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Rochester Recollected: A Miscellany of Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Descriptions

Edited by Pat M. Ryan

These pieces comprise a true miscellany. They were assembled at Rochester City Historian Joseph W. Barnes' urging, last summer, after I had presented to him two documents (Hutchinson, Wilson) unearthed in the course of work for the Irondequoit Oral History Project, and another (Bradstreet) encountered during a survey of Irondequoit supervisors. At first, we did not know the authors' names for *Description of the Genesee Country* or "Sketches from Memory;" neither were we sure just when Anne Royall, Mary O'Brien, or Nathaniel Hawthorne had visited Rochester. In the ensuing search, these details emerged along with some other elusive facts.

The following ten descriptions span almost a century of Rochester's growth, from undefined wilderness which land agent Charles Williamson had to sell off or go broke, to a bustling village incorporated in 1817, into a competitive flour-milling city of 1835, and eventually to a commercial metropolis populated by many thousands, connected to the rest of North America by

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roads, rails, water, and telegraph, in 1893. As edited documents, they complement Blake McKelvey, Myrtle M. Handy, and Dorothy S. Truesdale's "Foreign Travelers' Notes on Rochester and the Genesee Country Before 1840;"¹ as they roughly parallel (and partly overlap) Truesdale's "American Travel Accounts of Early Rochester."² Here are the varied products of chance travelers, authors, journalists, emigrants/settlers, long-time residents, and — in the last instance — a renowned guidebook publisher.

The earliest Anglo-American travelers had picked their way into the Genesee Country on foot and by horseback, sometimes over Indian trails. A turnpike road from Albany to Canandaigua, adequate for transportation via horseback, wagon, and stage-coach, was completed "at great expense" by 1805; while the improving Susquehannah Trail, to the south, provided an alternative access route for eastern emigrants and visitors like Mathias Hutchinson and Edward Hicks. In the early 1820s, when tourism was at full tide, American and European visitors pilgrimaged past Rochester by stage, en route to Niagara Falls. After spring 1823, though, when the Erie Canal had been completed between Albany and Rochester (it would extend to Lake Erie in October 1825), tourists such as Royall, O'Brien, Hawthorne, and Thomas McKenney admired and wrote about Rochester's famous canal aqueduct across the Genesee River, its myriad shops and mills, and the celebrated falls; and in 1830 local editor Edwin Scrantom was to write about these canal travelers. (The Rochester & Tonawanda Railroad would reach to Batavia in May, 1837; rail passengers might travel from Rochester to Albany four years later; and there was efficient, through rail service to Buffalo by 1852.)

Most accounts discuss travel conditions. Hutchinson writes palpably of the pace of travel, scenery, weather, food and lodging, toll-roads, ferries, fords, and chancy short-cuts. "We left the turnpike and pursued a new, lonely fearful, and tedious path . . . said to shorten the distance 10 miles, and better recommended than it deserves." Some reveal their authors' susceptibility to others' descriptions. Mary O'Brien's, for instance: "I immediately recognized the scenery of *The Pioneers* & found that in fact we were approaching . . . Cooperstown." And Isabella Wilson's: "The scenery [was] all and more than Stuart described them."

McKenney exults at Rochester's "... six churches, ... a court house and jail; and *public baths!*" (Lest we forget — since tolerant nineteenth-century travelers rarely descanted upon plumbing — New York City's Astor House was the first hotel, in 1836, to incorporate convenient water-closets, bathtubs, and showers.) O'Brien lightly touches on contemporary politics: "His mouth seemed to water for Canada & various other good districts." A now worldly Nehemiah Bradstreet, thinking back, recaptures youthful ingenuousness: "I never before had seen a canal or a canal boat, nor a mule driver, nor a canal-boat captain, nor a field of green wheat growing, nor people traveling west. Everything seen was exhilarating."

None of these visitors condescends toward this self-possessed upstart city, and several marvel at Rochester's phenomenal, overnight growth: "a standing proof that the wilderness may be made to vanish at a stroke" (McKenney); "very neatly and handsomely built with wide streets and almost splendid shops & an hotel [yet] begun only since ten years" (O'Brien); "fifteen years since, the place . . . was a wilderness" (Royall). In the early nineteenth century, moralists, temperance playwrights, and Transcendentalist authors had alike employed the American city as "a symbol of restraint, knowledge of evil, and corruption opposed to the innocence, freedom, and expansiveness of the American forest and garden."³ Historian Frederick Jackson Turner, who believed the locus of a people's national character and of democratic society was in the frontier ("an area of free land . . . and the advance of settlement westward"), darkly speculated in 1893 that the frontier was no more, and that "the first period of American history" was closed. But long before 1893, actual cities like Rochester had supplanted a visionary "virgin land" as emblems of opportunity. As these exuberant travelers' reports amply attest, the great folk movement of those times was from rural to urban, and not the Turnerian reverse.

So, too, with Turner's notion of a frontier growth "process" of programmatic stages (a proposition Richard Wade was to counter in *The Urban Frontier*). Hawthorne, already a master of paradox, might have smiled at that. "The town had grown up like a mushroom, but no presage of decay could be drawn from its

hasty growth," he writes. "The most ancient town in Massachusetts appears quite like an affair of yesterday, compared with Rochester."

Notes

1. Rochester Historical Society **Publications**, 18 (1940), 1-104.
2. **Rochester History**, 16 (April 1954), 1-20.
3. Charles N. Glaab, "The Historian and the Urban Tradition," **Wisconsin Magazine of History**, 46 (1963), 18.

I. Description of the Genesee Country (1798-99)

This anonymous booklet was early recognized as from the pen of Scots land promoter Charles Williamson (1757-1808),¹ who had sailed to America in summer 1791, made a site visit to the Pulteney Company's huge tract that same winter, and took up residence in the Genesee Country the next year. He eventually opened the Susquehannah Trail to emigration. His first five ostensible "letters" appeared in 1798, were broadly circulated in Maryland and Virginia, and enticed both investors and prospective settlers in England. Eight letters appeared in the second edition, to be reprinted in E. B. O'Callaghan's *Documentary History of the State of New-York* (1849, 1850).

Williamson's zealous *Description*, founded on his six years' experience as pioneer farmer, exemplifies the frontier emigration pamphlet. Speculator Robert Morris, who purchased most of Phelps and Gorham's six-and-one-quarter-million-acre tract from Oliver Phelps and the State of Massachusetts, and then resold part of it to Sir William Pulteney, had himself promoted their wilderness enterprise in a pamphlet of 1791 (lengthily cited in Williamson's first "letter"). Williamson biographer Helen I. Cowan surmises, however, that Morris's formidable enumeration of "necessary" equipment may have inhibited rather than promoted emigration, and that the Scot corrected Morris's error specifically in his own *Description* — recommending an austere log house, a yoke of oxen, one cow, farming utensils, and perhaps an ox-cart. "The wealthy man," Williamson observed, "may add what he pleases" to this list.²

His genteel, disarming account yields some of our earliest printed descriptions of Canandaigua ("Canandarqua"), Irondequoit Bay ("the Rundigut"), Genesee Falls, and the Genesee River site of Rochester. He articulates "progress" not alone in agrarian and mineral resources, navigation and commerce, and human population, but in such cultural and social amenities as academy, court-house, and jail.

[Charles Williamson] *Description of the Genesee Country, its rapidly progressive Population and Improvements: in a series of letters from a Gentleman to his Friend*. Albany: Loring Andrews & Co., 1798. 37 pp.

Description of the Settlement of the Genesee Country, in the State of New-York New York: T. & J. Swords. 1799. 63 pp.

LETTER I

Dear Sir,

I with pleasure comply with your request, and will endeavour to furnish you with such information relative to the soil, climate, situation, and present state of the Genesee country, as may enable you to judge of the propriety of making it the place of your future residence. . . . (*Description*, p. 3)

LETTER II

The opening of a road to the northward from the Pennsylvania settlements [late in 1792] over the chain of mountains before reckoned impassable, excited the curiosity of the inhabitants in the adjacent country; many were tempted to explore the Genesee lands, that previous to this had scarce ever given them a thought; men of observation pleased with the country

The town of Canandarqua, from consisting of a few straggling huts, as described in 1792, had now assumed the appearance of a very handsome village, a court-house and gaol were already built, and an academy founded on a subscription of 30,000 dollars was now building. The whole adjacent country was rapidly settling with a most respectable yeomanry, but particularly that part of the country lying between Canandarqua and the Genesee river; here, there is a tract of country about six miles from north

to south, and 27 from east to west, that for rich and elegant farms, a thick population and respectable inhabitants, may already vie with any part of the United States.* . . . (*Description*, pp. 8, 12)

*This tract of country has continued to increase with great rapidity. 150 families moved into it in the space of a few weeks last winter. 1797.

LETTER III

The rapid progress of this new country in every comfort and convenience, has not only caused the emigration of a vast number of substantial farmers, but also of men of liberal education, who can find here a society not inferior to that in the oldest settlements in America. The schools are far from being indifferent, and even the foundations of public libraries are already laid. The Gentleman fond of a rural life or the amusements of the field, may here gratify himself: he may find a situation for a country-seat that will please the most luxuriant fancy; the excellence of the climate and soil will afford him every certainty of a great return for his trouble and expense as a farmer, and with little trouble his garden may equal any gentleman's in England.* Indeed the climate, the soil, and a great variety of elegant situations, can only be equalled in the finest parts of England (*Description*, p. 21)

*Musk and Water Melons, and all the delicate plants produced in the interior of France, come to perfection in our gardens.

LETTER VII

The navigation from the interior county of Ontario into the lake of the same name, is by the Genesee, Rundigut, and Seneca Rivers The Rundigut lies about five miles east of the Genesee River, and runs into the country about six miles; at the south extremity of the Bay Rundigut Creek forms a very handsome fall of about twenty feet, affording a fine situation for mills, which may be so placed that boats might be navigated from Canada to the mill, and there loaded without trouble. A convenient store-

house has already been built, and, during the last two summers, very considerable quantities of provisions and distilled liquor were sent from this place to Canada. In the neighbourhood of this place are several bodies of iron ore,* and it is presumed that works will soon be established for the making of iron.

The Genesee River is navigable for sloops of sixty tons from the lake to the falls, a distance of six miles. These falls, which are formed by a continuance of the same ridge that forms the Falls of Niagara, are a succession of four distinct falls within the space of one mile: the highest is ninety feet, but, with the rapids above, the total height is three hundred feet. These falls, for beauty, are not inferior to those of Niagara. A carrying place is made on the west side of the river, and it has already a considerable employment. Immediately above the falls the river is navigable for large boats, and continues so for twenty-five miles above Williamsburgh, where it is again interrupted (*Description*, 1799, p. 676)

*Iron can be brought, by the Susquehannah, from Pennsylvania to Geneva or Bath, and afforded at nearly the same price it is sold for in New-York or Philadelphia.

Notes

1. Attribution to "Capt. Charles Williamson, who came to this country as the Agent of Sir Wm. Pulteney and Governor Hornby, for the settlement of their lands in the Western part of the State of New-York, in the year 1792," was made by John Greig of Canandaigua in a letter to Dr. T. R. Beck (inserted in the New York State Library's copy, and quoted in O'Callaghan's **Documentary History** (1849, II, 1168) Cf. review of **Description** in **Medical Repository**, II (1799), 427; and Joseph Sabin, *et al.*, **Bibliotheca Americana** (New York, 1936), XXVIII, 462-463. The latter editors erroneously assign the 1799 New York imprint as copy-text for the reprint issued as "Supplement to Volume IV" of John Payne's **New and Complete System of Universal Geography** (New York: John Low, 1799), pp. 1-11, which contains only Letters I-V, without the epistolary format.

A presentation copy of the 1799 edition, at the University of Rochester, contains two inscriptions of Williamson's name on its title page, one by Williamson himself and the other by this copy's former owner, English traveler John Maude. Letters I, II, and III are excerpted from Cornell University's copy of the 1798 text; the University of Rochester's 1799 specimen is copy-text for Letter VII.

2. **Charles Williamson: Genesee Promoter — Friend of Anglo-American Rapprochement**, Rochester Historical Society Publications, 19 (1941), 157.

II. Notes of a Journey to Upper Canada (1819)

Mathias Hutchinson (1795-1894), son of Thomas and Ann Cary (Walker) Hutchinson, was born in Solebury Township, Bucks County, Pennsylvania.¹ A Quaker farmer, he grew up on the family farm in nearby Newtown, where his friend Edward Hicks (1780-1849), a carriage-maker, sign painter, and back-country Quaker preacher, also lived. (Hicks was an untrained primitive artist, whose fame today arises from nearly 100 versions of *The Peaceable Kingdom*.)²

On September 6th, 1819, Hutchinson set out on horseback and, with Hicks and their friend Isaac Parry (1773-1857), an elder of Abington Quarterly Meeting (Friends' congregation), traveled through north-central Pennsylvania, over the Centre Turnpike, and north along the Susquehannah Trail, into western New York, then into the British colony of Upper Canada, returning home via the Mohawk Valley, Hudson River, and eastern Pennsylvania — an arduous journey of 1,940 miles.³ In the spring of 1821, Hutchinson and his parents moved to Cayuga County, New York; he became the Clerk of Scipio Monthly Meeting; served two terms, as a Whig, in the New York State Assembly (1853, 1854). He was married in 1830 to Hannah C. Doty, a Dutchess County Quaker, at Clinton, New York; and he died on his Ledyard Farm.

While the more celebrated Hicks recollected this trip only glancingly in his posthumous *Memoirs* (1851), Hutchinson's hitherto unpublished Panic-year *Notes* record their day-by-day itinerary, describe road and weather conditions, tell us where they ate and slept, and offer illuminating insights into the Society of Friends' social and religious practices along the advancing frontier. Like most travelers of this and later periods, Hutchinson and his companions were eager to behold Niagara Falls; but Hutchinson was awed, too, by sights in Rochester and its vicinity: Genesee Falls, the Carthage Bridge, and the Ridge Road. His meticulous travel diary affords a rare eyewitness perspective of the famous single-span bridge, then the longest in the world, which once connected segments of Ridge Road across the Genesee (at points now spanned by Driving Park Bridge).

The following excerpt from Hutchinson's manuscript is published by permission of the Department of Rare Books,

Manuscripts, and Archives, Rush Rhees Library, University of Rochester.

Mathias Hutchinson. *Notes of a Journey to Upper Canada, [1819-1820] &c., in Company with Edward Hicks, Who Has a Prospect of Paying a Religious Visit to Friends and Others Within the Compass of New York Yearly Meeting*, MS. (111 pages). Department of Rare Books, Manuscripts and Archives, Rush Rhees Library, University of Rochester. Pp. 14-19.

27th [September, 1819]. 16 m. Having our horses shod which detained us till noon we proceeded, accompanied by Caleb McC[umber], Isaac Smith, and Gideon Ramsdell towards the Genesee River. On the way I observed oats standing. On inquiry was told it was the custom with some to sow as late as the 6th mo. As a reason why it was not gathered yet it is not sowed in abundance. Corn they said, was generally sold at 50¢ ^a. Wheat [at] 100. Part of this day's ride was over a light sandy soil and but thinly settled until we came in the neighborhood of Rochester, which has arisen out of the wilderness in 8 years, said now to contain 1,400 inhabitants, has 4 grist mills, 5 saw mills, one factory, 2 tilt hammers, 1 tannery, 1 paper mill, 1 oil mill &c. [It] is situated at the Great Falls of the Genesee, 8 m. from the outlet. These falls have a perpendicular pitch of 96 feet over horizontal strata of limestone shell, affording the greatest water power for mills I ever saw, particularly on the west shore, the side [where] the town is builded.⁴ There is also a fall of 26 [feet] at the upper end of the town [and] one of 70 ft. 1 m. below. The soil here is very productive, composed of a variety of substances.

28th. 20 miles. This morning we rode 2 miles down the river to a remarkable bridge, which is a single arch set near the edge of an almost perpendicular rock of shell 200 feet above the river bed, from where it was thrown by means of a high scaffold, &c., with great expence and danger to the edge of similar rock on the opposite side, having a span of 300 feet.⁵ We understood that one man had been killed, and another much injured in this difficult work. The banks of the river are so high as to make a considerable descent to the bridge, where we pass on an almost level and uncovered floor over the top of the arch, from the sides of which there is a dizzy view, into the awful depths below. The stream is lessened to a brook and great rocks appear as little stones. Here, too, is a fine view of the lower falls which are a short distance

above the bridge. They are nearly perpendicular and said to be seventy feet high. On the east side of the river is a small town called Clyde.⁶ Having satisfied our curiosity we pursued our journey westward, having Gideon Ramsdell,⁷ who is a genuine Yankee, for our Pilot, and soon found ourselves on the Ridge Road,⁸ which is a natural turnpike of sand and gravel rising from 10 to 20 feet above the general from 20 to 100 yards wide, with sloping sides running nearly parallel with the Ontario shore, about 8 miles from it, and said to extend nearly the whole length of the lake, and on this land which is so remarkable level it is considered a great curiosity. Following this about 7 m. we left and changed our course south, eight miles to Riga where an indulged meeting⁹ is kept by a small number of friends who are mostly New Englanders and have lately settled this swampy wilderness. We lodged at the humble dwelling of Stephen Baker where we found some of the family shivering with agues and wasted by long continued fevers,¹⁰ though somewhat cheerful and apparently glad to see us. We understood that several in the neighborhood had been indisposed but I think were encouraged in a meeting which Edward [Hicks] had appointed among them.

Notes

1. No author's name appears on the MS. At the instance of Edwin Spelman of Irondequoit, who acquired his late cousin Dr. Edith Flower's 35-page typescript copy, Irondequoit Town Historian Walter Sassaman in 1968 ascertained from Frederick B. Tolles the identities of Edward Hicks' companions. They are mentioned in the artist's *Memoirs* (Philadelphia, 1851), p. 72: "I left home on the 4th of 9th month, 1819, in company with Isaac Parry, an elder of Abington quarter, and Mathias Hutchinson, an amiable young man of Bucks quarter, and travelled through the northern part of Pennsylvania and the western part of New York State."
2. Cf. Arthur M. Bye, "Edward Hicks, 1780-1849," *Bulletin of the Friends Historical Society*, 11 (1922), 53-64; Alice Ford, *Edward Hicks, Painter of the Peaceable Kingdom* (Philadelphia, 1952); Edna S. Pullinger, *A Dream of Peace* (Philadelphia, 1973); and James Ayres, "Edward Hicks and His Sources," *Antique Magazine*, 109 (February 1976), 366-368. Ayres, p. 366, discloses that Hicks' painting *The Falls of Niagara* was copied from an engraved vignette on Henry S. Tanner's *Map of North America* (1822), rather than painted from artist's sketches made on the 1819 journey. "With the exception of his paintings of farms, done late in his career, the bulk of Hicks' work is derived from prints after paintings."

3. Cf. Emily Howland, "Early History of Friends in Cayuga County, N.Y.," **Collections of Cayuga County Historical Society** (1882), p. 77: "In the fall of 1819 I traveled through this section of the country [Scipio], making a journey of 1,940 miles on horseback" [from Hutchinson's letter of December 25, 1879].
4. Although the falls have receded through erosion since 1819, their height is still ca. 96 feet.
5. The Carthage wooden bridge, "the wonder of early days," was built by Messrs. Norton, Beach, and Strong, commenced in 1818, and opened in February 1819. Cf. Jesse Hawley's historical sketch in **Directory of the Village of Rochester** (Rochester, N.Y., 1827), p. 134: "A bridge, the like which was only to be seen in Switzerland . . . at Schaffhausen . . . It consisted of a single arch, the chord of which was 352 feet, the summit of which was 200 feet above the surface of the water. Its length was 718 feet, and its width 30 feet." English feminist lecturer Fanny Wright (Frances Wright D'Arusmont) had inspected the bridge in August 1819 — "We scrambled . . . down, first by means of the wood-work of the bridge," **Views of Society and Manners in America** (London, 1821), p. 163; and so did Gen. Jacob Brown: "The bridge at Carthage [was] the principal object of the visit" [June 1, 1819], "General Brown's Inspection Tour up the Lakes in 1819," **Buffalo Historical Society, Publications**, 24 (1920), 299. Cf. also Joseph W. Barnes, "Bridging the Lower Falls," **Rochester History**, 37 (1974), 1-24.
6. The village of Carthage was laid out by Caleb Lyon and Elisha B. Strong, on the east side of the Genesee River at the Lower Falls. Its name was changed to Clyde in June 1819 then changed back to Carthage in 1830. Cf. **Rochester Telegram**, June 22, 1819.
7. Gideon Ramsdell was a prosperous farmer of Farmington, whose lands comprised 400 acres — 300 under cultivation (Hutchinson, p. 72).
8. The Ridge Road, now Route 104, extends from Oswego to Buffalo.
9. Cf. William Heiss, ed., **Abstracts of the Records of the Society of Friends in Indiana: Part One** (Indianapolis, 1962), p. xv: "Indulged Meeting for Worship. On the frontiers, there might be two or three families who were far removed from a Friends meeting. It was usually inconvenient but more often impossible to attend the nearest established meeting. In this situation, the monthly meeting [congregation] allowed members to meet in homes or in a public place on First-day [Sunday] as an indulged meeting for worship."
10. So-called Genesee Fever took its awful toll of life, and inhibited settlement around Rochester, for more than twenty years, until the land had been cleared and drained. Hicks, **Memoirs**, p. 74, calls it "the Yellow fever." Cf. Rochester Health Officer Dr. George W. Goler's letter, cited in Edward R. Foreman, "Historiettes," **Rochester Historical Society**

Publications, 11 (1932), 347: "nothing about their true cause was then known . . . I think it is likely that the early fevers in this vicinity were malaria — *i.e.*, mosquito fever — typhoid, and typhus."

III. Sketches of a Tour to the Lakes (1826)

Thomas Loraine McKenney (1785-1859),¹ store-keeper, soldier, author, and federal Indian official, led a stormy public career and left a complex, brooding autobiography, *Memoirs, Official and Personal* (1846). From 1816 to 1822, he had served as Superintendent of Indian Trade, an adventure climaxed by termination of that agency and ugly proceedings which acquitted him of charges of abusing public trust. In 1824, he was put in charge of the newly organized Bureau of Indian Affairs, under the War Department, a post he held until 1830.

His joint commission of 1826-27 with Lewis Cass, to negotiate a treaty with the Chippewas, Menominees, and Winnebagos, brought about the western journey that produced *Sketches of a Tour to the Lakes* (1827). He set out from Georgetown, D.C., May 31, 1826, and after sailing up the Hudson by river-boat, took the canal packet *De Witt Clinton* along the Erie Canal from Albany to Rochester,² then rode westward to Lewiston via stage-coach. He returned from his treaty mission in September; and his graceful travel diary of both visits is preserved in the *Sketches*.

Since he did not experience at first hand the bustle, sounds, and smells of urban construction in Rochester (his boat had docked on a Sunday, and he departed that same day), he resourcefully capitalized upon physical evidences left in the workmen's wake; but on his return there, he registered admiration at the feat of traversing the Great Embankment with a canal seventy feet above natural water level. Such descriptions nicely balance urbanity with awe.

Thomas L. McKenney. *Sketches of a Tour to the Lakes* . . . Baltimore: F. Lucas, Jr., 1827. Pp. 85-87, 437-438.

Lewistown, Monday, June 12, 1826

My Dear ***

Rochester is now to be spoken of, and of the route from it to this place. I shall have to make short work of both, and scarcely sketch as I go. It is difficult to begin a sketch of such a place as Rochester. The place is in such motion, and is so unmanageable

as to put it out of one's power to keep it still long enough to say much about it. It is like an inflated balloon rolling and tumbling along the ground, and which the grapple itself cannot steady. It is unquestionably a wonderful town; and a town of extraordinary pretensions. It may be referred to as a standing proof that the wilderness may be made to vanish almost at a stroke, and give place in as little time to a city! It really would seem that by one hand the forest had been made to disappear, and with the other a city had been made to grow up in its stead. It was only fifteen years since the surveyor dragged his chain over the brush, and dead wood, and around the enormous living trees that flourished there, and divided the ground into lots; and only fourteen years since the place was first settled! The war, it is said, and with reason, impeded its growth, and choking up the channels that were prepared to let in the settlers, put it back at least two years, so that Rochester is only in fact about twelve years old! In this short space of time, nearly six thousand citizens people it — and, as if it was destined to come up at once a full grown city, without waiting as usual for the gradual increase and perfection of its several parts, we see here some of the finest and commodious public houses; an eye and ear infirmary; a bank; *six* churches, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Methodist, Quaker, and Catholic; a court house and jail; and *public baths*! This you may find some difficulty in believing; but believe me it is so. Nor are these appendages part of a log-house settlement. The town is generally built of brick, and the houses are commanding, and some of them beautiful. Buildings appear to be running up as rapidly as ever, and so pressing is the demand that the workmen have no time to clear the streets of the rubbish, the lumber, I mean, and shavings, and hills of mortar, and broken bricks, that go well nigh, in some places, to choke up the streets. It is like a hive; and the apertures every where around it, are full of bees, pressing into it. Everything in Rochester looked to me to be in motion. It is true the day [Sunday] had stilled the noise of the hammers and trowels, &c. but the hands of the workmen appeared to have let them go only for a moment. The streets are laid off regularly, and the side ways of several of them are paved with flag stones.

The country round about is fertile beyond any idea you can form of it; and the town is near the Genesee River, and not far

from the Falls, which are ninety feet high. I saw only the spray ascending from the bottom, into which the water tumbles, looking like mist high in the sky. Who has not heard of the Genesee country? And of its proverbial fertility? On the River, and near Rochester, are numerous manufactories, which have also recently sprung up here, and these bear strong testimony to the action within the town.

I do not wonder at the man (not of Ross, but) of Rochester, who, on arriving at New York, exclaimed: "Of all the places I have seen New York reminds me most of Rochester." Perhaps the noise and bustle of Rochester may have been the first sounds of the sort that had ever filled his ears, . . . and they were even more deeply impressed and multiplied, than were those which he afterwards heard in New York. His first impressions, like those of most of us, were the deepest, and most lasting —

Soon after leaving Rochester, we reached that extraordinary ridge, called the "*Ridge Road*." It commences near to Rochester, and continues to within a few miles of Lewistown, and though but a highway, and principally of sand, is a great curiosity. This ridge is in some places little more than wide enough to allow the passage of the stage; and is never so wide as for the eye to be without the range of its width both ways. Sometimes it inclines gradually into the valleys on both sides, then again the ways to the depths below are precipitous and appalling! . . .

Thursday, 21st [September, aboard
Canal boat *Holley*, Erie Canal].

Morning clear and cool. At five o'clock we had advanced fifty-six miles [from Lockport]. By two o'clock in the morning the cabin was crowded with passengers, from the little villages, and *Shantys*, that line the Canal, the most of them going to Lockport. Out of thirty now on board, only about five are destined to Utica.

Accommodations the same as in the De Witt Clinton; and Capt. Rogers is very obliging and polite.

Arrived at Rochester at half past eight o'clock, A.M. Population busy. Every aspect in which the town is viewed demonstrates it to be a place of business, and flourishing beyond all former example.

At ten miles from Rochester is the prettily situated town of Pittsford, which is composed of about eighty houses. At the wharf, on the canal, was a canal boat, having on its side in large letters, CANAL MUSEUM. Thus are the inhabitants of the villages, and the farmers along the line of the canal, waited upon with a collection of curiosities. The owners of the museum live in the boat, and float up and down the canal in their moveable tenement.

Further on, and two miles from Pittsford, is the passage over the Iroنداquit. This is an interesting portion of this great work. The valley is crossed at least seventy feet above its level, and in the direction of two points of high land on a level with the line of the canal, the passage for the canal being cut out of the earth that has been carted into the valley to join these two points. It is a ridge of earth a quarter of a mile long, with the bed of the canal running along its top, and the water of the Iroنداquit passing through a culvert below. The tops of the trees which grow in the valley on either side of this ridge are, many of them, on a line with the boat. So it is — if a mountain is in the way of the canal, these enterprizing citizens make nothing of cutting it down; if a valley, they fill it up, and pass the waters across, in a bed cut out of the new made ridge; and in ascending, or descending, locks are resorted to. Thus do enterprize, and skill, and money level all things

Notes

1. Cf. the biographical article by Dorothy Ann Dondore in the **Dictionary of American Biography** (New York, 1933), VI, 89-90.
2. Cf. McKenney's description of this packet-boat, excerpted by Dorothy S. Truesdale in "American Travel Accounts of Early Rochester," **Rochester History**, 16 (April 1954), 6-8.

IV. Travels in the United States (1828)

Anne Newport Royall (1769-1854) was forced to seek a living by her pen when, at fifty-four, her late husband's relatives voided his will and left her penniless. She presently took to the road, writing and publishing ten volumes of domestic travel (and one fumbling novel) between 1826 and 1831; interviewed hun-

dreds of persons, great and humble; and everywhere sought opposing opinions embodying rival factions, parties, and religions. Thereafter, she launched a Washington weekly newspaper, *Paul Pry*, succeeded by *The Huntress*, whose lively, watchdog spirit persisted until mid-1854.

Her distinctive format was cast in *Sketches of History, Life, and Manners in the United States* (1826): "personal matters and comments on the inconveniences of travel, . . . description of the country . . . and discussions . . . of religion, literature, education, social injustices, crops, and important personages she met in her travels."¹ So, in an era before Noah Webster's standardizing *Dictionary*, were her idiosyncratic spelling, faulty punctuation, and wanton capitalization. Russel B. Nye credits her with "a termagant's temper and a vitriolic pen, . . . a straight-forward, readable style and an overweening curiosity about everything she observed."²

All these features mark her northwesterly *The Black Book* (3 vols., 1828-29), which inordinately extols thriving Rochester, Canandaigua, and Syracuse (at the expense of uncouth Troy, Utica, and Buffalo, whose inhabitants "do not read"), lauds the courtly Francis Granger, and speaks methodically of farming, commerce, culture, navigation, and public works at nearly every stop. En route from Buffalo to Albany, the Hudson River, and home, she had arrived at Rochester in mid-August 1826, to discover that a blistering attack on her and her first book had just been reprinted in the *Monroe Republican*.³ (Free advertising, of course.) The prophecy that Rochester "bids fair to out-strip all the towns on the canal" typifies Royall's unalloyed, unabashed partianship.

(This generous spirit was not always reciprocated. The *Republican* on November 30, 1830, reported Mrs. Royall's recent return to the city, and that she was then blessing citizens of Kingston, Upper Canada, "with a sight of her good person, maugre the snuff and other indications of uncleanness which distinguish it.")

Anne Royall, *The Black Book; or, A Continuation of Travels in the United States* . . . Washington, D.C.: Printed for the Author, 1828-29. Vol. I. pp. 59-61.

Rochester. This city (for a city it may be called) is on the Genesee River at the falls, where the canal crosses the river by an aqueduct 758 feet in length, and of great height from the river. Here again we are lost in wonder to see boats and horses, with men on them, passing at such a vast height above the surface of a bold river. The aqueduct is built on arches of hewn stone, and for beauty, symmetry and proportion is unrivalled. It is built on eleven arches of 50 feet cord each, and is supplied by a feeder of two miles in length. Rochester owns several manufactories of flour, cloths and wood, all of which are put in operation by the falls of Genesee River. Fifteen years since, the place where Rochester now stands was a wilderness. It now contains 1,500 inhabitants, and is increasing daily. It is settled principally of enterprising Yankees; not like those of Troy, Utica, or Buffalo, but by people of intelligence, wealth and respectability. The village is all alive with improvements, and activity; bricklayers, carpenters, and masons are at work in every part of the town. The streets are strewn with merchandise, and filled with strangers. Rochester, besides the advantage of the canal navigation, navigates the Genesee River 90 miles above the falls. The number of boats lying in the basin is incredible. In short, Rochester bids fair to outstrip all the towns on the canal. Its natural advantages being greatly superior.

It is situated in the midst of the most fertile part of New-York, viz. the Genesee plains; which produces the best wheat in the United States; this is manufactured at the numerous mills at the falls, and shipped from their doors. Besides these mills, there are several manufactories of cotton, belonging to Messrs. Matthews & Weight; they manufacture 800 yards per day, and have in operation 1,400 spindles, and 30 looms; turning, splitting, and sawing, of all descriptions, is done here by water power.

A bridge of 50 feet in height is built across the river below the aqueduct, which, with the falls of Genesee added to the objects already mentioned, renders Rochester by far the most interesting village in the state of New York. The falls* of Gene-

*Just below it falls 70 feet.

see at Rochester is 96 feet in height, perpendicular, and when the sun shines, forms beautiful rainbows, similar to those of Niagara. These falls are much handsomer than the Mohawk. The Genesee River, however, is much smaller than I expected to find it; so were all the rivers in the Atlantic States, except Niagara. From Rochester, stages set out in all directions daily, particularly to Lewistown, by the Ridge Road, which is much travelled by those visiting the falls.

From Rochester I took the stage to Canandagua, a few miles to the left, a beautiful village; very fashionable and hospitable people. Here lives my friend, Mr. Granger,¹ whom I met at Albany, mentioned in my first book of travels. Mr. Granger, as I had foreseen, has been honored by his country; an honor which his talents and integrity well deserve. Though it was late in the evening when I arrived, Mr. G. honored me with a call, a mark of respect which is rarely bestowed by any but real gentlemen. May he long continue to receive the reward due his merit. Near to this village is seen the lake which gives name to it. From Canandagua I went to Geneva village, wishing to see the beautiful lake of that name

From this I took the stage to the canal and proceeded to Syracuse, another great town that is to be. It has a large population, and has great advantages from its salt works. Here are the celebrated Onondaga salt works, and the Lake Onondaga. Here again we find great resources. What part of this great state but abounds in wealth, means, and enterprise? . . .

Syracuse is an infant city, which, like Rochester, has sprung up in a day. It is also principally settled by Yankees, similar to those of Rochester. Being well educated, and possessed of all the warm hearted Yankee benevolence. It being a handsome ride, and wishing to see again the Indian village, I took the stage again to Utica, the city of *Fops*. —

Notes

1. Anne Newport Royall, **Letters from Alabama 1817-1822**, ed. Lucille Griffith (University, Alabama, 1969), p. 10.
2. "Anne Newport Royall," **Notable American Women** (Cambridge, Mass., 1971), III, 204. For biography, cf. also George S. Jackson, **Uncommon Scold: The Story of Anne Royall** (1937); Sarah Harvey Porter, **The Life and**

Times of Anne Royall (1909); Helen Beale Woodward's essay in **The Bold Women** (1953); and Bessie Rowland James, **Anne Royall's U.S.A.** (1972).

3. **Monroe Republican**, August 8, 1826. Theodore Dwight's unsparing critique had first appeared in the **New York Commercial Advertiser**.
4. Francis Granger (1792-1868), an attorney of Canandaigua, was a member of the New York State Assembly in 1825 and 1826. He later ran for Lieutenant-Governor and Governor, was first elected to the Congress in 1834, and briefly served as U.S. Postmaster-General under Presidents Harrison and Tyler.

V. Mary O'Brien Journals (1828)

Mary Sophia Gapper O'Brien (1798-1876),¹ as yet unmarried, sailed from Bristol, England to America in August 1828, for a prolonged visit with three brothers already settled on farms along Yonge Street, Thornhill (north of York), Upper Canada. She, her mother, a brother, and the latter's bride debarked at New York City, sailed up the Hudson, then — alternating between stagecoaches and canal-boats — pressed westward toward Lewiston and the future site of Toronto. They entered the Erie Canal at Schenectady, paused briefly at Utica, and on October 13 contrived a hurried stopover at Rochester.

Set down in an era when professional (*i.e.*, publishing) travelers, foreign and domestic, criss-crossed the continent along hardened, classic routes — main roads and selected communities — this author's account of her journey probably never was meant to see print. Self-reliant, conservationist, and sometimes captious, she (like Anne Royall) may not be accused of writing with guide-book or promotional intent.

Her unwonted disparagement here of the Canal is neither chauvinistic nor blasé, of course, but impassioned, arising from dismay at human engineers' unthinking destruction of the natural landscape. The *Journal's* recital of a wild stagecoach ride leads suspensefully toward her self-amused nocturnal visit to Genesee Falls, brightened by fleeting glimpses of an iron foundry at night. Narrative and mood are everything — statistics are not contemplated. Her descriptions of tourists' conversation in a Rochester hotel lobby and of audible silence in a crowded, bleak, frigid canal-boat cabin (as she laboriously writes, upon her knee) are movingly dramatic.

When Audrey Saunders Miller edited the 110 voluminous notebooks for 1968 publication, she condensed the Erie Canal and Rochester material to a chapter of seven pages. The substantive portions are here published *in extenso* for the first time, by permission of the Archives of Ontario, Toronto, Canada.

Mary O'Brien. *Journal*. Diaries Collection, Series III-10, Private Manuscripts Section, Archives of Ontario. Journal #2, pp. 5-7.

[October 10.] We are now in another of the canal boats going on imperceptibly All this day we have been passing over a flat country to which we have hitherto been rising — for 60 miles there is neither lock on the canal nor any deep cut or any material embankment. This same canal is the glory of America & a most useful work it is & highly creditable, but as far as we have seen it, it has cost little ingenuity beyond the erection of locks, which in some parts are frequent. The plain over which we passed to-day is sometimes swampy, sometimes rather rudely cultivated, & sometimes forest, but none of the latter that we have yet seen come up to the magnificence of my imagination — they look younger & not so large as I had fancied, & wherever we have passed the hand of man has been at its work of destruction and left numbers of the newest trees standing lifeless.

Our party is altogether uninteresting anyway & unworthy description. Women, some old, some young, all vulgar, uninteresting and either unintelligent or reserved or cross . . .

It is Sunday & we contrived to read the service amongst our own party in a nook of the boat; the wind is piercing cold & the cabin disagreeably tenanted, so I believe I increased my gout a little. Passed Syracuse, a perfectly new & very well built little town with 3 churches — near it is a Lake [Onondaga] of fresh water

The night has brought us into a very agreeable smiling country of Meadowland and gentle hills, partially wooded — be it known . . . that it is feasible to clear the land in most places without desolating it, by the exercise of a little caution & additional labor

[October 13.] In the afternoon all the country was involved in smoke, thro' which the sun looked like an immense ruby & the smoke was sometimes so dense as to produce a sensible darkness

or rather a murky red light. It was arranged that we should take advantage of a stage which, by taking a shorter cut than the canal, arrives at the village of Rochester two hours before it, & thus gain an opportunity of seeing the falls of the Genesee which occur there. Unfortunately, however, the boat was delayed so much that we did not get the stage till four, and tho' we made the best haste over what they call good roads, on which we sometimes galloped away down & up hill & sometimes dragged over the heavy sand, sometimes tipped on one side three times as much as would be necessary to upset an English coach, & sometimes jumped a couple of feet off the ground, it was full dusk before we reached Rochester. The road lay over a half cultivated country, not very fertile, but some of the farms very neat & the road fenced off with railings of various description.

It was rather curious to find ourselves conducted by such a road & thro' so unfinished a country to a village containing 10,000 inhabitants, very neatly & handsomely built with wide streets and almost splendid shops & an hotel which is fitted up quite in good taste, where tea was served for us at the table d'hote with the greatest nicety & attention. This village has been begun only since ten years. It was so dark that I was afraid we should be mistaken for lunatics when we enquired for the falls, & within a few yards the sense of the ridiculousness of the attempt stopped half our party. I had not been the projector of the scheme, nor even a warm advocate, but I was rather pleased that it should have been thus terminated, because I found that I was likely to be accounted wild for wishing, if need were, to pursue our journey from York to Young Street by night rather than sleep so near the object of my wishes.

Of course, therefore, I was not of the retreating party which was led by Richard,² & I was well pleased that I was not, for the fall was worth the trouble and not perhaps less beautiful as I saw it in the dusk & contrasted with the light from an iron foundry, which was throwing showers of bright sparks over it, than it would have been by daylight. The Genesee is a good wide stream & falls over a circular projection of rock in one unbroken sheet into the lower bed.

We had two hours after tea to sit in the room of the hotel, where the ladies, far too forbidding in their aspect to be accosted,

& two or three gentlemen whom we found very courteous & conversible. One merry stout old gentleman sat with us the whole time & I was much amused & somewhat informed by his conversation, tho' I should not class him very high amongst the rich of the land. I had most of the talk to myself, as the rest of the party were more or less asleep. I was amused by the degree in which his mouth seemed to water for Canada & various other good districts, tho' he said that extension of territory was not sought by the States except for the sake [of] making convenient frontier. The other man, who was sooner tired of our company, seemed to be of more cultivation & to have a smack of science, but both were evidently what we should call gentlemen. I observed that their language was free from the Yankeeisms which seem as much confined to the lower classes as our provincialisms are, & as likely as they to be worn out by more extensive cultivation. My friend, I observed, always turned the conversation when I accounted for the superiority of this States over other nations with which it was compared by referring to the superior education they had received.

We got back to our boat at 10 with very little hope of arriving at Lockport in time to proceed to Lewistown to-night . . . [October 14] It is so cold that we are obliged to stay below, altho' Fanny³ is half sick with seeing the men spit, & I shall not much enjoy myself now that I have finished my scribbling. I am rather too near the end of my journey to settle to my book, and the queer scene around me distracts my attention from reading. The curtains between the two cabins (for we are only screened by a curtain) is withdrawn & all the females have crowded towards the stove which stands near the junction. Mama, Fanny & I have got past the barrier. Fanny is sitting reading and Mama working, at the two ends of a settee. I am squatting between them, writing on my knee, & Richard is posted before us — beyond is Mr. Thorne . . .⁴

Notes

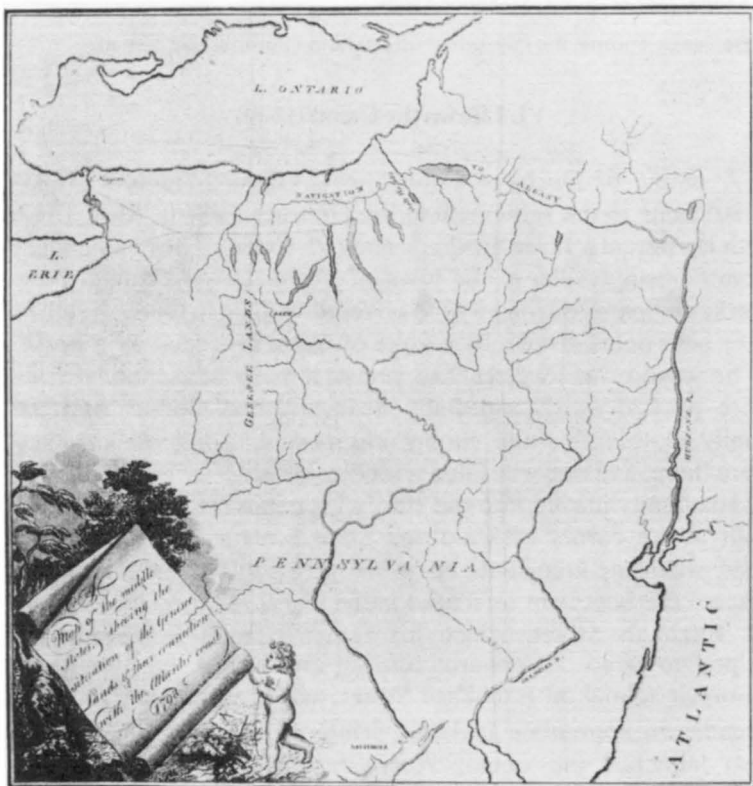
1. For biographical information about Mary Gapper O'Brien, see Audrey Saunders Miller, ed., **The Journals of Mary O'Brien** (Toronto, 1968), and Miller, "Yonge Street Politics, 1828 to 1838," **Ontario History**, 62 (March 1970), 101-118.
2. Mary Gapper's brother, Richard Colston Gapper.
3. Fanny Gapper, Richard Gapper's wife.
4. Benjamin Thorne, the mill-owner after whom Thornhill was named.

VI. Life on the Canal (1830)

A native of Durham, Connecticut, Edwin Scrantom (1803-1880) came to the settlement at the Genesee Falls in April 1812, with his parents, three brothers, and two sisters. They came there from Constableville, in the town of Turin, Lewis County, New York, on board a strong wagon covered with linen cloth stretched over bent poles, drawn by a yoke of oxen, preceded by a horse. "The wagon was long-reached, and in it many household articles were packed away, especially beds and bed clothes, and the family clothing — and roomy chests and trunks well packed were there, and one was filled with *luncheon*."

His family moved into the sturdy log cabin Henry Skinner had built at the corner of Main and State Streets; and in the next year, when the immediate environs were still "a wild and desert place," the boy went to school in the "Little Red Schoolhouse," on Fitzhugh Street, which his father Hamlet Scrantom had helped to build. Afterwards, during one winter, he attended a grammar school on Exchange Street; and in September 1816, he became an apprentice to Utica printer A. G. Dauby, who that year launched the weekly *Rochester Gazette*, the city's first newspaper. Such comprised the formal and vocational education of Edwin Scrantom, destined to become a pioneer Rochester journalist, litterateur, and local historian.

In 1826, Scrantom and two partners bought the *Monroe Republican*, successor to the *Gazette*, and published this journal for several years. On May 16, 1829, he brought out the first issue of the *Rochester Gem and Ladies' Amulet*, a literary paper he conducted (and largely wrote, himself) until 1835, and which continued in existence through 1843. He had married Mary Ann



“A Map . . . Shewing the situation of the Genesee Lands . . . 1798”
 Published with [Charles Williamson] *Description of the Genesee Country* . . . (1798), the original map measures 26x24 cm. and is far less detailed than the map accompanying the pamphlet of 1799.



The Powers Buildings in 1895

Two years after publication of *Baedeker's United States*; reproduced from John Devoy, comp., *A History of the City of Rochester* . . . (1895).

Sibley, of Walpole, N.H., in 1826; and he gave up newspapering in 1835 to join his brother-in-law, Levi W. Sibley, in a Rochester mercantile, auction, commission, and land agency business. But he never gave up writing.

Under the transparent sobriquet "An Old Citizen," in June 1862, he contributed the first of 172 lengthy literary letters to the *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle* (a series which ran until May 1879). He also wrote and published popular verse and song lyrics; and, as one biographer affirms, "The historical portion of [William McIntosh's] *History of Monroe County*, 1877, was mainly his work."¹

Edwin Scrantom. "Life on the Canal," *Rochester Gem*, Vol. II (July 18, 1830), p. 47.²

Sitting in our window a few mornings since, looking out upon the busy world, and reflecting upon the doings of the vast multitude that were passing and repassing before us (the reader will remember that we are now near the canal), we gazed until we were completely lost in the mist of our own reflections. On a sudden, we were started by a loud scream, succeeded by a splash, and the expression "He's knocked him into the canal" soon told us what was the matter. A general rushing of people towards the spot succeeded, and we were soon found in the train. We had not proceeded far, before a polite, good-looking, red-faced young man took our arm.

"Going East, sir?" was the quick question that met our ear.

We replied that just at this time we were going *West*.

"West — the boat *Young Lion*,³ of the 'Merchant's Line,' goes West in fifteen minutes, and will carry you any distance for one and a quarter cents per mile," continued our friend.

We informed the gentleman that as we were going only a few rods, it could be no object to the Merchant's Line to avail themselves of our fare at that rate — and the gentleman left our elbow as abruptly as he took it; so much so, that the last of our reply did not fall upon his ear.

By the time we had arrived at the spot we started for, there were seemingly a thousand persons collected, of all kinds, descriptions, colours, and nations. It seemed as if the very stones

upon the bank had risen up people, but of the difficulty we did not inquire. Our little red-faced gentleman was there, however, eager to fill the boat *Young Lion*. When his eye met our own, it glanced, and we passed.

There is a world about our canal: all appear to be busy, yet many evidently have little or no employment. The "Kent Bugler" is busy picking up his job of "blowing a boat out," or going out to "blow a boat in," and thus he lives.

The "Runner" is picking up passengers, running from face to face with a quick and anxious inquiry; telling *facts* that are never realized — that the boat will go so fast, will arrive at such a time, and that "There's no mistake in the line, &c.:" and thus he lives.

The ice man goes from boat to boat offering his "*cold comfort*," and tempting the foolish to freeze themselves in these hot times. You will see him retailing his *winter weather* by the pound — hear him praise its cooling quality, and thus he lives.

Then comes the bread and cracker pedler, the raddish or the vegetable merchant — the former *needs* for his living, the latter lives by his *sauce*.

Then the posy-girls, with their two-penny bunches of pinks, roses, geraneum and asparagus — each claim their little and pass on — and thus they live.

The measure is only filled up by the din of horns, the profanity of boatmen and drivers, and the orders of the "Captains," whose voices loom up amid the general confusion. We had forgot to mention the porter, who claims his shilling for transporting baggage; and of all the claims there is none more promptly demanded or paid.

The canal has its titles, too — and that of *Captain*, though first on the list, is not more tenaciously claimed than that of *Cook*. Among those who are dubbed captains, however, there is more difference than among any of the minor officers. You can usually tell the captain by his difference of dress or manners, though there are many grades, until you come to a crew where it is impossible to tell who is captain, except as the title falls from the lips of some bareheaded fellow addressing himself to another, perhaps as much sunburnt and with hair as bleached and bushy as his own.

But the Canal is an interesting picture. You see there the produce of our country wending its way to market, or the importations from our cities finding their destination to the remotest parts of the state — or, perhaps, over-reaching our boundaries to be lodged in Ohio, Pennsylvania, or Michigan. All, too, is in safety. You see no wanton squandering of the property of others — but, on the contrary, all is protection and care. You see, too, the hundred families that are weekly passing, to fill up the forests of the west, from the intelligent and affluent, down to the ignorant but hardy Swiss, who almost, perhaps, has to “work his passage on the tow-path.” All seem to have a specific object in view, and all are anxiously pressing on. We might mention the community that infest the canal to pick the pockets of the honest traveller, either by gambling or in a more summary way — but, of these, no matter. They are the mere hangers-on of the human family — the *bed-bugs* of life, who bite mankind and fatten upon them when they are defenceless. Our article is out, and we fear, gentle reader, you will say thus of your patience.

Notes

1. “Edwin Scrantom” (obituary), *Rochester Union and Advertiser*, October 4, 1880. Cf. Harriett Julia Naylor, ed., “And This Was Rochester! Excerpts from the Old Citizen-Letters of Edwin Scrantom,” *Rochester History*, 4 (January 1942), 1-24.
2. Bibliographical note: Edwin Scrantom’s “non-standard” spellings — “geraneum,” “pedler,” “raddish” — have been retained; whereas punctuation has been modernized (e.g., “Young Lion” becomes *Young Lion*) and silently emended for clarity (e.g., “a polite good looking red faced young man” becomes “a polite, good-looking, red-faced young man”).
3. The packet *Young Lion of the West* plied the Canal between Rochester and Lake Erie from its completion in October 1825. Cf. William F. Peck, *Landmarks of Monroe County* (Boston, 1895), I, 119.

VII. Sketches from Memory — Rochester (ca. 1830)

Gem editor Edwin Scrantom had no way of identifying the Massachusetts traveler whose “Rochester” sketch he approvingly reprinted from the *New England Magazine* in December 1835; nor, when Dorothy S. Truesdale excerpted this text for *Rochester History* in 1954, from Nathaniel Hawthorne’s posthumous *Tales, Sketches and Other Papers* (1883), was she aware it had been twice published, anonymously, in the 1830s. “Hawthorne,” she wrote, “endowed . . . the incident of Sam Patch . . . with his own gently melancholy romanticism, [yet] noted that the practical people of Rochester were rapidly doing away with the ‘unprofitable sublimity’ of the falls.”¹

Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864), a native of Salem, Massachusetts, had “embarked about 30 miles below Utica” on a westward journey along the Erie Canal, sometime in the fall of 1830; paid a brief visit to Rochester; then boarded a stagecoach for Niagara Falls. Less than a year before, on November 13, 1829, daredevil Sam Patch, celebrated for jumping from a lofty perch into the Niagara River and effecting a similar plunge at Rochester, into the Genesee, had perished in his third attempt, at Genesee Falls. Describing this western tour five years later, in a series of sketches,² Hawthorne transmuted Sam Patch’s sensation, an actual event, into “legend” — a technique he would later employ in many symbolical stories and romances, notably in *The Scarlet Letter* (1850).

The apprentice author’s imaginative response to Sam Patch’s catastrophe (“Why do we call him a madman or a fool, when he has left his memory around the falls of the Genessee . . .?”), moreover, either anticipates or complements his handling of the fame motif in “The Ambitious Guest,” published anonymously in the *New England Magazine* a few issues before “Sketches from Memory.” Hawthorne’s fleeting, note-taking passage through Rochester’s busy streets and his ostensibly brooding pilgrimage to Genesee Falls would contribute crucially to the fruition of a distinctive literary art.

"Sketches from Memory. By a Pedestrian" [Nathaniel Hawthorne], *New England Magazine*, 9 (December 1835), 406-408; reprinted in *Rochester Gem*, 7 (December 12, 1835), pp. 197-198."

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The gray, but transparent evening rather shaded than obscured the scene — leaving its stronger features visible, and even improved, by the medium through which I beheld them. The volume of water is not very great, nor the roar deep enough to be termed grand, though such praise might have been appropriate before the good people of Rochester had abstracted a part of the unprofitable sublimity of the cascade. The Genessee has contributed so bountifully to their canals and mill-dams, that it approaches the precipice with diminished pomp, and rushes over it in foamy streams of various width, leaving a broad face of the rock insulated and unwashed, between the two main branches of the falling river. Still it was an impressive sight, to one who had not seen Niagara. I confess, however, that my chief interest arose from a legend, connected with these falls, which will become poetical in the lapse of years, and was already so to me, as I pictured the catastrophe out of dusk and solitude. It was from a platform, raised over the naked island of the cliff, in the middle of the cataract, that Sam Patch took his leap, and alighted in the other world. Strange as it may appear — that any uncertainty should rest upon his fate, which was consummated in the sight of thousands — many will tell you that the illustrious Patch concealed himself in a cave under the falls, and has continued to enjoy posthumous renown, without foregoing the comforts of this present life. But the poor fellow prized the shout of the multitude too much not to have claimed it at the instant, had he survived. He will not be seen again, unless his ghost, in such a twilight as when I was there, should emerge from the foam, and vanish among the shadows that fall from cliff to cliff. How stern a moral may be drawn from the story of poor Sam Patch! Why do we call him a madman or a fool, when he has left his memory around the falls of the Genessee, more permanently than if the letters of his name had been hewn into the forehead of the precipice? Was the leaper of cataracts more mad or foolish than

other men who throw away life, or misspend it in pursuit of empty fame, and seldom so triumphantly as he? That which he won is as invaluable as any, except the unsought glory, spreading, like the rich perfume of richer fruit, from virtuous and useful deeds.

Thus musing, wise in theory, but practically as great a fool as Sam, I lifted my eyes and beheld the spires, warehouses, and dwellings of Rochester, half a mile distant on both sides of the river, indistinctly cheerful, with the twinkling of many lights amid the fall of evening. * * * *

The town had sprung up like a mushroom, but no presage of decay could be drawn from its hasty growth. Its edifices are of dusky brick, and of stone that will not be grayer in a hundred years than now; its churches are Gothic; it is impossible to look at its worn pavements, and conceive how lately the forest-leaves have been swept away. The most ancient town in Massachusetts appears quite like an affair of yesterday, compared with Rochester. Its attributes of youth are the activity and eager life with which it is redundant. The whole streets, sidewalks and centre, was crowded with pedestrians, horsemen, stage-coaches, gigs, light wagons, and heavy ox-teams, all hurrying, trotting, rattling, and rumbling, in a throng that passed continually, but never passed away. Here, a country wife was selecting a churn, from several gaily-painted ones on the sunny sidewalk; there, a farmer was bartering his produce; and, in two or three places, a crowd of people were showering bids on a vociferous auctioneer. I saw a great wagon and an ox-chain knocked off to a very pretty woman. Numerous were the lottery-offices — those true temples of Mammon — where red and yellow bills offered splendid fortunes to the world at large, and banners of painted cloth gave notice that the 'lottery draws next Wednesday.' At the ringing of the bell, judges, jurymen, lawyers, and clients, elbowed each other to the court house, to busy themselves in cases that would doubtless illustrate the state of society, had I the means of reporting them. The number of public houses benefitted the flow of temporary population; some were farmers' taverns — cheap, homely, and comfortable; others were magnificent hotels, with negro waiters, gentlemanly landlords in black broadcloth, and

foppish bar-keepers in Broadway coats, with chased gold watches in their waistcoat pockets. I caught one of these fellows quizzing me through an eye-glass. The porters were lumbering up the steps with baggage from the packet-boats, while waiters applied the brush on dusty travelers, who, meanwhile, glanced over the innumerable advertisements in the daily papers.

In short, everybody seemed to be there, and all had something to do, and were doing it with all their might, except a party of drunken recruits for the western military posts, principally Irish and Scotch, though they wore uncle Sam's gray jacket and trowsers. I noticed one other idle man. He carried a rifle on his shoulder and a powder-horn across his breast, and appeared to stare about him with confused wonder, as if, while he was listening to the wind among the forest boughs the hum and bustle of an instantaneous city had surrounded him. * * *

Notes

1. "American Travel Accounts of Early Rochester," **Rochester History**, 16 (April 1954), 13.
2. "Sketches from Memory . . .," **New England Magazine**, 9 (Nov. & Dec. 1835), 321-326, 398-409.
3. "Rochester" was not printed under Hawthorne's name until after the author's death, in **The Dolliver Romance** (Boston: Ticknor & Fields . . ., [1876]): The text is reprinted in **Rochester History** verbatim from the **New England Magazine**.

VIII. Two Emigrant Letters (1833)

Isabella Hope Wilson (1811-1867),¹ born in Dalkeith, Scotland, came to America with her parents, George and Janet (Clark) Wilson, in mid-1833. She was the eldest of seven children, one of whom, Alexander Hope Wilson, became Supervisor of Irondequoit, and another, George Wilson, Supervisor of Brighton. Isabella Wilson was married in 1835, in Brighton, to Dr. John R. Smyles (an emigrant to Monroe County from Loan-

head, Scotland), who was Irondequoit Supervisor in 1853, 1858, and 1859. She bore her husband four children, and she died in Irondequoit.

Her letters (Scots addressees unknown), spaced over two months, remarkably compress the emigrant's acculturation process: docking in New York, first impressions of America, travel to a new homesite, and settlement. Cultivated and urbane (Edinburgh is her exemplar), versed in contemporary travel literature, and informative concerning both town and countryside, Wilson had landed confident of her family's future here. In her first letter, from Albany, their Erie Canal destination is Buffalo, en route to Ohio, where George Wilson expects to buy a farm. In the second, from Brighton, we learn they had changed these plans, briefly rented a house in Rochester, and bought their Brighton place — "the farm and all about it, unencumbered." (Her father died the following month, though, leaving Janet Wilson to manage this operation alone and bring up seven children.)

Affection for Rochester, Brighton, and environs came easily to Isabella Wilson. Two months after her arrival from Scotland, she relishes visiting Scots settlers in nearby Caledonia. Yet she forthrightly affirms the Rochester market, American men and women, and American self-sufficiency. "I do think," she confides to her Scots friend Catherine, "the Americans here are the most polite and obliging people in the world."

Isabella Hope Wilson. [Emigrant Letters to Scotland], *Chambers' Edinburgh Journal*, January 1, 1834; reprinted in *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*, May 30, 1898.

Albany, 24th July, 1833

My Dear Catherine:

I expected to have had time to write you before leaving New York but found it impossible, from being so hurried; so I will now tell you something of our voyage from Scotland, and pro-

ceedings since. We sailed from Greenock on the 29th of May, in a vessel for New York, where we landed on the 17th of July. [Particulars of the voyage followed, but were deleted by the *Journal* editors.] When we came to New York, an American doctor came on board to examine into the health of the passengers, and we had to ride quarantine only one day, but all the dirty clothes in the ship had to be washed before we were allowed to go on shore. You would be astonished if you saw the American gentlemen: they are the - - - in the world and beat the Scots gentlemen hollow; they are not only handsome but smart and well dressed. In passing along Prince's Street, in Edinburgh, you will meet many affected foppish puppies, who do not appear to have a grain of sense in their compositions; but here the young gentlemen have a smart, intelligent look and are quite superior to the silly dandies in the old country. As for the American ladies, they look very well, but are not half so well dressed as our ladies, and you will not see one lady for twenty gentlemen.

They have far finer stores here than we have, no shops that I ever saw were so splendid, but the shopkeepers are the sauciest set you can think of and do not seem to care whether they serve you or not. The American servants are as ill every bit. The hotel we stayed at has a good many servants, but no one would brush our shoes; if you want to have them cleaned, you must go to a place where there is the sign of a brush.

My mother and the children went to Albany in one of the Luggage Boats. My father and I got into one of the Steamers. It was named the *Ohio*. The grandeur of it you can have no idea of, it was one of the night boats, and every one had a bed to themselves. There were more than five hundred beds for gentlemen, all hung with scarlet damask moreen. The ladies cabin was splendid, the beds in it were of orange damask, beautiful Brussels carpets, fine dressing glasses, and the rest of the furniture far richer than anything I ever saw at home. The scenery on the banks of the Hudson River, and the country were all and more than Stuart described them;² it is indeed the glorious Hudson.

We are to leave Albany today, and go on to Buffalo, about three hundred miles further up. It will take us four or five days. We have to go by the [Erie] Canal. I can assure you I am heartily

tired of travelling, although I think now nothing of two or three hundred miles.

Yours truly,
Isabella

Brighton, Monroe County, State of New York
26th September 1833

My Dear Miss S - - -:

You will already have heard of our arrival in America; but I deferred writing to you till we were somewhat settled here.

We stayed only four days in New York, and went thence to Albany in a steamboat which might be called a floating palace. It was very commodious and the fare for each passenger was three dollars. In proceeding from Albany to Buffalo, we stopped at Schenectady, a large town on the canal. Here we learned that our old minister, Mr. F - - - [*Journal* editors' deletion], lived at Princetown, a place only ten miles distant. We got a gig and went to see him. He was not in the house when we called, and was working at his farm. When we saw him, he was much stouter than formerly, and you would never have known him to be a minister from his appearance. He was well contented and happy, also his wife and family.

He advised my father not to go to the State of Ohio, as cholera was very bad there this summer, but to stop beside him, look around the country and settle in his neighborhood. My father, however, did not like the land there, and so we got into the canal boat to go to Buffalo, then to proceed to Ohio, as we intended before we left Scotland. But the boat got leaky and could not proceed farther than Rochester, where we also stopped, being heartily tired of travelling by canal boats. You may have some idea of how uncomfortable we were, so many of us, all our luggage, and a number of passengers besides, in one of those wretched boats, not so large as any of those that ply on the canal between Edinburgh and Glasgow.

We rented a house in Rochester, which is a large, handsome, and increasing place. The Genesee River runs through the town, on which are situated many flour mills and other establishments. The Erie Canal crosses the river in the center of the town, in a splendid aqueduct of red freestone. Rochester being situated on the canal, and only a few miles from Lake Ontario and a ship navigation within two miles, its inhabitants are enabled to select a market at either New York, Quebec, or the borders of the Great Western Lakes. Its other natural advantages for trade make it as busy and stirring a place as any of its size in North America.

My father, on inspection, liked the country around, and was determined to go no farther west if he could find a farm to suit him, and I dare say he travelled forty miles round in every direction before he made his choice. I often was with him on these excursions and I do think the Americans here are the most polite and obliging people in the world.

There is a settlement of Scotch, twenty miles from Rochester, called Caledonia. I went there with my father and we called first on a Mr. M - - -, a highlandman. We told him we were lately from Scotland, coming from the "Land of Lakes," [which] seemed to have a talismanic effect upon him. His horses, his gig, all were at our service in a moment. He introduced us to his neighbors, who were equally kind and obliging and I was soon as much at home in the New Caledonia as ever I was in the old one. I have since been there on a visit, and it was a continual round of visiting among the neighbors, who were equally kind. There I heard a Gaelic sermon for the first time in my life.

But I am forgetting to tell you about our own place. My father bought a farm about a week since, of one hundred and sixty acres, about three miles from Rochester.³ It is as pleasant a place as I have seen in America and I am sure there is no place, half so pretty, in Scotland. Our house is beautifully situated and from the windows of the second flat, we have a view of the whole farm. The house contains a dining room, drawing room and parlor, six bedrooms, with garrets, kitchen and cellar, etc., finished in the best style. Every window has green venetian shuts, even to the milk house one, pretty flower pots around the house; quinces and roses growing up to the windows, a large garden in front and

an esplanade of vines running across the whole breadth of it. We have a handsome front door, with a flight of steps, and seats on each side of it. Eskbank⁴ is not nearly so pretty. At the back of the house is the peach orchard, and it is a noble one.

There grew in it, the last year, 250 bushels of peaches. About a hundred yards from the house are the plum and the apple orchard of seven or eight acres together, - - - [*Journal* editors' deletion (undecipherable?)] among the fruit. You have no idea of the vast quantity of plums and apples here; if we could be at the trouble to pull them, we would find a market for them in Rochester, to go to Canada.

There are excellent barns, stables, and other outhouses, all in good repair. There are about 160 acres of cleared land on the farm, the land being ploughed and ready when we bought it; and I now, from the window where I am sitting, see my father sowing his wheat, and my brother George carrying the seed to him. He will have in between thirty and forty acres this fall. The rest of the farm is in fine wood, beautiful oak and hickory, black walnut and butternut trees, some of them 50 feet without a branch. The woodland is as valuable and more so than cleared land, being so near to Rochester where much wood is consumed for want of coal in this part of the country. A fine stream of water runs through the farm, which drives a saw mill, a very profitable concern, a share of which belonged to another man, whom my father bought out. He now has the farm and all about it, free and unencumbered.

He paid \$34 an acre for it. It is reckoned an excellent bargain by all the neighbors around, as he had it \$1,000 cheaper by paying down cash, than he could have bought it on credit, or one-half cash and mortgaging, which is a good deal practiced here. Ready money tempts the Americans more than anything, for ready money seems the greatest want among them. Everyone appears anxious for property. A man buys a farm for \$4,000, but he will pay only perhaps \$1,000, and pay an interest of 8 or 10 per cent on the remainder. Dollars, dollars is the incessant cry here. You will no doubt think \$34.00 an acre a high price for an acre of land in America, and it would certainly be a dreadful price for land in Canada or the Western States; but here in the State of New York, it is very different. Here the country is mostly well cultivated,

and more populous than many parts of Great Britain, and the markets are good for everything that can be raised even to a cabbage. - - - than anything, because few people raise more than to serve themselves. We generally paid five and six cents (about 3 d.) for a single cabbage in the Rochester market; but victuals are generally a great deal cheaper than in Scotland. We reckon that a dollar will go as far here in buying things we need (clothing excepted) as a pound did at Dalkeith. The people hereabouts seem to grudge sugar more than anything, and may take their tea and coffee without it. We have quite a new system of living here. We get up at five in the morning, breakfast at six, dine at twelve noon, and sup at sundown and then off to bed.

We have as yet had most beautiful clear summer weather, but oppressively hot, and frequent showers, which keep everything fresh and green. The showers do not last long, but are very heavy. There has just been one with a good deal of thunder. The climate appears no way injurious. We have never heard a cough amongst us, nor a complaint since we came here.

You have no idea of the style of living here. Every petty farmer has his light wagon or gig, with seats covered with buffalo skins, which looks very nice, and a pair of beautiful horses. The truth is, the people never think of walking; they get out a team, as they call it, and away they go, though perhaps they have not half a mile to ride. You will rarely meet anyone walking on a road, and the farmers all about seem to live as well as the nobility of Scotland. Such loads of victuals they have, and a breakfast like a dinner you would have for a party, and supper the same. They mostly have tea at all their diets, most of them being temperate. In this part of the country they do not cook any dinners on Sundays, as it interferes with their going to Church.

They take pride in raising everything they need on their own farms. They make soap, candles, and cider; kill their own meat, take the wool, spin it, weave it and dye it; in short, they do everything. The American women here are very industrious; everyone works; and no servants, but at extravagant wages.

All the ladies go without caps, married ladies, too, no matter how old they are; most of them have beautiful hair, which they dress tolerably, no curls, all done up with combs; the combs they

have for their back hair are low, ugly things; mine was a perfect wonder, but I broke it and I will never get another anything like it.

We had to purchase a good deal of stoneware at Rochester, most of ours being broke, and all our crystal. We got crystal of English manufacture much cheaper than at home.

In looking back to the time since we left Scotland, it appears a mere nothing. It is scarcely four months since we left Dalkeith, and here we are all well and comfortably settled and all well pleased with our new home.

I remain, my Dear Miss S - - - ,

Yours truly

Isabella.

Notes

1. Evelyn Smith Howard, of Rochester, Isabella Wilson Smyles' great-granddaughter, brought this document to the editor's attention in the course of an interview for the Irondequoit Oral History Project. She acquired the texts from her relative De Witt Butts and has included them in her typescript family history "The Wilson Genealogy — Seven Generations in America, 1833-1967."
2. Probably Scots traveler James Stuart (1775-1849), author of **Three Years in North America** (Edinburgh, 1833).
3. The Wilson farm was located in Brighton.
4. A place near Dalkeith, Scotland.

IX. "Bradstreet's Reminiscences" (1839 *et seq.*)

Nehemiah Cleveland Bradstreet (1821-1908), son of Samuel and Mehitable (Gould) Bradstreet, was born in Danvers, Massachusetts. He was a descendant of Massachusetts Governor Simon Bradstreet and Anne (Dudley) Bradstreet, Anglo-America's first woman poet. After an intermittent classical education, young Bradstreet taught school in Topsfield in the winters of 1838 and 1839. He migrated with his paternal grandmother to Monroe County, New York, in 1839; worked three years as clerk in his uncles' Rochester shoe store; and soon gravitated into local Democratic politics.

He was elected Fifth Ward Supervisor in 1855 and Alderman in 1856; was several times re-elected to the Common Council; served one term as Mayor of Rochester, in 1863-64, "during the most trying period of the war;" and was elected State Assemblyman in 1868 and 1869. He was married in 1854 to Mary W. Babcock, daughter of Isaac and Elizabeth (Wilbur) Babcock; and he died at his daughter's home in Swampscott, Massachusetts.

"Reminiscences" vividly illuminate trans-Appalachian migration (by other Bradstreets) into western New York; and, written almost seventy years after the events, feelingly evoke his New Englander's condescension at Barnum's Museum ("not a whit more interesting . . . than . . . my father's workshop"); his stung recollection of a New York harbor boat-taxi swindle; and his delighted, democratic stint along the Erie Canal tow-path. The concluding sections (less than half of the MS.), here published for the first time, bespeak a hard-working, commercial manager and astute city politician who, like Charles Williamson and George Wilson, was ultimately bound to the soil.

Bradstreet "soon became acquainted with every person in the . . . town" at the outset of his local career; whereas his turbulent wartime mayoralty impelled him into direct contact with not only Governor Seymour and War Secretary Stanton but "companies and regiments from various parts of the country." His Rochester reminiscences yield fresh perspectives on the shoe and leather business, mid-century urban politics, and the Civil War's impact upon northern civilians.

Nehemiah Cleveland Bradstreet. "Bradstreet's Reminiscences." Undated typescript in the Irondequoit Historical Workshop. Irondequoit, New York.

. . . That evening, grandmother and I left for Albany on the steamboat *DeWitt Clinton*, one of the first steamers built for passenger service on the Hudson River. Arriving in Albany, we took a steam car for Utica; there we were transferred to the line boat on the Erie Canal, which was very slow. I need not say. However, I enjoyed the trip very much. The change of scenery was wonderfully interesting and surprising. There was no other railroad in the State of New York except one from Rochester to

Batavia. I never before had seen a canal or a canal boat, nor a mule driver, nor a canal-boat captain, nor a field of green wheat growing, nor people traveling west. Everything seen was exhilarating; and, though the journey was slow from Utica to Rochester, it was the most enjoyable part of the trip. Many young men, as well as I, had signs on our hats, "Going West." We all took our turns driving the mules, day and night.

It was in the morning about six o'clock on the 11th day of May, 1839, I immediately descried Uncle Sam Gould's residence, and knew it was his home from the description of the beautiful grove which had been given me. It was located about midway between the canal and his house. Grandmother and I, with our luggage, left the boat at the first lock in Brighton, near the old red brick house near the tow path. It still stands there, looking as it did sixty-nine years ago. It being only a few rods from the house, we walked there and found them at breakfast. After joyful salutations and greetings, we joined them at the breakfast table. In the family were Uncle Samuel Gould and wife, Hatch and Edward, the two sons, Lizzie, Carrie, and Hattie, the three daughters, and, to my great delight, my grandfather and grandmother Gould, with whom I spent so many happy days at their home in Boxford.

During the day Uncle Samuel took us, in his wagon, grandmother and I, to the farm in Irondequoit which father had purchased for their new home. It was located on the corner of the road going to the Sea Breeze and the Ridge Road.¹ It was a very pleasant place. We were met by a most cordial welcome by all of the family once more reunited, but in a strange land. We had indeed arrived on the banks of the river but had not as yet entered upon the "Promised Land." . . . But I must hasten on to my new home in Rochester.

Having spent a few days with father and mother in their new home in Irondequoit, I went to Rochester where my uncles, Jacob and George Gould, were in the shoe and leather business at 16 State Street.² They had located in 1819. They had done a large and prosperous business and supplied the whole country around, making boots and shoes to measure for customers, also keeping a large stock on shelves for ready sale. My twin brother

Foster and I were hired as clerks for a term of three years, and it was three years of the hardest work I had ever done. The handling of sole leather, which was kept in the basement, was the hardest. When soles were made, it had to be cut in rolls of 200 pounds each, which required skill and great strength. The leather was bought in New York, on Terry Street, known as the "Swamp." It was brought to Rochester on canal boats. All traffic and travel was then done by canal or an old fashioned stage. I boarded with Uncle Jacob and slept in the store in a bedroom on the top floor. In the summer time we were obliged to open the store at 4 o'clock in the morning, to secure the trade of passengers from packet boats, arriving at that hour from the East and West. The trade from these boats was frequently larger than from the rest of the day. Rochester was then called a small town, and I soon became acquainted with every person in it and all the surrounding country.

The Gould Shoe Store was the largest establishment of its kind in western New York. In addition to the shoe and leather department, I was bookkeeper for the store and correspondent, and did the ordering for goods in Albany, New York, and Philadelphia. I began my services in the store as clerk in May 1839. At the conclusion of my three years' service as a clerk I was taken in as a partner and remained in the business 25 years. Although the business at the store was brisk and good, my Uncle Jacob had a great penchant for political life. He was a warm personal friend of President Van Buren and was appointed by him as Collector of the Port of Genesee, which office at that time was quite a lucrative one.

In those early days so soon after the revolution all male persons between the ages of 18 and 45 were required by law when duly summoned to appear once a year, armed and equipped, as the law directs, for military duty and inspection.

I think it was in the year 1842, at one of those annual military meetings, I was elected to the Office of Captain of the Militia of the City of Rochester, and received my commission from Governor William H. Seward. His autograph on that commission I have always kept. I fully discharged the duties of the office and received an honorable discharge.

In 1855 I was elected Supervisor of the County of Monroe for the Fifth Ward in the city. The following year I was elected Alderman of the Fifth Ward and was re-elected for several terms and held the office until 1863, when I was elected Mayor of the city.³ At that time I lived in my own cottage, corner of Andrew and St. Paul Streets; and it was in the year of the great and decisive Battle of Gettysburg. The victory at that battle of the Union Army was the salvation of the country.

During the year I held the Office of Mayor, politics were laid aside and all interests were centered in the great war. The Democrat Party, which at first was opposed to any war with the South, now saw that to preserve the Union of the States all partisanship must be laid aside. Rochester seemed more like a camp of soldiers than anything else, and the duties pertaining to the Mayor's office were very largely of patriotic and military character. One of the duties of the mayor, in consequence of the calling of so many of heads of families to enter the war, was in providing means of support for the families left behind. During the progress of the war I visited Washington and Fredericksburg to assist in caring for Rochester's wounded soldiers. In this I sought the aid and service of Mr. Stanton, Secretary for War.

During my term of office as Mayor, Horatio Seymour was Governor of New York State and visited Rochester quite frequently, and always made his headquarters at my office in city hall. He was one of the most perfect gentlemen I ever met.

According to the Charter of the City at the time I was Mayor, all the public departments were under the immediate control of the Mayor. All policemen were appointed by the Mayor, including the Chief of Police. My chief was named William Mudget. He was a great politician and belonged, as I did, to the "old First Church."⁴ The great interest in the Civil War eclipsed all minor municipal functions, and the details of ordinary city affairs were of little moment. The whole business of the year seemed to be and was the finding of men to go to the front to help fight the battles of our country.

Companies and regiments from various parts of the country were constantly passing through the city, always stopping for refreshments; and it was my pleasant duty to see that they were well taken care of and promptly forwarded to their destination.

When the war broke out in 1861, I was an Alderman and was appointed Chairman of the War Committee to act for the City of Rochester. It was my duty as Chairman to assist in raising a regiment of troops for the city. The result was the formation and forwarding to the front of the Old Thirteenth Regiment of the City of Rochester. Later, when the war was over and the Regiment returned to the city, it was my duty and pleasure to welcome home the little band that had left hundreds behind them on the field of battle. Their torn and tattered flags told a sad story. One of the privates of the 13th Regiment was Col. James S. Graham, later Postmaster of the City of Rochester.⁵

When my term of office as Mayor expired, I tried farming on the Sea Breeze farm, which at that time belonged to me.⁶ The first year I had good luck raising early potatoes, sending to the city market about 100 bushels at \$1.75 per bu. We also had good crops of corn, wheat, and oats. We had a fine stock of cattle and horses and the finest picnic grounds in the country, which we enjoyed with our friends from the city. Apples sold that year for \$5.00 a bbl. We were at the farm at the time of Lincoln's assassination, April 19, 1865, and I was the first one to bring the news to the city. Very early in the morning, I got the papers and threw them out at people's houses as I passed along home.

As all good things come to an end, so our farm life came to an end and we returned to city life, bringing with us our daughter, Louise, then 2 months old.⁷ We made our home at 44 North St. Paul, where on the tenth of May 1869 our son, John Howard, was born.⁸

I was elected to the New York State Assembly in 1868 and 1869. I had the honor of being appointed Chairman of the Committee on Canals, which at that time was one of the most important committees of the House. I was instrumental in securing the passage of a bill to construct a swing bridge over the Erie canal where it intersected Exchange Street (in Rochester).⁹ Every

bridge crossing the canal from Troy to Buffalo was an old-fashioned one-track bridge, difficult to cross and very unsightly. The old bridge came down and the swing bridge took its place. The citizens of Rochester were very pleased at my success.

Upon leaving the Legislature, I sold out my interest in the shoe business to Uncle George; and for a few years it was uphill and dull times, with no prospects of business ahead. Finally, in 1883, I was appointed by County Judge William C. Rowley to the Office of Crier of the Courts of Record for the County of Monroe. For the next twenty years I held this office under the following Judges: William C. Rowley, Hon. John A. Morgan, Hon. William E. Werner, and Hon. Arthur C. Sutherland. I was taken ill and compelled to retire from further service in the office, and have been a patient ever since.

Notes

1. According to Mehitabel Bradstreet's obituary (clipping, ca. May 1877, Local History Collection, Rochester Public Library), the senior Bradstreets "soon after" moved from Irondequoit to Rochester.
2. Bradstreet retained an interest in J. & G. Gould & Co. until 1875. Jacob Gould, appointed Mayor of Rochester in 1835 and 1836, later attained the rank of General in the Union Army during the American Civil War.
3. A Democrat, Bradstreet was inaugurated as Mayor April 7, 1863. "As a councilman he had chaired the committee that recruited the 13th Regiment, and as Mayor he welcomed the 190 remaining members [home] for their discharge in May 1863. As a councilman he had opposed the hasty chartering of a horse-car line in 1862, but as Mayor he refused to block its extension providing the consent of neighboring property owners was secured. [He] visited Washington to check on the administration of the draft and responded by taking proper precautions when notified by Secretary Stanton of a rumor that a group of rebel sympathizers in Canada planned to seize a steamer on the lake and attack and liberate an encampment of prisoners at Buffalo . . . Appalled by the overcrowding and by the terrible suffering [in some hospital encampments], the ex-Mayor persuaded the authorities to transfer over 425 wounded to the newly established St. Mary's and City hospitals in Rochester." Blake McKelvey, "The Mayors of Rochester's Mid Years: 1860-1900," **Rochester History**, 28 (January 1966), 5-6.
4. The Bradstreets were members of the First Presbyterian Church.

5. Soon after the Civil War, the voting machine was invented by a Rochester man named Jacob Myers. It was later changed by one named Sylvester Davis, a member of the Myers Co. It is the Davis machine that is in use today (Bradstreet's note).
6. Located on the west side of what is now (1979) Culver Road at Sea Breeze amusement park. This farm had belonged to Bradstreet's older brother Samuel, who built a fine house there in 1855.
7. Louise Bradstreet was married December 25, 1895, to William A. Randall.
8. An obituary notice gives his name as Howard J. Bradstreet (Rochester Public Library, Local History Division).
9. "The first movable bridge ever placed across the Erie Canal," according to an unidentified clipping ("A Golden Wedding," Rochester, N.Y., ca. April 3, 1901) in the Rochester Public Library, Local History Division.

X. Baedeker's United States (1893)

Karl Baedeker (1801-1859), a publisher of Coblenz, later of Leipzig, Germany, had been dead more than three decades when *Baedeker's Handbook to the United States* was elaborately brought forth in 1893 — the year of an economic panic, the Chicago World's Fair, Frederick Jackson Turner's "Frontier Thesis," and (for the first time in thirty-six years) Democrats in control of both the Presidency and the Congress. The first of Karl and his son Fritz Baedeker's world-famous Handbooks for Travelers — tourists, not immigrants — was one for Coblenz (Leipzig, 1829); and, well into the present century, *Baedekers* (the name soon became synonymous with guidebook) in German, French, and English, with maps, plans, and railway schedules, were issued for most countries in Europe, parts of North America, and the Orient.

"The House of Baedeker had never been content (as most modern guidebooks are) with information about trains, food, and hotels alone," as Henry Steele Commager has noted. "It aimed higher, for its audience (so at least the Baedekers and the audience believed) was sophisticated, literate, and curious, eager to know more about the country they visited than the mechanics of tourism. The Baedeker guidebooks therefore provided authoritative essays on the geography, history, government, art, and culture of those countries fortunate enough to belong to the Club."¹

The editorial genius overseeing *The United States* was Glasgow-born James F. Muirhead (1853-1934), a graduate of the University of Edinburgh and a frequent traveler in America, who was a Baedeker writer and English editor (e.g., *London, Great Britain, Canada*) over thirty years. He lived and worked for most of his career in London, and spent about ten years in Leipzig. He was married to Helen Quincy, of Boston, the daughter of Josiah Quincy, in 1894; and his attractive, expert study *America the Land of Contrasts* was published in 1895.

Muirhead's illustrious essayists in 1893 included John Bach McMaster, James Bryce, O. T. Mason, Nathaniel Shaler, William Coffin, and Montgomery Schuyler; and his principal map-maker was U.S.G.S. geographer Henry Gannett.

Baedeker's United States proffers sections on Sports ("Buffaloes are nearly extinct"), Commercial Buildings ("The earliest of the elevator buildings were the Union Building . . . and the Tribune Building, in New York, and these are but twenty years old"), and Mineral Springs ("Saratoga Springs . . . has, perhaps, the best claim to ranking with . . . famous European spas"). Rochester's aqueduct is here credited as fine engineering, while the fledgling University of Rochester is remarked for its geological collections, whereas the Powers Gallery is reservedly set down as embracing many paintings "ascribed" to first-rank masters. Not yet a member of the Club.

James F. Muirhead, ed., *The United States, With an Excursion into Mexico: A Handbook for Travellers* [*Baedeker's Handbook to the United States*/*Baedeker's United States*], Leipzig & New York, 1893. Pp. 191-192.

ROCHESTER (510 ft.; **Powers Hotel*, \$4; *Livingston*, \$2-3, *R.* from \$1; *New Osburn*, \$2-2 1/2; *Rail. Restaurant*), a city of 133,896 inhab., situated on both sides of the *Genesee*, 7 M. from Lake Ontario, makes flour, beer, clothing, boots, and other articles to the annual value of \$75,000,000. Near the middle of the city the river forms a perpendicular **Fall*, 90-100 ft. high (best seen from the new Platt St. Bridge, reached from the Powers Hotel by following Main St. to the left, State St. to the left, and Platt St. to the right). The river forms two other falls to the N.

within the city limits, the *Middle Fall*, 25 ft. high, and the *Lower Fall*, 85 ft high. — *Main St.* crosses the river by a concealed bridge, lined on both sides with houses in the style of old London Bridge. A little to the N. [*sic*] of this, the Erie Canal is conducted over the river by an **Aqueduct*, 850 ft. long and 45 ft. wide, a fine piece of engineering. — The POWERS BUILDING, part of which is occupied by the *Powers Hotel*, contains (upstairs) the *Powers Gallery of Paintings* (adm. 25c.), embracing many ascribed to masters of the first rank. A fine **View* of the city is obtained from the tower (204 ft.). — The *University of Rochester* (200 students), in the E. part of the city, has good geological collections. — The **Warner Observatory*, East Avenue, a well-known private institution, with a 16-inch telescope, is open to visitors, if clear, on Tues. and Frid. (7-9 in winter, 8-10 in summer) by cards obtained at 60 N. St. Paul St. The *City Hall*, near West Main St., has a tower 175 ft. high. — *Mt. Hope Cemetery* is pretty, and the *Public Parks* are well laid out. — Interesting visits may be paid to the large *Flour Mills* and *Breweries* (lager-beer), lining the river, and to the extensive *Nurseries* in the outskirts of the city. Rochester is a great centre of Spiritualists and supporters of Woman's Rights.

Railways radiate from Rochester to Elmira and New York, Niagara Falls, *Ontario Beach* (on Lake Ontario; 7 M.), Pittsburg, etc. — A fine drive may be taken along the *Boulevard* to (7 M.) Lake Ontario.

The direct RAILWAY TO NIAGARA FALLS (74 M.) runs via *Lockport* to *Suspension Bridge* (p. 199) and the *Falls* (p. 199).

Notes

1. "Introduction," **The United States** . . . [ed. James F. Muirhead] (New York, 1971), p. vi.