay in the Franklin Street gutter awaiting the slow collection of funds. Finally on June 21, 1860, after a sum of \$150 had been raised to purchase and paint it, the new pole was successfully erected. Not quite as tall as its predecessor, it stood 102 feet above ground bearing a large wooden ball topped by a weather vane and a smaller tin ball in which a number of public documents were stored. No provision had been made for a flag, but shortly after the outbreak of the Civil War a huge American flag, 30 by 17½ feet in size, and a streamer 75 feet long were purchased and strung aloft as symbols of the city's steadfast loyalty.

The scattered homes which had dotted this area—the outskirts of the city when the first Liberty Pole was erected—gave place after the war to one- and two-story shops and in the eighties to three- and four-story structures built in solid block formation. For years the Liberty Pole triangle had remained undeveloped, and gradually

during the seventies farmers coming in to market found it a convenient location to display their produce. Thus an unofficial Liberty Pole market developed at this point, appropriating the streets after the properties were built up and continuing to bear that name for nearly a decade after the Liberty Pole itself crashed in a gale on the day after Christmas, 1889. A plan to replace it with a steel pole was abandoned when local firms declined to undertake its construction. Even the marker, which was later inserted in the pavement at or near the original site, disappeared a decade ago, while the concentration of department stores and towering office buildings in this locality has made the street intersection one of the busiest centers of vehicular and pedestrian traffic in the city, completely obliterating all traces of the Liberty Pole.

Rochester has lost and forgotten several other old-time landmarks, such as the great spreading elm which stood at the corner of Main and Alexander streets until 1896, when, despite pleas that its hoary age (estimated at more than a century) commanded respect, the march of progress appropriated the spot for an insignificant building now likewise forgotten. The cupola which for many decades adorned the roof of the old Reynolds Arcade, affording a choice vantage point to visitors in the early days, lost favor to the Court House cupola and the Powers Block tower long before its own destruction by fire in 1909. Neither the remodeled Arcade of that year nor the modern skyscrapers which took its place a quarter-century later attempted to restore it.

3

A better fortune has preserved the wooden statue of Justice—the skyline symbol which shared honors with the Liberty Pole throughout Rochester's mid-years. Carved in 1851 by an unnamed French woodcarver, the fair figure of Justice graced the cupola over the dome of the second Court House for more than forty years—a model for good citizenship in more than name since she never wore the blindfold traditional with her sisterhood. After stepping down from that conspicuous post in 1894, when the second Court House gave way to the third, she has found a more modest place in a niche high up over the entrance of the present building where observant strollers on Main Street may still see her balancing her scales.

4

The Powers Block tower, opened in 1873, stands almost unnoticed today in a city which boasts many more lofty and imposing

structures. The tower's successive red, green, brown and shell-colored floors, once the pride of Rochester, are now opened only by special permit, and the curious visitor, even if admitted, will never suspect their former elegance, though a grand view may still be had by rubbing some of the thick dust of recent years from the windows. The sturdy character of the Powers Block itself, above which the tower soars, still challenges attention. It is in fact one of Rochester's most important landmarks—a veritable historic document shedding light on the character and activity of an entire era.

The Four Corners

The Powers Block occupies the choice site at the original Four Corners—the central hub of Rochester from village days down at least to 1900. A log cabin, a frame tavern and a stone hotel preceded it on the same site before Daniel Powers, whose private bank occupied the east corner rooms of the hotel, decided in the mid-sixties to replace the hotel and adjacent structures with a modern commercial block. The dubious character of such a costly project, in a city lacking a water system and suffering as a result numerous and destructive fires, prompted many to dub it "Powers' folly," but Daniel Powers and his architect, Andrew J. Warner, determined to avoid this danger by adopting the newly developed cast-iron construction considered especially safe for urban use in the decade before the great Chicago fire demonstrated the contrary. Whatever its shortcomings, the Powers Block, except the corner section of stone, is constructed largely of glass and cast iron. Boasting the first marble floors in Rochester, the first passenger elevator (called a vertical railroad), and an improved system of gas illumination which was promptly replaced by electricity when the latter became available—the originally five-story Powers Block, capped by a mansard roof over the corner section, was for many years much the most pretentious structure in the city.

Daniel Powers was so proud of his new block that he established an art gallery on the fifth floor in 1875. Soon the mansard roof was extended over the entire block making a sixth story into which the growing art gallery and social halls quickly spread, providing Rochester's fashionable society with a truly sumptuous headquarters. The tower had been erected in 1873 and six years later (after the new Elwood building across the street had risen to a height of seven stories) a second mansard roof or seventh story was added, over-

topping the Elwood gargoyles. Again in 1888, when the new Ellwanger & Barry building was erected nearby to a height of eight stories, Daniel Powers called in his architect and requested still another roof, which when completed provided two additional floors though only one is apparent from the street.

The old Four Corners section is historic ground. Two water troughs once refreshed passing horses at this point and of course the first horse-car lines, built in the mid-sixties, branched out from this central hub. As traffic increased after the Civil War, a turntable was installed to facilitate the return of cars on each separate line, but that cumbersome structure soon had to be removed and matching lines linked together across the city. The introduction of trolley cars in 1890 brought the first effort to re-route some of the lines in order to relieve congestion at the Four Corners, yet it nevertheless remained for another decade or two the busiest intersection in Rochester.

5 & 6

New buildings on the eastern corners added to the distinction as well as to the congestion of the Four Corners. J. G. Cutler, architect of the Elwood building with its four gargoyles or griffins maintaining a silent watch over the city from the eaves of its Gothic tower, (and of the Kimball tobacco factory mentioned above), was likewise the architect for the new Wilder building which reared its head to the unprecedented height of thirteen stories in 1888. The Powers Block was now definitely topped, although the Powers tower, raised another notch, continued to hold the highest place on the Rochester skyline for another five years. But if the fame of Daniel Powers remains dominant at the Four Corners, the works of James G. Cutler will not be forgotten. It was in the Elwood building on the northeast corner that this architect first tried out his ingenious scheme for the delivery of mail by chutes from the upper floors to the street entrance. A patent was soon acquired and an important new industry, the Cutler Mail Chute, was born. New skyscrapers, springing up all over the country, hastened to introduce this convenient device, and one of the earliest was Cutler's own Wilder building.

7

It was almost exactly a hundred years before the erection of the Wilder building that Ebenezer Allan began to clear the ground for his pioneer mills. The parking lot adjoining the Wilder building on Exchange Street extends back two blocks to cover the site originally

occupied by Allan's mills. Two markers attached to the stone wall which supports the rear of the parking lot may be seen on cobblestoned Graves Street a few steps from East Main Street, but the visitor will need a fertile imagination to clear the entire city of its buildings and replant the virgin forest of maple, beech, ash, oak, elm, pine and sycamore which blanketed this region when Allan arrived to build his crude saw and grist mills in 1789.

Bridges and River Vistas

Rochester is a city of bridges and at least two of its sixteen river bridges have definite historic interest—those at Main and Broad streets. The first river bridge in this area was a timber structure completed in 1812 at the point where Main Street crosses today. Outgrown and damaged by successive floods, it was replaced in 1824 by a more sturdy frame structure supported on stone piers, which gave place in turn to the present stone arch bridge of the mid-fifties.

8

The remarkable character of the third Main Street bridge is not its age, now approaching a century, but the fact that the average visitor will cross it, as most residents do daily, without being aware of its existence. Indeed, in order to see it as a bridge (what can be seen of it), it is necessary to go around to Andrews Street bridge on the north, or better still to Broad Street bridge on the south, from which vantage points one will see the rear walls of Main Street's three- and four-story structures carried across the river without a break. Nowhere else in America can such a bridge be found, and if the observer will pause to lean over the Broad Street bridge railing for a moment or two on a misty morning (when a score of white and grey gulls are circling in graceful flight, watching and plunging for fish in the rushing waters of the shallow river) the rustic quality of the scene will waft him away to some dreamy old-world river town of the mid-nineteenth century until an auto horn behind him suddenly brings the present back into the picture.

9

The sound of an auto horn on Broad Street bridge is in itself something of an affront to the searcher for historic lore. It should have the less mechanical quality of the canaller's tin horn, for Broad

Street is only a twentieth century highway built over the abandoned ditch of the famous old Erie Canal which coursed through Rochester at this point, contributing mightily to its early development. An electric subway constructed in the old ditch in the 1920's never fully developed the potentialities expected of it and may soon give place to a modern depressed highway. Broad Street bridge is thus the top deck built over the canal aqueduct which can best be seen from Court Street bridge to the south. The sturdy arches of the aqueduct were laid in place during the late 1830's and the aqueduct was completed in 1842 at a cost of nearly a half-million dollars—incidentally a most timely "P. W. A." project financed by the state and greatly sustaining the Flour City throughout the depression of that period.

The present aqueduct was the second erected at this point. Its predecessor, completed in 1823 a short distance to the north, had been constructed of stone which crumbled so rapidly on exposure to the elements that a few years saw the appearance of numerous leaks in its sides and bottom. Yet even that original aqueduct, which cost only \$83,000 and soon proved imperfect, attracted enthusiastic praise from European engineers who hailed it as the largest and finest example of bridge masonry in the world. That honor had passed elsewhere before the building of the second aqueduct, which, although slightly longer and much wider than the first, could not rival several contemporary bridges over broader rivers. Its sturdy character is, however, as evident and impressive today as at the opening ceremonies in April, 1842.

10

The fine modern Rochester Public Library, standing on the east bank of the river between Broad and Court streets and opened in 1936, is a modern rather than an historic landmark, and yet a unique architectural detail—a series of arches in the foundations on the river side through which an overflow from the old Johnson-Seymour race spills back into the river—gives the building a symbolic link with the mills formerly driven by this power. Today, even more than in Emerson's time, his famous aphorism, "Knowledge is Power," rings true, especially in a city such as Rochester, with its scientific industries and complicated social structures. The rich store of knowledge housed in this beautiful library contributes more materially to the community's prosperity (not to speak of other matters) than ever did the water falls.

All of the old flour mills and sawmills which once bordered the river at this point have long since given way before the march of progress, but two or three of the rough stone buildings which back up to the river north of Broad Street may be identified as the re-converted hulks of the second or third mills built on their sites. Mills were especially susceptible to fires, and none of the original generation is still standing here, though one or two may be seen in the somewhat larger milling area along the west side of the gorge north of the New York Central tracks. That area is well worth a visit, for a stroll along Mill or Race streets will carry one back at least a hundred years to the time when Rochester was the leading Flour City in the world, and when, as one building still faintly advertises, farmers came to Rochester to get "cash for wheat."

11

Platt Street bridge, which spans the gorge at this point, was not erected until 1891, long after the decline of flour milling, and its eastern approach intersects the old Falls Field which served Rochester for a half-century as a favorite picnic ground, later a commercial amusement center. Breweries and other industries encroached upon this choice recreation site before the city was ready to invest in public parks, but if we are deprived of the delights of a park on Falls Field we may nevertheless enjoy a grand view of the falls and the gorge from the bridge railing. Indeed from this vantage point one can see the modern and the eternal fused together, especially of an evening when the industrial plants down in the gorge are ablaze with light and an occasional burst of flame shoots up from an exhaust pipe to cast a weird flicker over the falls in the distance.

12

The view of the falls will be disappointing unless seen after a heavy rain, for so much of the water is now carried off to the turbines of the power company that only a filmy sheet normally occupies the bed where once a foaming torrent tumbled 96 feet into the dark pool below. The ghost of Sam Patch still restlessly haunts this spot which only the imaginative visitor can see as it was when he made his famous last jump on Friday the thirteenth of November, 1829. Springing from a platform erected on an island long since merged with the west bank, Sam Patch horrified an estimated 10,000 onlookers gathered on Falls Field and elsewhere about the rim of the gorge when he failed to reappear after his plunge into the swirling pool at the foot of the falls. The experience was enough to

sober the overwrought nerves of the booming canal town of the 1820's and helped to transform it into the enterprising Flour City in which Yankee virtues held dominant sway.

Historic Houses on the West Side

Before visiting a number of historic houses we might well pose a question which always arises—what is an historic house? Of course the answers are varied. Perhaps the architecture attracts attention as expressive of an era or a style; sometimes the residents lived significantly creative lives, or again the home may have provided the setting for important events; only occasionally do all three distinctions apply to the same house.

13

In spite of Mark Twain's scorn for the homes of ex-mayors, we will go first to the Jonathan Child mansion on Washington Street. Built in 1837-38 by Hugh Hastings for Colonel Rochester's son-in-law a few years after he had resigned as first mayor, this most imposing mansion of the Flour City period, with five Corinthian columns gracing its front portico, became a center for many decades of fashionable life in Rochester. The early afternoon balls in the large double parlors graduated into evening parties during the late forties when gas lights were introduced, but no liquor was served by Jonathan Child, Rochester's leading temperance advocate of pre-Civil War days. After the death of Mrs. Child in 1850, the mansion was occupied for two years by John N. Wilder, president of the board of trustees of the newly established university, and many of the early functions of that institution transpired behind these lofty pillars.

In 1852, Freeman Clarke—banker, railroad and telegraph financier, and politician—bought the mansion. The flood of new business and social interests which filled its spacious rooms during the next four years may have subsided a bit during the occupancy of Clarke's successors, the Frederick Stewarts and the D. C. Hydes, but the atmosphere of dignified elegance remained. Even during its four decades as a boarding house, starting in the early eighties under the capable administration of Mrs. Theodore A. Ives, and later when known as "The Pillars," high standards were maintained. Young ladies or bachelors, fortunate enough to gain admittance to its register, were assured of introductions into the fashionable circles

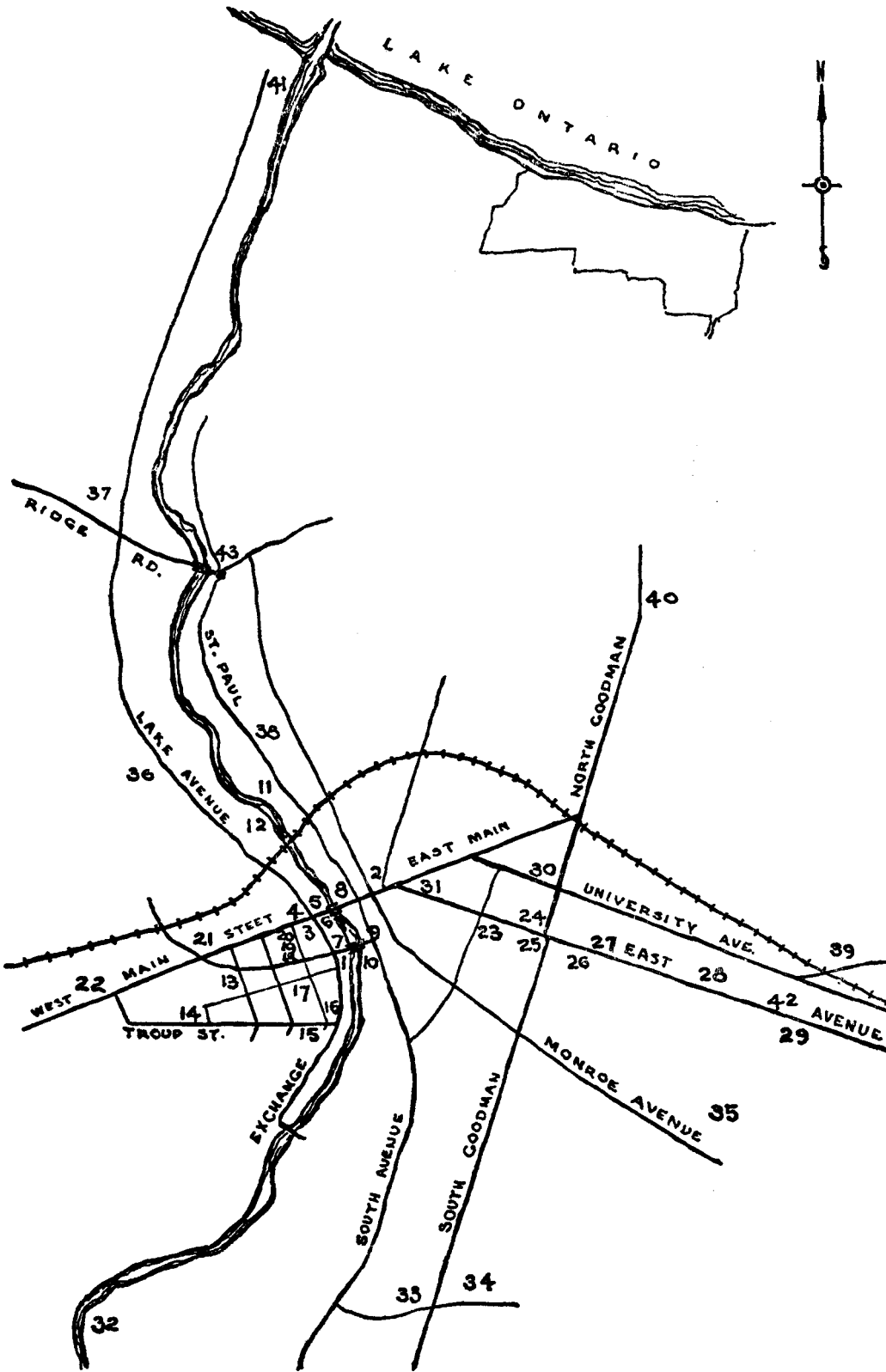
of the expanding city. When in 1921 the Washington Club was formed by some of the members of the disbanded Whist Club, a formerly popular gentlemen's club, the old mansion was acquired as a clubhouse. Finally in 1933 it passed into the hands of the Fourth Christian Science Society, for whose services its temple architecture appears admirably fitted.

14

Hugh Hastings, the architect of the Child house, had been brought to Rochester a few years before to build the Hervey Ely mansion on Livingston Park. The simple if weighty dignity of its Doric temple style has in a measure characterized its successive occupants. A reserved Yankee, Hervey Ely was forced to sell when plunging flour prices brought his mill, the largest in Rochester (and perhaps in all America as well), to the brink of bankruptcy in 1842. The Reverend Henry J. Whitehouse, rector of St. Luke's, occupied the mansion during the next two years, after which it passed successively to William Kidd, a metalurgist, to Azariah Boody who served for a time as Rochester's Congressman, and to Howard Osgood, professor of Hebrew at the Rochester Theological Seminary, who occupied it from 1871 until his death thirty-four years later. The Irondequoit Chapter of the D. A. R., which finally acquired the mansion in 1920, has since maintained it as an appropriate shrine for patronymic activities.

15

Another choice example of Greek temple architecture is the Campbell-Whittlesey house on Troup Street, maintained by the Society for the Preservation of Landmarks in Western New York. Built in 1835-36 for Benjamin Campbell, a prosperous miller, it likewise passed through bankruptcy proceedings in 1842, though the Campbells continued to live there most of the time until 1848 when it was acquired by Frederick Whittlesey, justice of the State Supreme Court. It remained the home of successive generations of the Whittlesey family until 1937 when the newly formed Landmark Society came into possession and began a conscientious program of restoration. By careful research the interior has been restored faithfully to its original state, with some surprising and most pleasing results, and furnishings of the 1835 period have been secured as loans or gifts, enabling the society to recreate a fine example of the domestic setting of favored residents of early Rochester. Visitors are cordially welcome.



Key to the Historical Site Map

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Statue of Mercury | 23. Erickson-Perkins House |
| 2. Site of Liberty Pole | 24. Pitkin-Powers House |
| 3. Figure of Justice | 25. Woodside, Headquarters of the Rochester Historical Society |
| 4. Powers Block | 26. Museum of Arts and Sciences |
| 5. Elwood Block | 27. Brownstone House |
| 6. Wilder Block | 28. Eastman House Museum |
| 7. Site of Allan's Mills | 29. Academy of Medicine |
| 8. Main Street Bridge | 30. Memorial Art Gallery |
| 9. Broad Street Bridge and Aqueduct | 31. Eastman Theater |
| 10. Public Library | 32. Rush Rhees Library |
| 11. Site of Falls Field | 33. Highland Park |
| 12. Main Falls | 34. Colgate-Rochester Divinity School |
| 13. Jonathan Child House | 35. Cobbs Hill |
| 14. Ely-Osgood House | 36. Kodak Tower |
| 15. Campbell-Whittlesey House | 37. Kodak Park |
| 16. Lyon-Chapin House | 38. Bausch & Lomb |
| 17. Bicknell Houses | 39. Stromberg-Carlson |
| 18. St. Luke's Church | 40. Bond Factory |
| 19. Education Building | 41. Lighthouse |
| 20. Rochester Savings Bank | 42. Oliver Culver House |
| 21. First Home of the Univer- sity of Rochester | 43. Veterans' Memorial Bridge |
| 22. Susan B. Anthony House | |

Less noted for its architecture, the home of Lewis H. Morgan, Rochester's most distinguished scholar, stands across Fitzhugh Street from the Whittlesey mansion. Here was organized Rochester's first men's literary society, the Pundit Club, still active after almost a century, and here were composed in a book-lined study the significant volumes written by the "father of American anthropology."

16

The Troup-Fitzhugh Street corner has still another noteworthy building, the oft-remodeled Lyon-Chapin home which now serves as the Hellenic Orthodox Church. Built in 1832 for Edmund Lyon a wool merchant, this house was acquired in 1886 by W. W. Chapin who, among other improvements, added a north wing and in 1916 installed a pipe organ with the pipes of various ranks located in different parts of the house. The Chapin pipe organ, said to rival that in the Eastman mansion on East Avenue, was removed after the Greek church acquired the property in 1938, when a new addition was built for a chapel on the north and the Classical embellishments on all sides were considerably toned up, making it an appropriate headquarters for the Greek church and several affiliated societies.

17

If most of the old Third Ward, from Broad Street (which now hides the Ward's former "moat" as Virginia Smith aptly characterized the Erie Canal) south to Clarissa Street bridge, is today in a much less happy state of preservation than that of these few mansions, it does nevertheless retain some of the flavor of the time when as the Ruffled Shirt Ward it was for several decades the favorite residential quarter in Rochester. Here one can still see some of the original modest frame houses with simple but attractive lines (such as the Bicknell houses, 63 and 65 Spring Street, dating from the early 1820's), charming Post Colonial houses (notably the Isaac Hills house at 223 Plymouth Avenue), the Greek Revival mansions listed above among others, a few examples of Gothic Revival (the Brewster house at Spring and Washington Streets, 1849), Queen Anne touches (as in the Medbury house at Spring and Livingston Park), as well as Victorian and later influences. Unfortunately the surging traffic of the twentieth century city has destroyed the former tranquility of this ward, appropriating numerous home sites for parking lots, sweeping other old homesteads away to make room for apartment houses, commercial and educational institutions; more-

over, overcrowding has reduced some of the ward's structures to tenement conditions. Depressed beyond recognition is the former home of the Jerome grandparents of Winston Churchill at 90 Fitzhugh Street. At least three or four "underground railroad stations" which existed on Sophia (Plymouth) Street a century ago, have disappeared, as have the two houses on Troup Street occupied by the Fox sisters during the birth pangs of Spiritualism. Let us hope that the engineers charged with the opening of a new inner traffic loop will save as many of the remaining landmarks in this area as possible.

18, 19 & 20

The old Third Ward, like the old Four Corners, lost favor to the east side before the turn of the century, but before we leave the west side several other historic structures deserve attention. St. Luke's Church on Fitzhugh Street, built in 1824-25 when First Presbyterian, likewise of stone, was under construction on the present City Hall site across the street, is one of the oldest and finest landmarks of early Rochester and well merits a visit. The Education Building next door, erected in 1875 as the Free Academy, was the third school on its site where the first village school appeared in 1813. And next door, on the corner of Fitzhugh and Main, the Rochester Savings Bank, erected in 1855-57 by Henry Searl, enjoyed an architectural renown in its day which only the observant will now suspect. Built in the Greek Revival style as adapted to urban blocks, it was hailed as the finest structure in Rochester before the Civil War, and an impressive succession of cultural institutions enjoyed quarters on its upper story under a dome which was considerably elevated in 1870 (when the third story was added) and later removed.

21

Further west on the other side of Main Street (formerly named Buffalo Street) stands the four-story red brick building in which the University of Rochester was born. Built possibly as early as 1826 as a hotel to serve canal travelers arriving from the west, it enjoyed new business when in 1837 Rochester's first steam railroad made its eastern terminus at the street line in the hotel's morning shadow. But the linking of that line to the new eastern railroads a few years later diverted travelers to newer hotels on State and Exchange Streets and the building became successively a girls' seminary, a university and theological school, and then, more definitely on the

downward grade, a boys' academy, a boarding house, a tenement, and finally today an historic site in sad decay.

22

Lest we become depressed with the thought that our historic vitality is running down, let us hasten several blocks farther west to Madison Street on which we will find the recently restored Susan B. Anthony house. Built in the nondescript style of the Victorian period, this home of Mary Anthony during the last forty years of her long life, served also as the only permanent home of her more famous sister. Though Susan B. Anthony's busy campaigns throughout the country and her several trips to Europe kept her on the road much of the time, here the major part of her biography was written and here increasing portions of her later years were spent amidst a widening circle of sympathetic Rochester friends who were thus inspired to carry on the fight after her death in March, 1906, to the ultimate triumph of the woman's suffrage cause. The Susan B. Anthony Memorial, incorporated in 1945, is doing an excellent work in maintaining the character of the Anthony home, to which visitors are welcome.

East Side Landmarks

The eastward movement of Rochester's business and commercial activity, which became clearly evident by the 1880's, has had the effect of leveling practically all the first and second generation of buildings east of the river within the compass of the old or Flour City. A few mansions erected in a rural setting along the "Pittsford road" of the late 1830's still grace East Avenue as it was re-named in the late fifties, but already many even of the Victorian mansions of the Avenue's heyday are disappearing. Fortunately the great elms for which the avenue has become famous still provide it with a high, and in summer leafy, vault extending unbroken for nearly two miles beyond Alexander Street.

23 & 24

Scattered along this avenue are a number of old and new landmarks. The first building on the right, as one travels eastward from Alexander Street, is the Genesee Valley Club, housed in the remodeled mansion built in 1842 for Aaron Erickson and long occupied by his daughter's family, the Gilman H. Perkins, prominent in social and business circles throughout the Flower City period.

Additional facilities have been added in the rear since the club acquired the property in 1921, fortunately without marring the harmonious appearance of the old mansion from the avenue. A half-block farther east stand two impressive mansions, likewise in the Greek Revival style, facing each other across the avenue—on the right the Woodside home of the Rochester Historical Society, built in 1839-40, and the Pitkin-Powers house of the same period across the way.

25

Built for Silas O. Smith, an early Rochester merchant, Woodside, as it was called because of the stretch of virgin forest then bordering it on the east, displays throughout the strength and noble conceptions of the Greek Revival builders. Walter Cassebeer, a student of Rochester's architecture, has asserted that "Its mass, detail, and crowning square and cylindrical cupola are all perfect." Perfect also is the graceful staircase winding upward through successive floors in the central hall; the design and construction of the doors and windows are likewise noteworthy. A second-floor smoking room was added later, perhaps by the sports-loving Frank Lords, third occupants of the house, who raced their cutters along the avenue in wintry months during the early seventies. The charming circular porch and enclosed garden in the rear were added by the Hobart F. Atkinsons who acquired the property in 1876. Mrs. Ernest R. Willard, Atkinson's daughter, lived in this house from an early age until her death many years later, when, in 1940, she willed the property to the Rochester Historical Society. Here visitors will see not only a fine replica of the elegant domestic environment enjoyed by a favored few, but also, through the changing displays of old pictures, costumes and other artifacts of early Rochester, something of the life of the entire community. A program of meetings, teas and exhibits (occasionally, of contemporary artists as well) encourages return visits by members and the public generally.

26

The Rochester Museum of Arts and Sciences in the imposing new Bausch Hall, a few blocks farther east, is the avenue's most impressive modern landmark. Recognized as a model among the museums of natural science and history in cities of the second class, its displays already crowd three exhibit floors with both permanent and movable dioramas, fixed and changing showcase displays (some of which, incidentally, depict historic scenes of the Rochester area). A busy

program of meetings by hobby clubs, scientific societies and more general public meetings attracts the public back for repeated visits.

27

Across the avenue, in a spacious lawn shaded by a great spreading elm, stands a charming brownstone house of unique interest in Rochester. Built, approximately a century before the museum, by Josiah Bissell who gave East Avenue its name, the stone house follows a design adopted by A. J. Warner from Downing's famous "Country Houses." Successive owners have included the families of Charles Bissell a nurseryman, Charles Upton a banker, John C. Wright, Schuyler Colfax, Jr., whose father had been Vice-President under Grant, and the Harold C. Townsons, prior to the present owners. But the distinctive feature to the historian is the brown stone of which it is constructed—salvaged from the wreck of the first Erie Canal aqueduct shortly after it was replaced by the present one in 1842.

28

Several blocks farther out East Avenue and on the left side, in a spacious setting at No. 900, stands the Eastman House museum. Built for George Eastman in 1905, this is the largest and most elegant of Rochester's mansions. Its front portico, supported by four Corinthian columns, graces but does not dominate the mass of the house, which is of Georgian Colonial design. This three-story house, built of brick with stone trim, originally contained 49 rooms, the most spacious of which is the conservatory, extended up through the second floor to a glass roof long since enclosed. The conservatory housed a large pipe organ and provided the setting for the Sunday evening recitals to which frequently a hundred guests were invited. The mansion was willed to the University of Rochester at Eastman's death in 1932 and served as the president's house until 1947 when plans were launched to convert it into a photographic museum. Opened in 1949, Eastman House museum provides Rochester with a unique attraction, a resort to which amateur and professional photographers will turn in increasing numbers to study past and present developments in this field. Visitors are cordially welcomed.

29

The new home of the Academy of Medicine, opened in 1939 in the Edmund Lyon mansion, 1441 East Avenue, will especially interest visiting doctors. A modern wing, housing an auditorium that seats 450, accommodates frequent lectures on medical science, while

the library, exhibit and social rooms and offices carry on the active functions of the academy.

As the number of museums and churches on East Avenue will suggest, Rochester is rapidly becoming a center of cultural institutions, each one ready to serve in its own peculiar way but all appearing in a general sense as community landmarks.

30

The Memorial Art Gallery, standing on the corner of the Women's campus at University Avenue and Prince Street, was originally opened in the fall of 1913 and considerably enlarged in 1926. A gem of Italian Renaissance architecture itself, the gallery's permanent collections include medieval tapestries, Romanesque and Gothic sculpture, and the only considerable collection of French Romanesque fresco painting in America. Frequently changing displays bring art exhibits from all parts of the world to Rochester, while an annual Finger Lakes Exhibit engenders keen interest among local artists. A creative workshop open to children and adults, a little theater, and numerous classes, lectures and films join with the exhibits to attract a steady stream of visitors.

The Women's campus, now much less crowded by buildings than in the period before 1930 when the entire university was centered here, is crisscrossed by shady walks leading under memorial elms from old Anderson Hall to the Sibley Library, the art gallery, and the modern Cutler Union with its fine English Gothic tower and its facilities for social and intellectual life.

31

Another part of the university, the widely famous Eastman School of Music adjoins the Eastman Theater at the corner of Main and Gibbs streets. Opened in September, 1922, as a theater for the display of fine films and fine music together, it was decorated with lavish artistic splendor, inside and out. Since the development of sound pictures, Eastman Theater has become more exclusively a music hall, the home of the Rochester Philharmonic and the favorite setting for visiting orchestras and vocal stars.

32

The main concentration of university developments since 1930 has of course been on the new River Campus. The circular tower with a crowning turret rising high above Rush Rhees library, visible especially when illuminated at night from many parts of the city and on highways leading in from the south, provides one of the

most familiar of our modern landmarks. The great expansion of classroom, laboratory, and dormitory buildings and other facilities clustered on this campus has already spilled over to the Strong Memorial Hospital area between Elmwood Avenue and Crittenden Boulevard where the medical school and the new psychiatric clinic (one of the very newest of Rochester's points of interest) are located.

33, 34 & 35

A sharp contrast between the newest and the oldest among Rochester's landmarks is to be seen on the southern border of the city. Rising up from the level bed of an extinct glacial lake which borders Rochester on the south are several pinnacle hills that antedate everything else in Rochester (except the underlying rock strata) even including the falls and the gorge. Blanketing one of these hills, Highland Park, with its widely famous lilacs and its equally noteworthy pinetum and other displays, is a center of interest throughout all seasons. The English Gothic tower of the Colgate-Rochester Divinity School, beautifully located on another of these hills, and the fountain spouting up from the reservoir on top of Cobbs Hill, around which a park drive is etched by lights at night, have long been visible from a distance. The newest landmark is the slender steel transmitter jutting up 328 feet from the side of still another of the pinnacle hills, and if the slender pylon is not very visible from a distance, the pictorial messages it sends forth to television sets scattered throughout this area reach a radius of nearly 75 miles.

36

But of course the Rochester landmark which is itself visible from the greatest distance on all sides of the city, especially at night, is the radiantly lighted pyramidal roof and turret on top of the Kodak tower. The Eastman Kodak Company's new office building was erected in 1913 on the site of the old factory. Towering up to a height of 16 stories, it not only dominated the several 7-story Camera Works buildings clustered around it on State Street but overtopped everything else in Rochester as well. Not until the late twenties did any challengers appear. Neither the Lincoln Alliance Bank building with its 14 stories, nor the 12-story Genesee Valley Trust building could equal the Eastman tower's height, but the greater elevation of their sites and the Trust company's plan to mount its symbolical "Wings of Progress" on a suitable framework above its building threatened to give it top place on the Rochester skyline.

Whether for this reason, as was widely believed, or solely because

of the need for more office space, George Eastman, like Daniel Powers before him, called in his architect and requested three additional stories with a pinnacle roof and turret. Fortunately the result is not unattractive, though the steeply pitched Gothic roof topping a modern skyscraper is quite as bold in execution as the modernistic "Wings of Progress" which stretch 42 feet above the Genesee Valley Trust building. The latter overshadows Mercury and the old Four Corners, but no structure in Rochester, not even the radio pylon, can match the 340 foot height of the Kodak tower.

37

No structure, that is, except the twin smokestacks at Kodak Park. The first one, completed in 1906, was just another smokestack, but when a second arose near by in 1910 and to exactly the same height, 366 feet, the twin stacks became a favorite skyline symbol especially appropriate to the industrial neighborhood at Kodak Park. The ever increasing concentration of factories in this area defies brief description but some conception of the developments on the Park's 1920 acreage (235) can be gathered from the fact that equally as many new acres have since been added and in considerable part occupied here, and that a third major center of Eastman Kodak factories has grown up since 1911 in the Hawk-Eye Works on the east bank of the gorge. The strikingly modern design of one of the new Hawk-Eye buildings and of another in the Camera Works group on State Street gives immediate evidence of the continued vitality of this great industrial concern.

38, 39 & 40

This is not the place to list and describe all of Rochester's important industrial plants, but three deserve our notice, one as an old landmark and two whose recently completed buildings have a special interest. The Bausch and Lomb factory has occupied its present site on St. Paul Street since 1874 and the clock tower which rises modestly above one of the many buildings which now crowd this site has been a familiar landmark on St. Paul Street for more than half a century. Outstanding among Rochester's new industrial landmarks is the new and vast Bond Clothing Company factory. Constructed on modern architectural lines and covering a third of its 52-acre site, this largest clothing factory in America is the most considerable structure in the northeast section of the city, although its two- and three-story height and out of the way location, 1400 North Goodman Street, render it a rather elusive landmark. Like-

wise off the beaten highway, Stromberg-Carlson's new office building at 201 Humbolt Street, the home of WHAM and WHFM studios, attracts visitors not only because of its interesting design but also because of the Rochester Radio City programs it stages.

41

Numerous landmarks and historic buildings on the city's outskirts invite our attention. The quaint old lighthouse at Charlotte, built of stone in 1822 and long since retired from service, stirs the imagination of all who catch a glimpse of it back of the Holy Cross Church at approximately 4500 Lake Avenue. A considerable tract of filled land now separates this quaint old structure from the lake shore and the modern lights on the piers, extended progressively into the lake since the 1820's. Two cobblestone houses on Culver Road, at the Grand Avenue and Main Street intersections, dating from the late 1830's, are the best representatives in the city of a form of masonry and stonework almost unique to Western New York, several hundred examples of which may be seen in charming farm dwellings along the highways east and west and south of Rochester.

42

Perhaps the oldest house in Rochester and certainly one of the finest is the Oliver Culver house. Standing since 1906 at 70 East Boulevard, it was originally built by Oliver Culver at the corner of Culver Road and East Avenue when the latter was but a marshy forest road leading from the hamlet of Boyle (Pittsford) to the undeveloped mill plot at the Genesee falls. A rear section of this house dates perhaps from 1805 but the major design and structure were not fixed until 1816 and the front portion was not completed until 1818. The results justified the long effort, for as Carl F. Schmidt and Walter Cassebeer, local authorities on regional architecture, have declared, "the main entrance is one of the most successful to be found anywhere in the [original] American Colonies, and . . . the house itself is unquestionably the best example of Post-Colonial architecture in the Genesee Valley." Built as a tavern, the second floor is comprised principally of the ballroom which boasts the best spring-floor in the area and a high arched ceiling of unusual charm. It is now occupied as a private residence and is maintained in a fine condition of preservation.

A still older house stands just beyond the city limits at 2370 East Avenue, the Orringh Stone house. Again the rear portion is the oldest, dating from 1790 and erected before the post-and-frame con-

struction used in the front of the present house was introduced in this area. Still later improvements mar somewhat the house as originally finished for a tavern sometime before 1820, but the traditions of the distinguished guests it once sheltered continue to cluster about it.

Another and more impressive old tavern is the Spring House on Monroe Avenue some distance beyond the city line. Built in 1822 at the point where the road to Pittsford crossed the newly constructed Erie canal, it accommodated both stage and canal travelers and, when this traffic declined, advertised the health benefits to be derived from the water of a near-by sulphur spring. The five large chimneys and ten fireplaces tell of the heating problems in the days before stoves were introduced in this area. The recent reconditioning of this old tavern for use as a modern roadside dining tavern seems most appropriate.

Of course no one will stay in Rochester long without a visit to its parks. Highland Park with its lilacs and other unusual displays has already been mentioned, but the statue of Frederick Douglass, standing on a knoll overlooking the bandshell in a natural amphitheater on the extension of that park west of South Avenue, should not be missed. Rochester has as yet paid comparable respect to only two other distinguished citizens—President Anderson whose statue stands in front of Anderson Hall on the old university campus, and Dr. Edward Mott Moore, father of the park system, whose statue greets visitors to Genesee Valley Park on the southern outskirts of the city. An unexpected feature in this park is the sight of the Barge Canal, successor in 1918 to the old Erie, which crosses in the river at this point and continues through the park, giving occasion for several graceful bridges from which the slow passage of a tug-drawn chain of barges can frequently be watched during the canal season.

43

The gently rolling hills and open fields which make Genesee Valley Park ideal for golfers, contrast with the more rugged terrain of Seneca Park, overlooking the gorge at the northern edge of the city. The indoor zoo at this park and the outdoor pens stocked with North America fauna at Durand-Eastman Park provide special attractions for youngsters, while the beaches at the latter and at Ontario Beach Park refresh thousands of bathers on hot summer days. Playfields, shady walks and drives, picnic and rest areas, serve

varied needs at these and several smaller parks. Noteworthy vistas abound, of river, country and city scenes, and the views, especially from Maplewood Park, of the Veterans' Memorial Bridge, with its great arches faced with granite, standing out against the foliage of the gorge behind, make a lasting imprint on the visitor's memory.

Let us hope that the new Community War Memorial, scheduled to appear in the near future, will become as worthy an architectural landmark as the bridge, as useful as the parks and as rich in public affection as the statue it displaces.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE: I am indebted to the technical staff of the City Planning Commission for the finished draft of the Historical Site Map. The reference to Mark Twain is to Dixon Wecter's *Love Letters of Mark Twain*, cited with the permission of Harper & Brothers.