

# ROCHESTER HISTORY

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## Early Rochester Illustrated

DRAWINGS BY NORMAN KENT

TEXT BY BLAKE McKELVEY

In this visual age, with press and screen bringing a vivid moving picture of contemporary events to the average citizen, the historian is often hard pressed to find suitable material with which to portray the past. Fortunately, early Rochester possessed many interesting views, prompting successive landscape artists to make numerous sketches, several of which later appeared as engravings or woodcuts, invaluable to the historian. The slow development of photography, starting in the forties, provided additional visual records, but, unluckily, few of the early photographs have been preserved, and fewer still have found their way into depositories convenient to the student.

In 1934, at the time of Rochester's Centennial, a need was felt for a fresh interpretation of some of the early scenes. At the request of the Centennial Committee, Norman Kent prepared a series of twenty drawings of old Rochester views for use in *The Book of the Rochester Centennial*. Brief descriptive notes accompanied each illustration, and many fond recollections were revived. During the nine years that have elapsed since the Centennial, most of these booklets have disappeared, and it is with considerable satisfaction that *Rochester History* is able to reproduce here a selection of fifteen of these Kent drawings.

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The drawings fall conveniently into three groups: The first displays changes in the architectural and other living conditions of favored residents. A second group depicts characteristic transport facilities. Finally, we have a small selection of several panoramic views of the youthful city. The accompanying commentary will, it is hoped, provide some of the historic atmosphere which once surrounded these scenes.\*

## Historic Houses

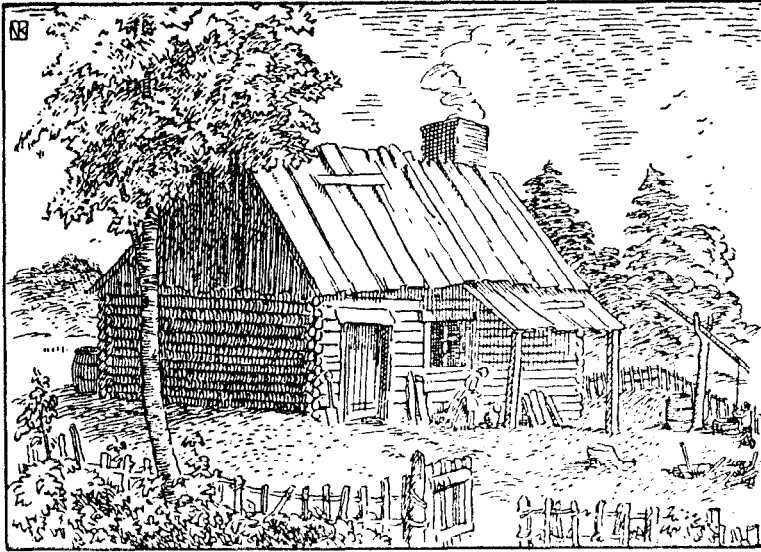


*The Scrantom Cabin*, as it is usually called, the first dwelling in Colonel Rochester's recently surveyed village, was erected on the site of the Powers Building at Rochester's central Four Corners. The Scrantom family moved in on July 4, 1812, a few weeks before the first crude bridge was completed across the river nearby. Here they occasionally sheltered other pioneers over night until more adequate accommodations could be provided. Building operations were progressing, however, and six months later the Scrantoms moved into a frame house of their own. Mr. Skinner, owner of the choice lot, soon removed the log cabin to the rear as a stable, thus making room for a large frame house in which the pioneers gathered for a Christmas ball on the afternoon of December 25, 1815. This second building was either replaced or enlarged a year or two later when the Ensworth Tavern appeared on the same site. A watering trough, located in front of the building, accommodated thirsty horses, thus attracting drivers to the Four Corners. A loft, constructed over the second story during the twenties, served as a public hall, available for a visiting minstrel show or a community dance.

The growing town soon called for a more pretentious hostelry, and Dr. Ensworth decided to remove the frame building to the rear of the lot and erect a brick tavern on the old site. The new Eagle Tavern, as it was called, boasting a captain's walk atop its three stories plus dormer loft, (having exhausted Ensworth's resources) was opened in 1831 by a new proprietor who enjoyed several prosperous years. Hard times returned, following the panic of 1837, and as commercial life

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THE SCRANTON CABIN

stagnated, the tavern keepers failed to meet the payments on the \$50,000 mortgage. When Abraham Schermerhorn, the recently resigned third mayor of the city, acquired the property, new improvements were added and the name was changed to the Eagle Hotel.

A new community function appeared on this choice corner when the Bank of Monroe, second in the county, established itself in the corner rooms with an opening on to the street intersection. Schermerhorn, the bank president, gradually enlarged his hotel, hoping to maintain its reputation as the finest in western New York, but the appearance of new and larger hotels in Buffalo as well as in Rochester antiquated the old Eagle, and after Daniel W. Powers acquired the banking corner in 1850, plans were made for a new stone office building. The imposing Powers Building, when erected in the mid-sixties, was much the most pretentious structure in Rochester. Indeed, as the decades advanced and additions were added in the same style both on Main and State Streets, and as two new stories were added to the original six, local residents were so frequently heard to boast of this massive hub of the city's activity that a Buffalonian is reputed to have described Rochester as a

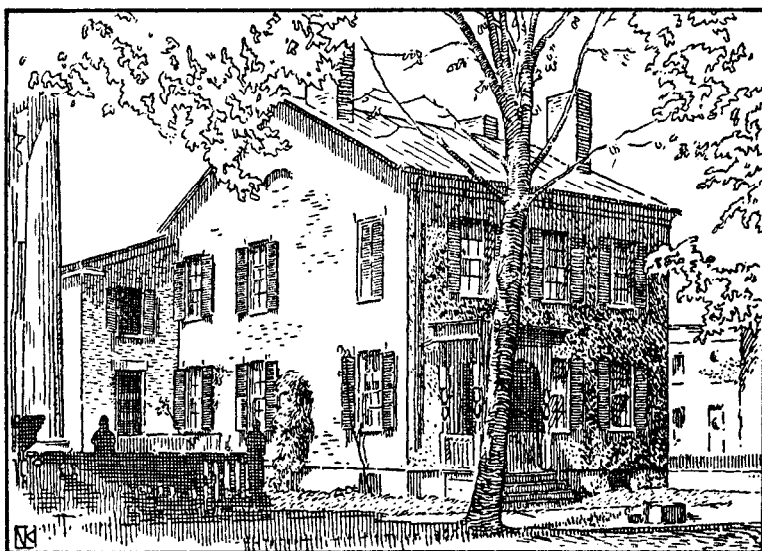
"four-corner settlement at the foot of the Powers Building." Perhaps the most striking change that has come over this sturdy structure was the displacement of the last bank or trust institution from the corner stand by a retail merchant in the early twenties.

The city has travelled far since the days when the Scrantom cabin was the principal structure at the Four Corners. The country has likewise grown up during the intervening one hundred and thirty years. Log cabins were a most common sight to travelers who penetrated a hundred miles west of the coast in 1812. As late as 1855 the census taker found one log cabin still inhabited within the borders of the city of Rochester, and nearly seven hundred in Monroe County—more indeed than the same area boasted in 1812. But already the city had 7,407 other dwelling houses and slightly more than that number were scattered about the remaining portion of the country.

Edwin Scrantom, one of the lads who moved into the cabin in 1812, was by the mid-century an old man, musing over the past. As early as 1843, after composing a song entitled "My Early Home," he had supervised the drawing of a "life-like vignette" (followed closely by Mr. Kent) to decorate the published copy of his song. Three decades later, when Edwin Scrantom was again consulting with an engraver in an effort to secure an accurate representation of the cabin of his memory, Daniel W. Powers was already contemplating the necessity for adding a second mansard roof which, when completed in 1881, increased the massive block that occupied the old cabin site to seven stories. The eighth was not added for several years.



*The Everard Peck House* carries us back again to the early village days. Built in 1820, eight short years after the Scrantom cabin, by the publisher of Rochester's second weekly newspaper, this house demonstrated the rapid growth of the community in substance and refinement. Indeed it appeared so commodious that room was generously made for the family of Thurlow Weed, Peck's new assistant on the *Telegraph*. Situated at the corner of Spring and Fitzhugh Streets, the Peck house was soon surrounded by scores of attractive and comfortable homes, and the Third Ward, sheltered by the canal, emerged as the choice residential district of the youthful city.

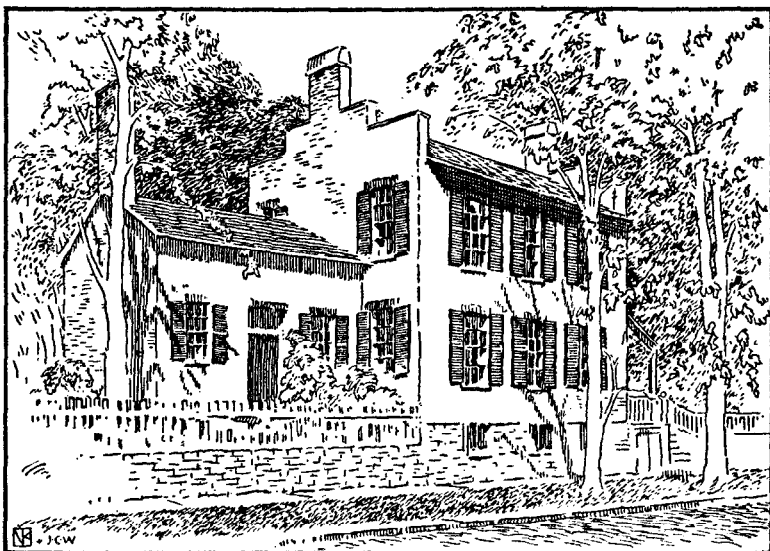


THE EVERARD PECK HOUSE

The Peck home became a community center in other respects as well. Here was organized the Female Charitable Society in 1822, Rochester's first (and today its oldest) institution for charity; and here likewise were held many of the early conferences which laid the foundations for the University of Rochester, of which Everard Peck and his first wife's brother, John N. Wilder, served as trustees. William F. Peck, local historian in post-Civil War days, was born here in 1840, and indeed the old house retained much of its charm until the end, which did not come until 1929, a decade after the abandonment of the Erie Canal (by removing the Third Ward's trade barrier) had admitted a flood of motor cars which finally appropriated the Peck site as a parking station.



*The Last Home of Colonel Nathaniel Rochester*, erected in 1822 at the corner of Spring and Washington Streets, stood for nearly a century as one of the city's best examples of a chaste post-Colonial town style. After providing the center for the comfortable old age of



THE LAST HOME OF COLONEL NATHANIEL ROCHESTER

Colonel and Mrs. Rochester, who died here in 1831 and 1845 respectively, the house was owned for many years by the proprietor's twelfth and youngest child, Mrs. Louisa Rochester Pitkin, though she and her husband chose to live in the newer house next door, originally built for Thomas Hart Rochester. In the early sixties when Gilman H. Perkins acquired both properties, he likewise chose the Washington Street house, and here his talented wife, the former Caroline Erickson, presided graciously over the social life of the younger generation of the Third Ward until their withdrawal in the early eighties to the old Aaron Erickson homestead on East Avenue (the present home of the Genesee Valley Club). Mrs. Louisa Rochester Pitkin and other old residents remained in the Third Ward until the end; indeed it was 1903 before "Aunt Louisa," as she was fondly known to her neighbors, the last of the original proprietor's family, passed on. The old home, after long service as a boarding house—a function which many of its neighbors were to assume—finally gave place to the Bevier Memorial Building of the Mechanics Institute in 1910.



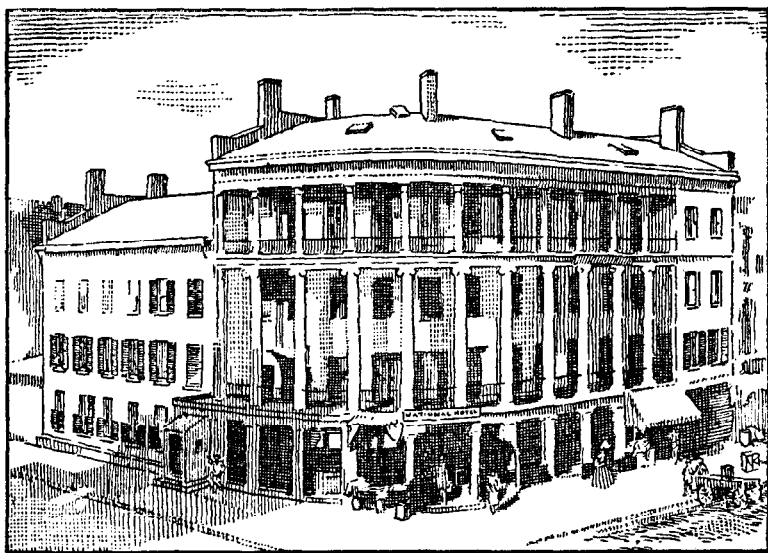
THE JONATHAN CHILD HOUSE



*The Jonathan Child House*, much the most pretentious mansion of the youthful community, was erected in 1837 by Mr. Child, son-in-law of Colonel Rochester and first mayor of the city. Built in the classical temple style, with five Corinthian columns gracing its front portico, "Child's Folly," as it was sometimes called, became the center for many decades of the fashionable social life of Rochester. The early afternoon balls in the large double parlors of this imposing mansion graduated into evening parties during the late forties, but no liquor was served by Jonathan Child, Rochester's leading temperance advocate of pre-Civil War days. After the death of Mrs. Child in 1850, the mansion was occupied for two years by John N. Wilder, President of the Board of Trustees of the newly established University, and many of the early functions of that institution transpired behind these lofty pillars. In 1852, Freeman Clarke—banker, railroad and telegraph financier, politician, and brother-in-law of the Wards, the Seldens, and the Chapins—bought the mansion and made it the hub of much of the social and

business activity of Rochester, until 1856 when the Clarkes removed to a newly acquired homestead on Alexander Street.

Although the Child House has since passed through a succession of hands, it has ever retained much of the dignity of its early days. Even during its four decades as a boarding house, starting in the early eighties under the capable administration of Mrs. Ives, and later when known as "The Pillars," high standards were maintained. Young ladies or bachelors, fortunate in gaining admittance to its choice precincts, were assured of introductions into the best families of the expanding city. An increasing number of elderly persons, after breaking



THE NATIONAL HOTEL

up housekeeping, delighted to spend their declining years in this gracious abode. When the old boarding house itself began to decline in popularity, the Washington Club, organized in 1921 by some of the members of the disbanded Whist Club, acquired the old mansion as a clubhouse. Finally, in 1933, it passed into the hands of the Fourth Christian Science Society of Rochester, for whose services its temple architecture appears admirably fitted.





*The National Hotel*, when erected in 1832 across from the original Court House, was known as the Monroe House. Operated for many years as a temperance hotel, it served those who shunned the more lively crowds at the Eagle Hotel nearby. The hard times following the panic of 1837 brought foreclosure, and while the temperance regulations were long maintained, a band of musicians was engaged to play for the diners and temperance plays were staged in the ballroom in order to create a more lively atmosphere. Successive changes of name and much remodeling occurred before it emerged as the National Hotel catering to permanent residents. The destruction or removal of several of its leading rivals during the languid sixties and seventies enabled the National to survive until 1881, when a group of enterprising men, led by Daniel Powers, acquired its site and those of adjoining buildings for the magnificent, fireproof Powers Hotel which opened in 1883.

## Early Transport Facilities



*The Old Stone Lighthouse at Charlotte* is one of Rochester's most intriguing reminders of the past. When the Federal Government provided funds for its erection in 1822, two steamboat and fifteen schooner visits a week already supplied activity at the Rochester port during the open season. Indeed, lake shipping had reached an early peak with Genesee exports valued at nearly \$400,000. Nevertheless, British and American tariff policies joined with the Erie Canal to check the growth of lake trade. Even the provision in 1829 of two log piers, twelve feet apart and extending nearly half a mile into the lake in order to provide a secure access to the largest boats of the day, failed to make Charlotte a thriving port.

A spurt in activity did occur in 1833 when four steamboat and numerous schooner calls each week carried away exports valued at \$800,000 for the year. Many of the boats safely guided into the river by the faithful lighthouse, were towed upstream to the docks at Carthage where for several years a horse railroad provided convenient transit to the mill town at the upper falls. But it was an unstable trade, and

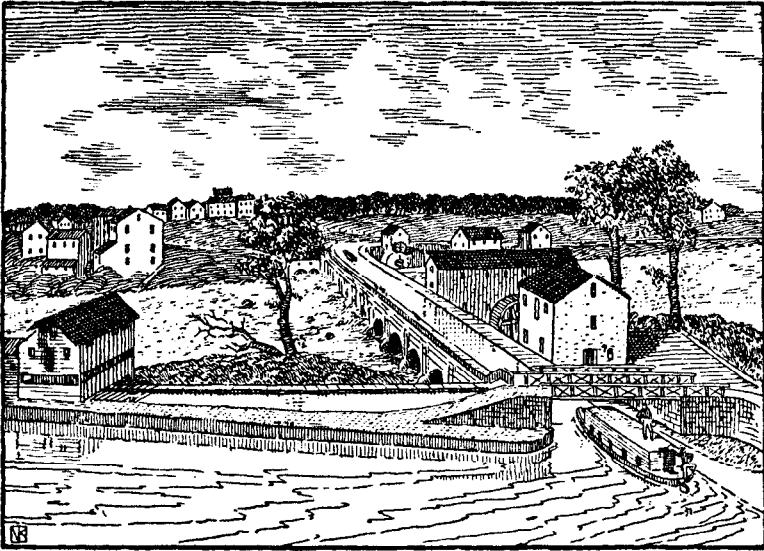


THE OLD STONE LIGHTHOUSE AT CHARLOTTE



exports dropped to \$200,000 in 1836, rose to \$650,000 in 1841, and declined again to the 1836 level by 1847. The abandoned Carthage railroad was replaced by a steam line on the west side in 1853, connecting Charlotte with the Flour City and the newly consolidated New York Central, but the expected boom in lake trade did not occur, chiefly because of the absence of a staple article for export to Canada.

The first lighthouse keeper had provided his own dwelling, removing it to another lot when a successor was appointed, and that procedure continued until 1863, when the keeper's house now standing was erected by the government. Several quiet decades slipped by, numerous lake storms piled their sand deposits in the lee of successive piers, and thus eventually a new shoreline was built up far beyond the lighthouse hill. Though the old tower stands as solid and enduring as ever, a modern and more conveniently located beacon replaced it when the establishment of railroad connections with the coal fields near Pittsburgh in the eighties stimulated the development of a car ferry to carry



THE FIRST AQUEDUCT

a steady flow of coal to Canada, thus ushering in the modern era at the Rochester port.



*The First Aqueduct*, built at a cost of \$87,000, was at its completion in 1823 the longest stone arch bridge structure in America. A joyful celebration heralded the opening of unobstructed water traffic with Albany almost two years before the canal was completed to Buffalo. The eleven sturdy Roman arches of the original aqueduct supported a canal trough only forty feet wide and four feet deep, but no other structure in the area could rival its massive proportions. Among numerous travelers who came to see it was a German engineer, A. Duttonhofer, whose sketch of 1826 (made perhaps from the roof of a building on the corner of present Broad and Exchange Streets) is closely followed by Mr. Kent. The view shows Child's Basin in the foreground, with the canal crossing eastward over the north-flowing Genesee.

Unfortunately, the solid appearance of the first aqueduct was deceiving. Its engineers, ignorant of the durability of area stone when exposed to air and water, chose unsuitable building materials. Within a decade numerous leaks were complicating the task of maintaining a sufficient water level, while the channel proved too narrow to permit the boats, only fourteen and one-half feet wide in the early days, to pass safely. As the number of boats visiting Rochester increased from fifty-six a week in 1824 to thirty-five a day in 1829, long lines of waiting boats frequently congested both ends of the aqueduct. After considerable hesitation the decision to replace the crumbling structure was fortunately made in 1837, for the work on the costly second aqueduct provided valuable employment during the depression years that followed.



*The Concord Stagecoach* probably made its first appearance in Rochester during the thirties. As early as 1822, however, a daily stage wagon rattled back and forth between Rochester and Canandaigua. By 1826 two stages were leaving Rochester every day for Albany (which could be reached with comparative ease in five days), one left daily for Niagara Falls, another to Buffalo, and a fifth up the valley to Genesee. The increasing number of canal packets failed to check the growth of the stage business, despite the customary charge of three and a half cents a mile (double that on a packet), for the stage generally covered more than seventy miles a day, better than most canal packets could do in twenty-four hours.

Perhaps the most dramatic episode in local stagecoach history was the bitter contest between the six-day stage company of Bissell and Champion and the old seven-day or "Sabbath-breaking" stage line. The new company was organized at considerable expense by several Rochester and Utica advocates of a quiet Sabbath. Great care was taken to engage only teetotal drivers and to schedule stops only at temperance taverns. Established in 1829 the six-day stage provided sharp competition for passengers between Buffalo and Albany, but the growing number of travelers sustained both companies for several years (although the six-day schedule was gradually abandoned) until the railroads captured the cross-state passenger traffic in the late thirties. The

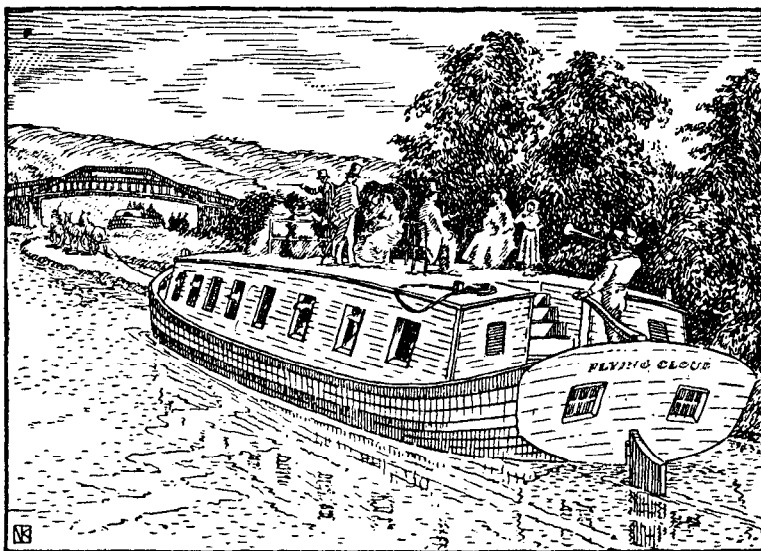


THE CONCORD STAGECOACH

flexibility of the stage route, in contrast with the canal or railroad, proved an asset in this new struggle for survival. The stage companies simply recharted their routes. Five separate stage lines operated out of Rochester a decade after the arrival of the first steam cars, but by 1860 they had been reduced to two, and a few years later the last was driven out to serve as a feeder to the railroads in rural areas.



*The Erie Canal Packet* doubtless proved an agreeable carrier on mild sunny days, if, that is, the passenger list was not too long or the traveler in a great hurry. Unfortunately, countless mosquitoes and the necessity for ducking each successive low bridge, added to the cramped quarters in which passengers and baggage were confined at night or on rainy days, generally made a packet ride something to be remembered but only to be repeated when necessary. The packets reached the zenith of their popularity in the late twenties, and although improved service was advertised from time to time (especially after the first enlargement of the canal in the forties permitted the construction of larger and more



THE ERIE CANAL PACKET

comfortable boats), the packets could not compete with the railroads in passenger service.

Among the many good descriptions of an *Erie Canal Packet* was that made by Dr. Charles Daubney, an Englishman who visited Rochester in October, 1837. After splashing about the muddy streets of the city in a driving rain for one day, Daubney decided that a stage trip to Canandaigua and Geneva would be much too wet and dreary, so he boarded an east-bound canal packet, of which his journal comments:

Many both of the gaily painted packets and the more useful and more numerous freight carriers or scows, were built in Rochester. Indeed, for several decades after the opening of the canal, the Genesee milltown was also the chief producer of canal boats. Pine logs floating down the river from the forests up the valley provided a more suitable lumber supply than that available elsewhere along the canal, and a half-dozen boat yards, located within the city along the banks of the canal or its feeder, turned out more than two hundred boats a year during the late forties, valued at around \$1,500 each.

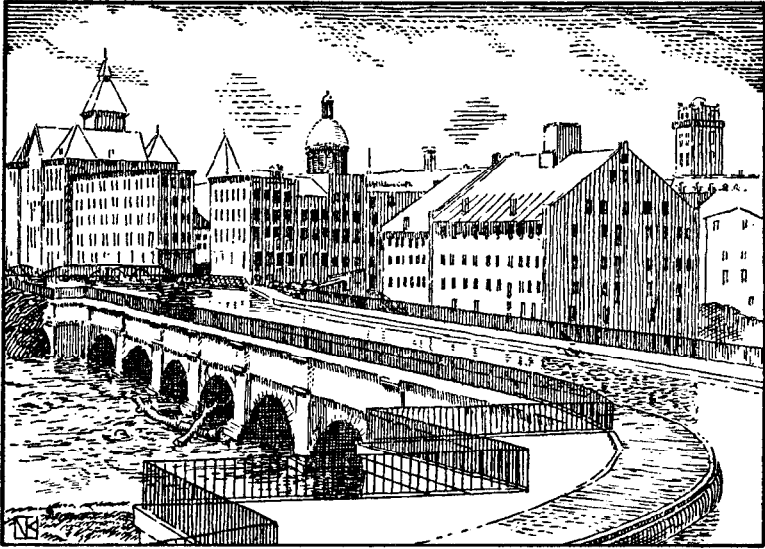
The canal boats are convenient enough by day, and carry you at the rate of four and one-half miles an hour, but by night the accommodations are not of an inviting character. Three tiers of shelves are suspended from the ceiling on either side of the narrow cabin, about six feet in length being allowed for each person. Consequently, as the cabin for gentlemen is about twenty-four feet long, each side will afford berths for eighteen persons; and thirty-six passengers are disposed of this way. Moreover, when there is a redundancy of company, the center of the room is also occupied, so that persons will often be stowed within these narrow limits. But, besides this is the ladies cabin, which will contain at least a dozen more, separated from ours by a curtain. Being placed with my head nearly touching that of another man, who was a great snorer, it was some time before I could get to rest, and the crying of a child in the ladies' chamber afterwards awakened me prematurely.

Here, as well as in the bars of all the inns, a public hair-brush and comb are suspended, but I have not yet seen a public *tooth-brush*.

Indeed the Erie Canal had been a freight carrier from its inception, and in this field the early railroads offered little competition. Though the freight costs, including tolls, started at approximately a tenth of the former wagon charges, they were repeatedly reduced, thus stimulating the shipment of formerly unmarketable articles. Even when in the sixties freight cars began to increase in number it was noted that one canal boat could carry as much heavy freight as twenty of the flimsy cars of the day. The tolls from the mounting traffic on the Erie proved more than sufficient for maintenance and amortization, and the repeated demands for the canal's enlargement could not be denied.



*The Second Aqueduct* at Rochester, completed in 1842 after an outlay of \$445,347 (staggering for that day), proved sound both as an investment and as an engineering feat. All of the difficulties of the original structure were now mastered, and a safe two-way crossing even for the largest boats was provided until the final abandonment of the canal in 1919. Long before that date the tolls had paid off all indebtedness permitting their entire abolition in 1882. The 1880 record of over



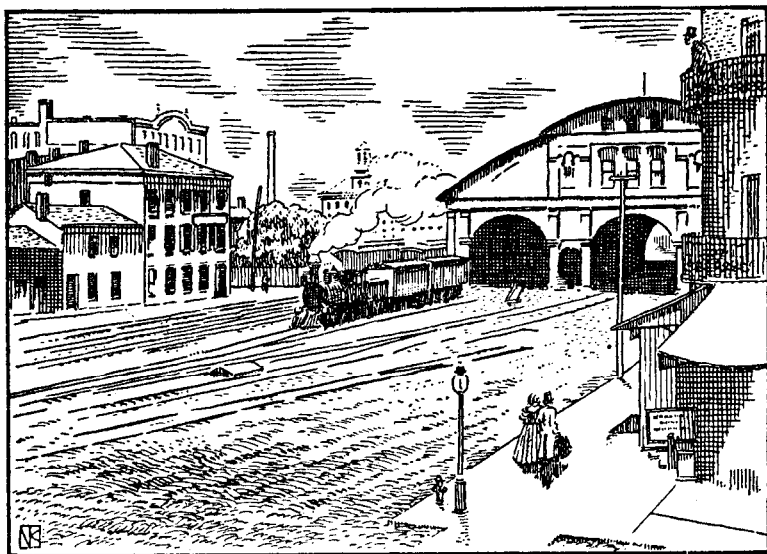
THE SECOND AQUEDUCT

four and a half million tons carried on the Erie by approximately six thousand canal boats was approached each year during the following decade, but the rapidly improving railroads, after capturing all of the high grade freight, finally in the early 1900's, took over most of the bulky freight as well, so that it was fitting for the sturdy aqueduct likewise to pass into the new service.

The city-owned subway which today uses the old canal trough, covered by Broadway on a new upper deck, lacks the romance of the old canal, but at least the aqueduct's original transit function is maintained. The Kent drawing shows the aqueduct at the height of its usefulness in the mid-seventies. The view is from the east, and the central business district appears in the background, with the newly completed city hall at the left and the Powers Building tower in the right background, the only prominent structures pictured here, aside from the aqueduct, which still stand today.

But the Erie Canal and its aqueduct had long since surrendered pre-eminence to the railroad as a traffic artery. Rochester's first steam railroad, opened to Batavia in 1837, terminated at this end on Buffalo





THE FIRST NEW YORK CENTRAL STATION

(West Main) Street, just west of the United States Hotel. Passengers wishing to transfer from the Tonawanda to the Auburn line, Rochester's second railway opened in 1841, had either to walk or hire a hack, for the Auburn train shed was located several blocks away on Mill Street. It was not until 1852 that the Tonawanda was persuaded to extend its line to enter the Auburn train shed and thus connect with the eastbound rail service. A year later the consolidation of these two companies with five others linking Albany and Buffalo brought the New York Central into being.



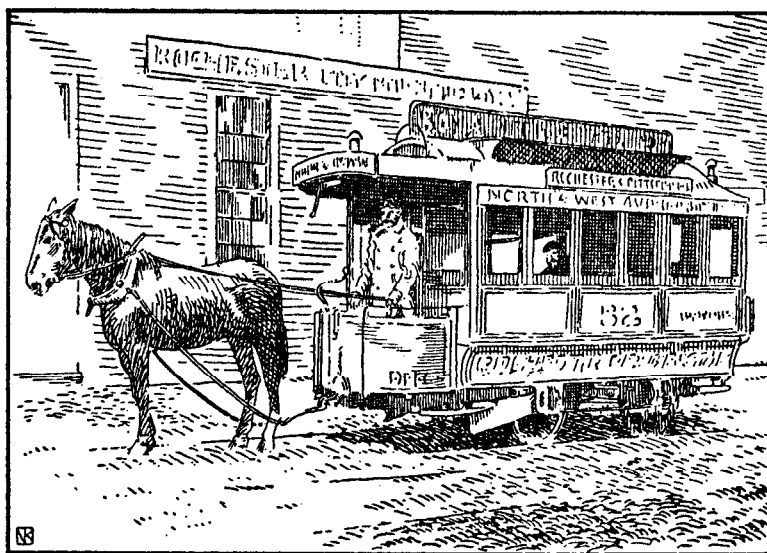
Among the numerous improvements undertaken by the \$23,000,000 company was the construction of a new station at Rochester that summer. The Kent view of *The First New York Central Station*, following a photograph of 1865, shows the west end of the station as seen from State Street, which the trains crossed at street level. Older residents passing this site after the Civil War no doubt still recalled the vast throng that gathered on an early February morning in 1861 to hear President Lincoln speak from the rear platform of his car drawn

into the right hand train shed just hidden from our view by the corner of the Waverly House. Here likewise came the parading soldier boys marching off to join the armies of the North.

For thirty years this station served as Rochester's transport center, attracting many of the city's enterprising merchants to open stores on State and Front Streets. Yet the busy activity about the canal basins south of Buffalo (Main) Street helped to maintain the balance of forces that revolved about the central Four Corners. As the decades passed (despite the occasional fears of Mortimer F. Reynolds that his Arcade would be left stranded on a side street unless his neighbors joined to improve their stores), the growing congestion in the business district, bounded on the south and west by the canal and on the north by the railroad, found its only direction for continued expansion over the bridge into the less constricted streets on the east side. When in the 1880's it became necessary to elevate the railroad tracks and erect a new station, the New York Central decided to relocate its center east of the river, where already thriving breweries and clothing factories had congregated. The station erected in 1883 on Central Avenue was, of course, the predecessor of the modern station opened in 1911, a block still further east.



It was during the mid years of the first New York Central station that the expanding city acquired its first horse-drawn street cars. Three omnibus lines appeared during the fifties, but the earliest effort to organize street railroad companies occurred in 1860. Two lines were built in 1863, one eastward from the Four Corners over the bridges and south to Mt. Hope cemetery, and the other north from the Four Corners to Deep Hollow. Despite insufficient revenue from the eight-cent fares of the late sixties, resulting in the foreclosure of the original companies, reorganization was effected, a third line quickly extended westward to Bulls Head, and a fourth east on Main to Union where it turned south to Monroe and back to Main. Other lines followed in the seventies and eighties until in 1889 some 183 horsecars were jogging along the forty miles of track that bound together the 130,000 Rochesterians. Already the death knell of the horsecar had been sounded, however, for the new electric cars on Lake Avenue beyond the city



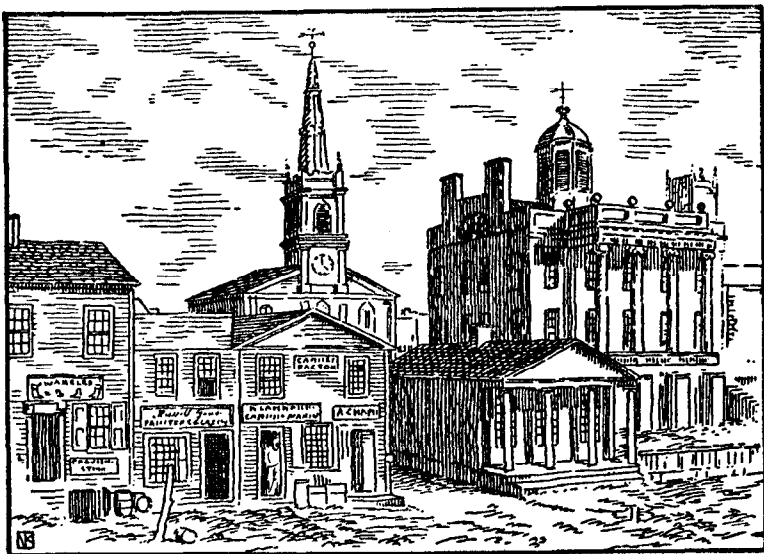
THE HORSE-DRAWN STREET CAR

limits were proving both more convenient and more economical. By the end of 1890 the last of the horsecars had disappeared from Rochester, one of the first cities in the country to complete this reform.

## Panoramic Views



No collection of early Rochester views would be complete without the inclusion of the *Court House Square* of village days, and at least two views of the main falls. When in 1827 a British naval officer, Captain Basil Hall, visited Rochester, the village was in the midst of its wildest boom days. The captain's journal reports "all in motion, creeping upward." But when he settled down with his "camera lucida" (a new device for projecting a scene through a lense on to a paper where it is then traced by hand), Basil Hall apparently decided to exclude all activity from his canvas. At first glance, Hall's Court House Square (closely followed by Kent) might belong to any comfortable

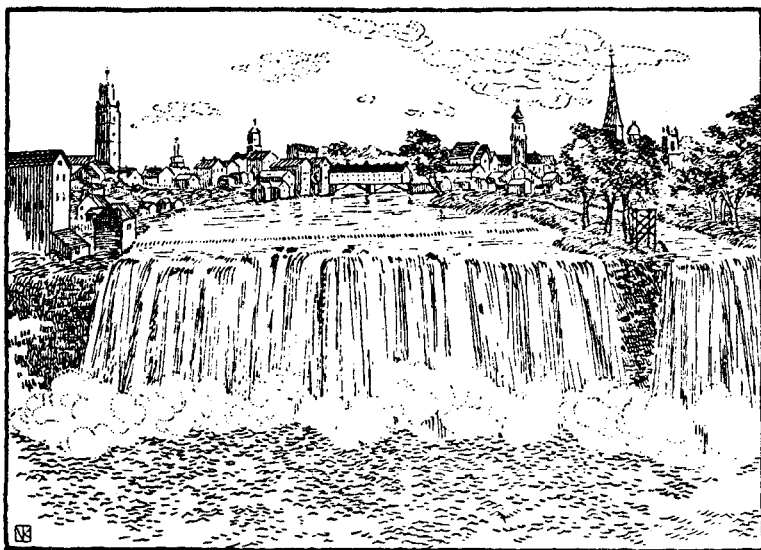


COURT HOUSE SQUARE

old village if one did not recognize several of the buildings, notably the square tower of St. Luke's church in the right background, still standing today. But on more careful examination the Court House Square does appear to belong to a raw frontier village, such as the fifteen-year-old Rochester of 1827. No friendly old trees, or even young ones, have yet had a chance to grow, as the sketch reveals, and sidewalks have not been constructed, nor the streets improved. Yet the graceful court house, as well as the large Presbyterian Church in the central background (not forgetting the Episcopal Church mentioned above), gave evidence of a community full of purpose and ambition. The crude structures in the left foreground were soon to give way to a more substantial brick block, as already the structures back of the artist, who originally made the drawing, were being replaced by the elegant Eagle Hotel.



*The Main Falls of the Genesee*, drawn from a woodcut made by a traveler who arrived two or three years later, shows another charac-



THE MAIN FALLS OF THE GENESSEE

teristic scene. Falls Field, on the east bank, overlooking the falls and the gorge, was long a favorite resort for visitors. From this vantage point they enjoyed a clear view of the 96-foot falls, with the village and later the city providing a panoramic background. Already in 1830, at the time this view was sketched, commercial buildings have crept out along the northern edge of Main Street bridge; already the Reynolds Arcade has raised its turret, rivalling the first Presbyterian Church steeple at the right and St. Paul's tower at the left. On the tip of the island in the foreground may be seen the frame platform from which Sam Patch made his last jump in 1829 — an event which brought Rochester much colorful notoriety but which helped to engender a more sober mood among local residents.

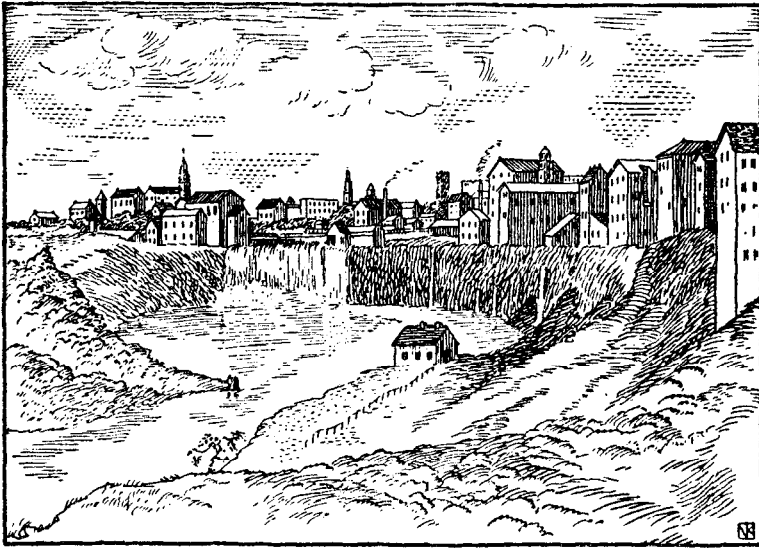
The village of 1830 seemed just on the threshold of great things. Amidst the surging growth of the previous decade, Rochester's population had increased fivefold (a more rapid growth than that of any other town in America prior to that date), and Sam Patch's motto, "Some things can be done as well as others," appeared logical enough. Unfortunately, Sam had not survived his fateful plunge, and the spirits

of the townsfolk were likewise dampened by the recession of 1829. Many suspected that the 9,207 residents enumerated by the census taken in 1830 were more than the town could support. Some were more optimistic and petitioned for a city charter, but the majority doubted the wisdom of such a move, for they did not wish to see the \$2,000 tax limit incorporated in the second village charter abandoned. These civic disputes were completely overshadowed, however, by the religious concerns of the day. The Finney revival of 1830 was stirring the town to its depths, and it was no more than fitting that the artist should dot his skyline with church steeples, for the cycle of achievement of the period, as one observer put it, was progress from stumps to steeples.



While Rochester's booming twenties soon came to an end, the community continued to grow with great vigor, as the view of *The Main Falls in 1860* reveals. A half dozen flour and grist mills had been erected along the edge of the gorge, for already the migration down from the small upper falls was begun. A railroad bridge just above the main falls and four other bridges joined the two almost equal sides of the city. The waterfalls, set in this larger industrial amphitheater, no longer appeared such a dominating factor as a few decades before, and indeed steam engines were proving increasingly useful in several of these large mills. But a comprehensive view of Rochester in 1860 would have required a leisurely tour about town, visiting numerous wood-working and ironware "factories," tanneries, and scores of small shoe and clothing shops, as well as the blooming fields of the prosperous nurserymen on the outskirts. Already the Flour City was giving way to a more comfortable, and, yes, more complacent Flower City on the eve of the Civil War.

Unfortunately, one of the results of the complacency which characterized Rochester's mid years was the loss to the public of the charming Falls Field. Nothing came of repeated movements by public-spirited citizens to persuade the city fathers to purchase this choice site for a public park. Long before the community awoke in the late eighties to the desirability of setting aside suitable park areas, the advance of industrial and commercial activity had appropriated both banks of the



THE MAIN FALLS IN 1860

gorge, not only blotting the landscape with unsightly structures, but shutting off the last view of the falls, except from Platt Street bridge, built in 1892. More than one wistful Rochesterian has speculated on the day when a modernized city plan will reopen a refreshing park on this choice site overlooking the falls.