Evidences of Culture in Early Rochester

Among the more elusive aspects of a community's history are the characteristics of its cultural development. Social and economic institutions leave voluminous records, while civic problems force their way into the documentary limelight, but individual cultural tastes emerge indistinctly from the archives. We can readily learn what books were in print at a certain period, but it is quite another matter to determine which of these were read and prized locally. We can study the general trends in art without gaining a certain knowledge of the artistic tastes of a specific community.

A real contribution is therefore made by the following two research reports. The first, by Mrs. Alice T. Sutton, explores with good result the inventories of several private libraries assembled during Rochester's first half-century. We cannot be certain either that these were the largest libraries or that they showed the most discriminating selection, for many wills contain no such inventories, while many persons long resident in Rochester moved on to record their wills in distant depositories. In like fashion the paper of Miss Jean Dinse makes no pretense at an exhaustive analysis of all art collections, but the reader will find her discussion of the paintings gathered by a half-dozen Rochesterians very illuminating.

Of course these art and book collections were in no sense typical examples of the literary or artistic tastes of the average citizen. They were the highly prized possessions of exceptional residents, not necessarily the most cultivated in art or literature, but certainly far above the average. Yet they were in every case representative Rochesterians.
who for the most part developed their taste for art and books after locating here and whose special interests may thus be accepted as significant evidences of cultural trends in Rochester.—The Editors.

Private Libraries in Rochester

By Alice T. Sutton

Our interests in life and our tastes and temperament are reflected in the books we read, especially the books we choose to buy for our own private collections. Let us turn, then, to the past, and glance at the private libraries of a few of Rochester's leading citizens, with the hope that we may discover hitherto hidden facets in the minds and lives of these men.

Fortunately it was long the practice of those who administered the estates of deceased persons to make a complete inventory of all personal belongings. Enlightening evidence as to the extent and character of several private libraries in Rochester has been discovered in these inventories, recorded in the County Clerk's Office and made available through the aid of Mr. Walter Gunther. It is well to examine first those records of the period before the middle of the nineteenth century, contrasting them with those of the last half of the century, when the personal collections became less significant as school and association libraries brought more books into circulation.

The actual number of volumes owned by various leading citizens had a wide range. In the five inventories before 1850 which have been studied, the smallest number of books listed was 31, the largest library (that of Dr. Anson Colman) contained 426, and the average was 171 books. In the inventories of eight prominent citizens who died after 1850, the size of the libraries mentioned ranged from 100 books to "about 600," the average being 297. This number includes school books and professional books as well as the "Family Library." Possibly the latter in some cases refers to the Harper's Family Library published in New York City in the 1830's, a collection of volumes "intended to combine the two objects of instruction and amusement," with many reprints of the classics among them. These books were moderately priced and evidently became quite popular.

In Josiah Bissell's obituary, published in the Rochester Observer on April 21, 1831, the Third Church Elder was described as a man who had made a profession of religion, supporting the cause with his
"business talents, his activity, system and energy, and his untiring industry." It might be expected that he owned many religious volumes, and although the "116 vols. of books and a lot of pamphlets composing the family library" were not separately listed in the inventory, the names of seventeen books were included elsewhere, six of them Bibles, one the Christian Observer, and six other religious volumes — a high percentage. His business interests are reflected in a volume entitled Bookkeeping, while Forsyth on Fruit Trees is noteworthy in that Josiah's son, Josiah W. Bissell, later became one of Rochester's leading nurserymen.

As Colonel Nathaniel Rochester was the founder and leading citizen of the village, the inventory of his library in 1832 is especially interesting. The list includes 84 books, not a very large library compared to some others at this time, but his frequent migrations had scarcely encouraged the collection of books, and of course he may have given some volumes to the Athenaeum library which he helped establish a few years before his death at the advanced age of seventy-nine. In his library were the ever-present "Family Bible" and religious books, the number of these being unusually small: "One Prayer Book," a second Bible, and a Life of Christ. The most surprising and provocative single entry in Colonel Rochester's inventory of books is "Dean Swift's works 23 vols." Only a man of considerable perspicacity would become such an admirer of that master satirist. Here, too, are nine volumes of The Spectator, delightfully rich in wit and wisdom, and two volumes of Scott's Waverly novels, noted for adventure and entertainment. Clearly Nathaniel Rochester liked a good story well told. He is probably the prototype of the industrious man of today who has for relaxation volumes of murder mysteries alongside the heavier books in his library. A reminder of Colonel Rochester's landed interests is the number of his books on farming, seven in all. Recorded here are many reference books, a Domestic Encyclopedia in five volumes, the U. S. Register, Finlay's General Atlas, and a Biographic Dictionary. The first Rochester Directory is also listed, valued at 25 cents! Today a copy in first class condition is worth $25. Col. Rochester owned six geographies and "Moore's France, 2 vols." Three volumes of Shakespeare and eight volumes of Rousseau round out this colorful library.

Dr. Anson Colman, Colonel Rochester's son-in-law, and one of the trustees of Rochester's first library company, died in 1837, and his
inventory of that year shows what an exceptionally well-read individual he was. His family library comprised 278 books, with 148 medical volumes in addition, making the total of 426, a respectable number at a time before the mass production of books. By far the largest number of books in any category were those on history, geography, and travel — twenty-five in all, with nine volumes of biography running second. Having pursued his medical studies in Boston, Philadelphia, Montreal, Paris, and London, Dr. Colman had evidently become intensely interested in other countries and peoples and their languages. He owned in addition two English dictionaries and a Theological Dictionary, a Classical Dictionary, a German and English Dictionary, a Latin and English Dictionary, and a Greek and English Lexicon, not to mention his Latin, Greek, English, French, German, and Italian grammars. These were all in his own library, not with the children’s school books separately listed. Many and diversified were the miscellaneous books in this library: two volumes of Shakespeare, Colloquial Phrases, Don Quixote, Sterne’s Works, Wesley’s Philosophy, Elements of Logic, Housekeeper’s Manual, Boston Tea Party, Cooper’s Pilot, Chesterfield’s letters to his son, and many others. He too, owned a City Directory, valued at a mere 6 cents!

It may prove interesting here to note some of the omissions in these libraries, for on August 25, 1818, there appeared in the Rochester Telegraph an advertisement of Everard Peck & Co., Book-Sellers, listing several hundred books for sale. Among them were various books found in the inventories mentioned: Emigrant Guide to the western traveler, Olive Branch, The Spectator, and Waverly (in Colonel Rochester’s); Sterne’s Works, Don Quixote, Wesley’s Philosophy (in Dr. Colman’s). But Peck’s list contained volumes to be found neither in Nathaniel Rochester’s inventory, nor in his son-in-law’s, and it would be interesting to know who purchased these books, for example, Bacon’s Essays and Smith’s Wealth of Nations. Of the many history books sold by Peck, few apparently appealed to Colonel Rochester, although Anson Colman had purchased many of them. The contrasting interests of the two men are apparent in the different volumes which they selected.

One of the ablest and most popular lawyers in Rochester from the time of his arrival in the village in 1816, until his death in 1865, was Moses Chapin. His inventory lists a library, nor including law books, of 384 volumes, attesting to his keen outlook on life.
The largest category of books in his library, religious books, numbered forty-eight, with three Testaments and fourteen Bibles in addition. Religion clearly played a substantial part in the Chapins' family life, and after examining the books in his inventory it is not surprising to learn that Moses Chapin's three daughters married clergymen, one of them being a missionary, while one of his sons became a Presbyterian minister. History and travel books, ranging from "8 Vols. Rollins Ancient History" to Bingham's Sandwich Islands, numbered thirty-one volumes, running second numerically in Judge Chapin's library. He, too, was possessed of the urge to learn more of other peoples and their lands. His twenty-one volumes of biography included three volumes of the Life of Napoleon, two volumes of Bancroft's Washington, Life of Franklin, Taylor's Life of Cooper, and a Life of Frederick Douglass, famous Negro abolitionist who made his home in Rochester for a number of years during Chapin's lifetime. Among the other books in Chapin's library were sixteen volumes of Shakespeare, two volumes of Cowper's poems, two volumes of The Spectator, two volumes of Pope, three volumes of Milton's Works, Poetical Keats, and Scott's Lay of the Last Minstrel, enough for a fairly liberal course in English literature. Here also were two books on homeopathy, others entitled Health, Domestic Medicine, Stewart's Physiology, Philosophy of Health, and Catechism of Health, reminders of the tragedy in Moses Chapin's life, for his charming first wife, Maria Ward Chapin, had died within a few years of their marriage, shortly after their first son died in infancy. Other provocative reading material was provided in two volumes of Locke's Essays, Priestly's Lectures, Woods's Botany, and two volumes of Telemachus, to mention a few of the miscellaneous volumes which once had their place on the shelves of the library in the Chapin home. And if you were not already familiar with the fact that Moses Chapin's profession was law, you would quickly ascertain it when you noted Have You Made Your Will among his books. Thoughtful, intelligent, and well-read, Judge Chapin properly deserved the honor and high esteem in which he was held in Rochester.

Another of Rochester's pioneers, a colorful personality who was praised for his benevolence and charity, then censured because the cash pledged was not always forthcoming promptly, was Aristarchus Champion, reputed to be "the richest man in the county" before 1840. His private library was a large and valuable one of 239 books, with some
editions appraised at an unusually high sum. None but a wealthy connoisseur would purchase such costly editions, as:

"1 Royal Gallery of British Art  $50
2 vols. Boydell's Shakespeare  40
7 Audubon's Birds of America  75
3 Audubon's Quadrupeds
Encyclopedia Brittanica, Vols. 1-21 inc.  50
45 vols. English Poets  75
8 vols. Shakespeare (Phillips, S. & Co.)  30"

The character of this library appears in the inventory of 1871, which, unlike the others examined here, names many books on nature and "natural science," seventeen in all. Perhaps his ownership of large tracts of wild lands in Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio contributed to Champion's interest in nature. In addition to the above-mentioned Audubon books, a real treasure then as now, he owned The Life of North American Insects, Elements of Natural Science, Illustrated Natural History, Jenny and the Birds and Jenny and the Insects. The last two must have been acquired for his own entertainment or instruction, for he had no children, being unmarried and supposedly a "woman hater."

A leading support of Brick Church, and at one time President of the Monroe County Sunday School Union, Aristarchus Champion owned twenty-one volume of a religious nature, ranging from Bunyan's Complete Works to Satan's Devices and the Believer's Victory. But by far the largest number of books in any one group were those in literature, numbering 84, with the "45 vols. English Poets" heading the list. Here, too, were "15 vols. of Irving's works unbound," ten volumes of Shakespeare, Emerson's Representative Men, Vicar of Wakefield, two volumes of Coleridge, and many others. History and travel books likewise had their niche in Champion's library. They totaled 28 volumes and included the popular Prescott's Conquest of Mexico, Conquest of Peru, and Ferdinand and Isabella; also Bancroft's United States; China and the Chinese; McCauley's History of England, and several others. Champion owned many reference books: the 21 volumes of the Encyclopedia as mentioned above, Webster's Dictionary, Pictorial Edition, and an Unabridged Webster, an English thesaurus, interest tables, Farmer's Encyclopedia, and many others. Art and music books were likewise included in Champion's library, al-
though the other inventories studied revealed none of these. "The Royal Gallery of British Art," valued at $50, was the most noteworthy of the list which included the Life of Sir Joshua Reynolds, Art Journal Catalogues, and The Crayon, pertaining to art; Modern School of Piano Forte and Tales from the Operas on music.

From the character of Champion's library it would seem that he was a cultured and well-informed gentleman. That he should have founded, in 1847, the Champion Library at Chagren Falls, Ohio, is a tribute to his love of books and his appreciation of the inestimable value of reading.

Isaac R. Elwood was a prominent Rochester lawyer who became one of the founders and first secretary of the Western Union Telegraph Company. A dashing personality, he took part in many of Rochester's activities, as Alderman, Inspector of Schools, City Clerk, and in other capacities, but his career was cut short by an accidental death in 1863. Although in his inventory of that year a "library of about 300 volumes" is noted, only eight books were named, the "Family Bible," "Children's School Books," Bancroft's United States, Motley's United Netherlands; Irving's Washington, and Prescott's Ferdinand and Isabella, Philip 2nd, Conquest of Mexico and Conquest of Peru. These popular and readable volumes indicate Elwood's interest in history, developed perhaps in the forties when for a time he contemplated writing a history of Rochester to supplement Henry O'Reilly's volume. A wealth of material in those "about 300 volumes" is suggested by the above-named books and by the character of the man himself.

It is unfortunate that the titles of books in Rochester's private libraries have been recorded in so few cases — surely it would be enlightening to find a list of the books owned by Everard Peck, pioneer bookseller, whose home became the focal point of many religious and charitable enterprises, but he had no inventory. The Rev. Samuel Luckey, long the Methodist Presiding Elder in Rochester, owned "1 Library of Books containing about 600 volumes," but they were not enumerated. Minister in the First Presbyterian Church here from 1822-32, later President of Hamilton College and one of the founders of the University of Michigan, the Rev. Joseph Penney, who returned to spend his last years in Rochester, made no mention of books in his will, while the appraisers of his property made no inventory.

Silas Cornell, Rochester's globe and map maker, had no inventory, nor did Dr. Levi Ward, outstanding in social, educational, and religi-
ous circles, and instrumental in founding early libraries in the vicinity. The latter, however, left to his wife in his will "such of my . . . books as she may desire," indicating a large library from which to make a choice. Addison Gardiner and Samuel L. Selden, learned judges, both had inventories, the former's recording "Books in Library . . . $400," while Judge Selden's 385 law books were carefully listed, and his personal library merely noted as "1 Lot Books, Family Library." Judge Harvey Humphrey, a classical scholar known as the "literary lawyer" must have had a valuable library, for in his will he specified that his "law library" was to go to his son. However there is no recorded inventory of his property.

In spite of these omissions, it has proved gratifying to peruse the few available inventories and add another chapter to the story of Rochester's libraries.

Private Art Collections
in Rochester

By Jean Merrell Dinse

Throughout its history Rochester has had many enterprising young men who worked up from minor positions to become outstanding personalities in the business world, amassing personal fortunes in the process. After achieving financial success, many of them invested their funds in a great variety of philanthropic projects and hobbies. One interest which attracted several, including Hiram Sibley, George Eastman, and Daniel W. Powers, was the formation of their own private art collections. In this way most of the important collections in Rochester were established.

The term "art collections" is a difficult one to define precisely because so many types of material may be thought of as art objects. In this study, however, paintings are emphasized, since they represent one of the most important forms of art and have been acquired in great numbers by local collectors. The amount of space devoted to each collection indicates the amount of material which was available rather than the value of the collection. I am very grateful to Mrs. Gertrude Herdle Moore, director of the Memorial Art Gallery, for helping me to obtain information for this study and for consulting with me as I attempted to evaluate the collections discussed below.
Early Interest in Art

During the first four or five decades of Rochester's history there is no evidence that anyone had what could truly be called an art collection. Many residents owned a few paintings, but most of these were family portraits, often painted by artists who worked in Rochester, including Grove S. Gilbert and Colby Kimball. Interest in the broader fields of historic and contemporary art was apparently satisfied by the public exhibitions which took place from time to time. Frequently these exhibitions consisted of paintings by well known men which were being sent on a tour of the country, while at other times the work of local artists was shown. One of the first traveling paintings that came to Rochester was "Christ Rejected" by William Dunlap, shown in the Court Room in December, 1823; a fee of twenty-five cents was charged for a single admission, while a special ticket good for any number of visits could be purchased for fifty cents. Dunlap was a popular artist at that time and his paintings were shown here on at least two later occasions, in October, 1830, and again in January, 1840.¹ Other exhibitions included the statue by Hiram Powers known as the "Greek Slave" and paintings by Benjamin West. Both West and Powers enjoyed great popularity in their day, the former for his large historical paintings and the latter for his sentimentalized statues derived from Greek sculpture. The "Greek Slave," Power's most popular work, was finished in 1843; it represents a young girl captured by the Turks during the Greek war for independence (1821-1833), an event recent enough to increase public interest in the statue. West's painting of "Christ Healing the Sick" was displayed at Talman's Hall in April, 1843. Admission to see this enormous canvas, which measured sixteen by eighteen feet, was twelve and a half cents. In November of the next year, another of his works, "Death on the Pale Horse," was shown at the First Presbyterian Church. Proceeds of the exhibition were to be used for the Orphan Asylum.²

Since the city had no regular art gallery, these traveling exhibitions were held at such places as the Court House, the Osburn House, and Corinthian Hall. As early as 1849 and for many years thereafter, D. M. Dewey exhibited and sold works by both local and out-of-town artists in his bookstore in the Reynolds Arcade.³ At a later period, beginning in 1877, the Rochester Art Club became the sponsor of an annual art exhibition.
By the middle 1860's Rochester could boast of what was apparently its first private collection, that owned by Hiram Sibley. When Mr. Sibley first came to the Genesee Valley from North Adams, Massachusetts, he worked as a machinist and wool carder, and also established an iron foundry at Sibleyville. He later became interested in the telegraph and joined with Ezra Cornell and others in forming the Western Union Telegraph Company by consolidating several small organizations. In 1864 he made a trip to Europe, accompanied by his wife and daughter Emily, to promote the building of a telegraph cable from Alaska to Siberia. Before returning to America in the spring of 1866, they visited Italy, where Mr. Sibley bought a number of paintings and some sculpture. The daughter, who later became Mrs. James S. Watson, was likewise interested in art and built up a collection of her own, which will be described below.

Mr. Sibley and his collection played a prominent role in one of the early attempts to establish an art gallery in Rochester. On December 13, 1874, a group of citizens which included Mortimer F. Reynolds, D. M. Dewey, S. A. Lattimore, Edward Harris, and Henry L. Morehouse, filed articles of incorporation for the Rochester Academy of Art. The Union and Advertiser reported on May 18, 1875, that the directors of the Academy had voted to lease a hall at 40-42 State Street and were planning a June exhibition. Local artists as well as those from other parts of the country and abroad would be invited to send canvases, but the nucleus of the show was to be a group of paintings from Mr. Sibley's collection. The reporter added that the paintings were "said to be magnificent, several valuable originals being among them." When the exhibition opened late in June, the press was most enthusiastic in its praise of the Sibley paintings. Paintings of the city of Nancy in Lorraine by Jacques Callot, a French painter and engraver, were described as "almost priceless." "The Queen of Sheba Welcoming Her Warriors" by Veneziano Bonifazio, a sixteenth century Venetian artist, was described as "a veritable masterpiece . . . in drawing, composition, and coloring." Two landscapes by the seventeenth century artist Salvator Rosa also attracted attention. Altogether there were fifty-four of Mr. Sibley's paintings in the exhibition. Most of them were by Venetian artists, including Pietro Liberi, Carletto Cagliari, and Andrea del Friso, minor sixteenth and seventeenth century artists who carried on the Venetian tradition of using brilliant color. Artists of other nationalities were represented, how-
ever, among them two outstanding Frenchmen, François Boucher and Eugène Delacroix. The Delacroix paintings represented two scenes at the coronation of Pope Pius VI. All of the paintings mentioned above are described as originals in the newspaper reports. Other artists of varying importance were represented in the collection by copies.

Mr. Sibley loaned the paintings to the Academy for two other exhibitions, in October, 1875, and in February, 1876. With two or three exceptions the same works were evidently shown on all three occasions. After the exhibitions closed, the Sibley paintings were displayed for a time in the lecture hall of the Free Academy, where the Academy of Art conducted a school of design. Then, in 1877, they were purchased by D. W. Powers and hung in the art gallery which he had established in the Powers Building two years earlier. These paintings and most of the other works in the Sibley collection have been scattered, and at the present time only one of the paintings and one or two of the pieces of sculpture are still owned by the family.

The Powers Art Gallery

The Powers Art Gallery was a remarkable institution because it was a gallery for the public supported and directed by one man, Daniel W. Powers. Although he charged a twenty-five cent admission fee, the returns must have been rather small compared to the sum he invested, estimated at more than one million dollars. Mr. Powers, who was born in Batavia in 1818, came to Rochester at the age of nineteen to clerk in a hardware store. He organized his own banking and brokerage business when he was 31 and became one of the most prominent bankers in western New York. In 1870 he erected the Powers Building and five years later set aside some of its rooms as a place in which to display his art collection.

The Gallery had its beginning in a trip to Europe which Mr. Powers made in 1875. The Union, reporting on the new project, stated: “The proprietor, D. W. Powers, is ever on the qui vive for some new attraction to make his building more worthy of the visits of everyone, but this time he has fairly outdone himself. During his recent visit to Europe, he determined in his own mind to establish a gallery of paintings in this city that should equal anything in the country.” The first painting he bought, a representation of Justice by an unknown artist, was purchased in the city of Florence for $300.
He purchased several other works, both originals and copies of old masters, and it was reported that he left orders for many more copies. At the present time the practice of painting copies of famous works has fallen into disfavor. In Mr. Powers' day, however, before color photography and other mechanical means of reproduction were developed, it was the established practice for gentlemen who visited the great galleries of Europe to order copies from the official copyists of the galleries so that they could bring home a record of the beautiful things they had seen. Mr. Powers' favorite copy, judging by the number of references to it, was Raphael's "Sistine Madonna" painted by Theodore Schmidt, the director of the Royal Art Gallery at Dresden. Mr. Schmidt spent five years making the copy, working at it for brief periods after the gallery was closed to visitors each day. Mr. Powers said that this was the only copy of the painting in America made from the original, the others being made from engravings and photographs of engravings.

The collection, arranged in three rooms on the fifth floor of the Powers building, was first shown to the public on October 23, 1875. The Gallery was described by a Union reporter who had attended a preview for the press two days earlier. In the first room, which was forty feet square and paneled in red, there was, in addition to the paintings, a stereoscope with a large collection of views from all parts of the world; the other two rooms, paneled in maroon and green respectively, contained only paintings. There were copies of works by Titian, Tintoretto, Raphael, Murillo, and other masters, and original paintings by modern Italian artists. Looking over the list now, the one which seems most interesting is a group portrait of Charles (II), William (James II), and Henrietta Maria (Princess Mary of Orange), the young children of King Charles I of England, by Anthony Van Dyck, the seventeenth century Flemish artist who lived in England for many years and painted several charming portraits of the royal children. The reviewer of that day remarked, "In the catalogue it is stated that the picture . . . is an original. This must be a mistake as the original of the picture is in the possession of Queen Victoria. There are, however, several replicas of this picture, with slight variation, from the hand of the original artist . . . and this is no doubt one of these replicas." The Powers catalogues for 1875 and 1880 refer to this canvas as "An original painting by the celebrated Van Dyck," and A. A. Hopkins, who was at one time editor and part owner of The American Rural Home,
a magazine published in Rochester, also described it as an original in his book on the Powers buildings. The volume on Van Dyck in the *Klassiker der Kunst* series, however, lists only two versions of this portrait from the hand of Van Dyck himself, one at Turin, the other at Windsor Castle, so that the painting owned by Mr. Powers was evidently a copy.\(^1\)

The first catalogue of the gallery, published in 1875, lists 121 oil paintings and 16 water colors.\(^2\) From time to time, Mr. Powers enlarged the collection by new purchases. In 1876 he bought some sculpture at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition. Three important acquisitions were made in 1877: an orchestration which could produce an amazing variety of musical effects; modern paintings by Erol, Mencia, Achenbach, and others who were evidently more prominent then than now; and the Sibley paintings, described above.\(^3\)

As the size of the collection increased, so did the number of rooms in the Gallery; at the end of two years there were six instead of the original three.\(^4\) From time to time changes in the lighting, decorations, and furniture were made because Mr. Powers wished to do everything possible to make the gallery more attractive to visitors. By 1880 he had provided new wall hangings, specially made window blinds, and skylights. That same year four examples of American art, the first in the collection, were purchased at an exhibition of the National Academy of Design in New York. They were: "Princess Elizabeth" by Daniel Huntington, "The Reprimand" by Eastman Johnson, "Cape Ann Fisherman" by George H. Story, and "Voices of the Night" by William H. Beard. These additions were welcomed by the Union with the remark that "Mr. Powers has at last secured some specimens of American art for his gallery and they are first class ones."\(^5\)

Throughout the eighties the expansion of the gallery continued. By 1889 it contained 490 oil paintings, mostly originals, by modern artists, 125 copies and attributed works of old masters, 65 water colors, and 17 pieces of statuary. Although the growth was much slower in the nineties, the catalogue of 1897 was able to list 574 modern oils, 127 old originals and copies, 71 water colors, and 18 pieces of sculpture. Beside these, there were tapestries, oriental rugs, Japanese vases, engravings, and a large hall clock eleven feet high which was said to have cost its original owner, A. T. Stewart, a New York merchant, $10,000. To display this material it was necessary to use all the rooms on the fifth, sixth, and seventh floors of the State Street side of the
Powers building. Many paintings were hung in the halls leading to the gallery, and the public was welcome to look at these without paying the admission fee. In the sixth floor corridors there was a display of several hundred stuffed birds.24

The collection was praised by both local and visiting writers. Jane Marsh Parker wrote: "It is no presumption to claim that the art gallery of Mr. Powers is second to none in this country for the number and value of its works of art." Henry B. Pettes, identified as a "well known art connoisseur and critic," writing for the St. Louis Republican in May, 1886, called it "the finest gallery of paintings and sculpture formed by a single individual and open to the public to be found in America, and I think I can safely assert, in the world." He added that the gallery was lighted by electricity two evenings a week, producing a "most enchanting" effect.26 An unnamed critic from Boston, whose article appeared in the Boston Journal, also praised the collection. He decided to visit the gallery because many people in this part of the state spoke of it. He gave the following opinion:

"The copies, (which range from good to indifferent to bad, as copies are wont to do) are interesting and valuable for study; the originals among the old pictures are attributed to men whose influence upon art has been unimportant and have their chief importance as illustrations of certain schools and epochs. The most valuable part of the gallery is that which is devoted to the modern schools and painters. . . Mr. Powers has brought together a collection which has few rivals in illustrating not only the general movement, but also the side eddies of the stream of modern European art. . . [There are] very fine examples of Dupre, Corot, Daubigny, Rousseau, Diaz, and a dozen other lesser lights in the great system of French painting in the generation that has just left the stage or is now beginning to pass away. . . There is, naturally, much unimportant work in the galleries, but little that is not valuable in giving a broad view of present art movements. Altogether the Powers Art Gallery gives abundant reason for the pride which the people of Rochester take in it. . ."27

This comment, written in 1888, nine years before the gallery was closed, is a good estimate of the artistic merit of the collection.

In glancing through the numerous catalogues which were published for the gallery, it is remarkable to observe the steady growth in Mr. Powers' knowledge and appreciation of art. When the first catalogue
was published in 1875, most of the paintings listed were copies, while the few originals mentioned were by unimportant contemporary Italian artists.

The catalogue of 1880 features a new group of sixty-five old originals which, it was noted, had formed a gallery in a private palace in Venice; the owners sold the paintings when they lost their money. Many of these canvases were in the list of those loaned by Hiram Sibley for the Academy of Art exhibitions in 1875 and 1876, so that this may explain the origin of the Sibley collection as well as furnish a more complete list of its contents. A majority of the paintings in this group were the work of Venetian artists. Beside those mentioned in connection with the Sibley collection, there were a number by Tiepolo, the eighteenth century artist who was famous for his fresco work, and several others by a contemporary of his, Antonio Canale, who specialized in painting views of Venice.

In the 1880's Mr. Powers began to concentrate on buying original paintings by contemporary artists. The Boston critic's remark that these paintings represented "present art movements" works out rather well for movements up to about 1870. In the second quarter of the nineteenth century Eugène Delacroix and other romanticists, who liked to paint scenes of distant lands and strange people or anything their imaginations might suggest, bitterly opposed the classicists, led by Ingres, who turned to Greek sculpture as a source of inspiration. A third group of artists, the Barbizon school, which was not involved in the controversy, lived and worked in the Forest of Fontainebleau painting nature. Mr. Powers had no important painting by a classicist, but the catalogue of 1889 lists "The Standard Bearer" by Delacroix, the leader of the romanticists. Several examples from the Barbizon school are listed: an excellent Daubigny purchased from the Dousman collection is noted in 1885; in 1886 a Corot and a Rousseau from the collection of George Seney, a New York banker, appear; and one new Corot is noted in 1892 and two others in 1893. A further example of his growing appreciation is the acquisition in 1889 of "The Stonebreakers," a very fine example of the work of the realist Gustave Courbet, who painted from the 1840's to the 1870's. These purchases show an awareness of the most progressive trends in the art of that period. The collection also included a number of examples of the more traditional type of work produced by men like Meissonier and Vibert which is considered unimportant today. Mr. Powers likewise purchased a few
works by well known old masters. In the catalogue of 1889 are listed two paintings by Hieronymus Bosch and one each by Sir Joshua Reynolds and Pieter De Hooch; the De Hooch was acquired from a Russian collection. These were all valuable additions to the Gallery.

A word should be said about some of the sources from which Mr. Powers gathered his collection. Many of the paintings were purchased during his annual trips to Europe. In the course of these visits he met many prominent artists, some of whom he commissioned to paint new works especially for the gallery. One artist, Jean Léon Gérôme, became a good friend of Mr. Powers; after painting a canvas entitled "Bab-El-Zouel" for the collection, he wrote: "Your picture was finished today. I have given great care to it in the hope of pleasing you, and I hope you will find it altered to its advantage. When you honored me with your visit, only a few of the figures were drawn, and the principal ones were not finished. . . . Contrary to my usual custom, and to accede to your wish, I have signed this picture twice, the first time with my name and the second time with my portrait; . . . This work is therefore doubly authenticated, and I shall be pleased to meet your approval." Mr. Powers also bought a great many paintings at sales of private collections, including those of George Seney, Mary Morgan, A. T. Stewart, and Albert Spencer.

In order to increase interest in the art gallery Mr. Powers gave two evening receptions for the public each week and sometimes held private receptions for his friends as well. At one of the private receptions, attended by over 1,000 people, one large hall was turned into a ballroom, while in other corridors, Mr. Teall, Rochester's leading caterer, served supper. The studios which several local artists had established on the fifth floor were open for inspection, and as the guests moved about from one attraction to another, they enjoyed the music of the orchestrion and Schaick's popular orchestra. The orchestrion, an automatic instrument capable of producing the music of an orchestra, was made by Bernard Dufner of Buffalo, a native of Switzerland. The compositions which it could play were arranged on large cylinders, and Mr. Powers owned so many of them that the machine could play for hours without repeating any selection.

The gallery attracted many visitors, including President Benjamin Harrison, who came to Rochester in May, 1892, and it stimulated interest in art throughout the community. Mr. Powers must have been a source of encouragement to local artists, also, for he purchased paint-
ings by many of them, including Charles Gruppe, Emma Lampert, and Alfred Perkins.

Mr. Powers intended to leave his collection to the city, but these plans were changed when a tax was levied on the Gallery. After his death in 1897 the Gallery was immediately closed and most of the collection sold in New York and Philadelphia. In the former city an auction was held on three consecutive evenings in January, 1899, at Chickering Hall under the management of the American Art Association. About 271 paintings were offered for sale, bringing in a total of $144,070. Among the buyers were R. M. Lindsay, S. P. Avery Jr., and James McCormick. The highest price recorded in the marked catalogue in the Memorial Art Gallery library is $7,600 for a painting by Eduardo Zamacois entitled "Levying Contributions." Several other high figures are noted. "Arab Falconer" by Eugène Fromentin, which Mr. Powers had purchased for $6,500 at the Albert Spencer sale in 1888, was resold for the same amount. "Little Pilferers" by William Bouguereau brought $6,000 and "Forest of Fontainebleau" by Diaz $5,700, while the Daubigny went for $3,000, and Corot's "Village Church" for $1,350. Some of the other paintings which have proved to have more lasting value sold for very small sums, the Courbet going for only $250, the De Hooch for $325, and the Delacroix for $160. The $10,000 clock was sold for $1,950, and the sale of 14 pieces of sculpture and some enamels and bronzes raised the total sum received to $150,232.50.

A few paintings may still be seen in the Powers Building. A mammoth painting of Niagara Falls, dated 1889, which measures ten feet high and eighteen feet wide, is located on the Main Street side of the seventh floor corridor. This is the work of a local artist named Horres. On the fifth floor there are six canvases, three of which have been placed on the wall over the office entrances, while the other three hang on the wall over the grand staircase. Hopkins says of the latter group:

"Directly over the staircase hang three of the largest in massive gold frames twelve feet by twelve. One of them represents the expulsion of Adam and Eve. . . . To the right of this canvas is Hubner's Betrayal of Christ . . . Mating these two in size and hanging next the latter is Herod's Massacre of the Innocents by Hubner, a painting too terrible in its realism to afford the beholder much pleasure."
At the present time, however, the paintings are covered with dust and poorly lighted so that the "terrible realism" is considerably toned down. None of the seven has any real artistic significance.

In December, 1927, on the thirtieth anniversary of the death of Mr. Powers, Rochesterians were reminded of his contributions to the enjoyment of art in the city when Mrs. Gilman Perkins, Walter W. Powers, and John Craig Powers presented a painting by Edward Redfield entitled "River Hills" to the Memorial Art Gallery in memory of their father.38

The William S. Kimball Collection

Another private art collection was built up by William Smith Kimball, a contemporary of Mr. Powers. Mr. Kimball, who was a native of New Hampshire, began his career as an apprentice at the Lawrence Locomotive works. After working in New Hampshire and Kentucky, he came to Rochester and married Marion E. Keeler. When the Civil War broke out, he accepted an appointment as master mechanic in the Navy, where he was in charge of a unit which repaired machinery on gunboats and transports. In 1863 he returned to Rochester and entered the tobacco manufacturing business.49 His wife died in 1879, and the following year he married Laura Mitchell, sister of J. Guernsey Mitchell, the Rochester sculptor and painter who executed the statue of Mercury for the chimney of the Kimball tobacco factory, now City Hall Annex. The statue was unveiled with appropriate ceremonies on January 9, 1881. Mr. and Mrs. Kimball were proud to include a statue of "Spring" and several oil paintings by Mr. Mitchell in their collection,46 and in September of 1886 "The Burial of Moses," a group of figures which he exhibited in the Paris Salon that year, was displayed at the factory.41

It is said that the collection, chosen with the help of Mr. Mitchell,42 included over one hundred paintings by French, German, Spanish, English, and American artists,43 most of whom lived in the nineteenth century. Among the best known were Joseph M. W. Turner, the English landscape painter, and Rosa Bonheur, the Frenchwoman who painted animals and was represented by a painting of a lion and lioness. There was one canvas by Charles Gruppe, who was born in Canada but lived in Rochester for several years. Mr. Kimball evidently spent a large sum of money in assembling his collection; on
April 14, 1893, the Union reported that he was present at an auction in New York and paid $8,010 for "Village Festival" by Knaus and almost $3,000 for four other canvases, "Garden Seat" by Heilbuth, "Sultana" by Diaz, "Faust and Marguerite" by Gabriel Ferrier, and "Black Forest Woodcarver" by Alfons Spring. It is interesting to note that the Kimballs, like Mr. Powers, seemed to prefer the more conservative work.

At first the paintings were hung in the rooms of their home on Troup Street, designed by Louis Tiffany of New York, but later an art gallery was added to the house at a reported cost of $100,000. It was a large room, with a fawn-colored plaster ceiling decorated with gold. The walls were hung with Pompeian red plush and the floors were covered with oriental rugs; the woodwork was oak. Off this room, under the musicians' gallery, was an alcove for their collection of pottery, china, and 1200 pepperboxes.

The art gallery was not the only unusual feature of the Kimball home, however. They also had a pipe organ, and sometimes the public was invited to hear recitals played by Mr. Kimball's son, Harold. In a special building a short distance from the house was still another attraction, a collection of more than 10,000 orchid plants.

Although Mr. Kimball died in 1895, the collection remained intact until after the death of Mrs. Kimball in 1923. Their daughter, Mrs. George Gordon, kept some of the paintings, but a large number of them were sold at an art auction in New York in January, 1924. One, "Devotion," by Lefebvre, brought $7,500 while "The Harvest" by Lhermitte brought $5,000 and "The Sheik and his Followers" by Schreyer $5,100.

Recent Art Collections

In more recent times there have been several prominent local art collectors, one of whom was George Eastman. Mr. Eastman's first job was in an insurance office in the Reynolds Arcade; later he became a bookkeeper at the Rochester Savings Bank. His career as a manufacturer of photographic supplies began in 1880 when he first produced dry plates commercially after experimenting with them in his spare time. In the next few years he introduced many new ideas which made him a leader in the photographic industry.

His art collection, acquired over a period of twenty-five years or
so, consisted of about forty paintings which were worth hundreds of thousands of dollars. In a letter to an art dealer, Mr. Eastman explained his technique for buying these works: when he found a painting he was interested in purchasing, he had it sent to his home, where he tried it out, and, as he expressed it, "lived with it." If he decided after this trial that he liked the painting, he bought it, but if he found that he didn't like it, he didn't hesitate to send it back, no matter how much art experts had praised the painting. He seemed to prefer two types of subject matter, portraits and landscapes. Among the portraits, there were "Portrait of a Young Man" by Hals, "A Young Man in an Armchair" by Rembrandt, and "Venetian Senator," a man in striking red robes, by Tintoretto. Van Dyck, the Flemish artist who lived in England for a time, was represented by a handsome portrait of a man in armor entitled "Portrait of an Italian Nobleman." There were also portraits by Reynolds, Lawrence, Gainsborough, Romney, Raeburn, and other English artists whose elegant style of portraiture is derived at least partly from the influence of Van Dyck. Most of the landscapes were by French and Dutch artists, although the collection included a few works by George Inness, Homer Martin, and other Americans. Valuable as these paintings were, Mr. Eastman owned two others for which he must have had a special fondness; these were portraits of his father, George Washington Eastman, and his mother, Maria Kibbourn Eastman, which were painted by Sir Philip De László.

Not all of Mr. Eastman's paintings were of equal value, of course, but they formed what was without doubt the finest of Rochester's private collections. The collection now belongs to the University of Rochester and is housed in Eastman House and the Memorial Art Gallery. Like some of his fellow art collectors, particularly Mr. Powers and Mr. Kimball, Mr. Eastman was very fond of music and installed a fine pipe organ in his East Avenue mansion.

Charles A. Greene, the nurseryman, made art one of his hobbies for about sixty years. Mr. Green, who was born in East Rush in 1843, founded Greene's Bank here in Rochester with his brother Mortimer, and also helped organize the East Side Savings Bank. After losing his money in the bank panic of 1873, Mr. Greene moved to the country and started a nursery which became a very profitable venture. He also published a horticultural magazine entitled Greene's Fruit Grower.

He began his collection at a much earlier age than most art lovers, for he was only twenty-one when he bought his first paintings. He
described this occasion to his family, saying that one day he visited a junk shop on Main Street Bridge and saw a painting of Lake Windermere, England, which he bought for $90. Then, his curiosity was aroused by a roll of canvas lying in the shop, and unrolling it, he discovered a representation of the repentant Magdalene. His offer of $30 for this was quickly accepted, and he then returned to the bank with his acquisitions. Both of these paintings are still owned by the Greene family after nearly eighty years. At one time the "Repentant Magdalene" was thought to be the work of the sixteenth century Italian master Correggio, but now it is described simply as the work of some unidentified Italian artist. Mr. Greene was once offered $5,000 for the painting, but he preferred not to sell it.

When Mr. Green had built up a successful nursery business, he had more money to devote to his hobby, and over the years he acquired more than a hundred paintings. These were hung in an art gallery added to his Highland Avenue home. The gallery was about forty-five feet by thirty feet, with very high ceilings; in order to increase the space for pictures, windows were omitted and the room was lighted through skylights in the daytime and by electricity at night.

The collection included all types of subject matter, painted, with a few exceptions, by American artists. It is worth noting that more than thirty of the canvases were the work of Rochester men and women, including Seth Jones, Armin Butcherkirch, Irving Marlatt, George Hanmer-Croughton, George Haushalter, and George Herdle, the first director of the Memorial Art Gallery. Mr. Herdle sometimes assisted Mr. Greene in choosing paintings for the collection. All of these artists were members of the Rochester Art Club, an organization which held its sixty-second annual exhibition in the Rundel Memorial Building in October, 1944. Mr. Greene was elected an honorary member of the Club about 1908 and often loaned a few of his paintings for their shows. In September of 1911, when the Club held its twenty-eighth exhibition as part of the Rochester Industrial Exposition at Edgerton Park, he loaned "Still Life," a study of two bronze vases by William Chase, and "Temptation of Marguerite," a large painting by the Frenchman, William Bouguereau.

Perhaps the most important painting Mr. Greene owned was a watercolor by Winslow Homer, whose oils and watercolors are eagerly sought by collectors. Mr. Greene was introduced to Homer and when he asked the artist to do a painting for him, Homer agreed. After
some time, he sent three watercolors, requesting Mr. Greene to choose whichever one he liked best. The price paid for the painting was a few hundred dollars, much less than the usual price of Homer's work; after his death his paintings became even more valuable, so that when the Greenes sold their watercolor, they received many times what it cost. One or two other paintings have been sold but the family has preferred to keep most of the collection.

Art was not Mr. Greene's only hobby — he was also an enthusiastic golfer. He frequently practiced in the spacious yard of his home. An English artist named Ertz who lived a couple of blocks away, on Castle Park, painted a portrait of Mr. Greene wearing the cap he always wore when he played golf. In spite of this characteristic touch, the family believes that a sketch drawn by Charles Gruppe is a much better likeness of Mr. Greene. Several other paintings by both Ertz and Gruppe are in the collection.

Of the many other artists represented in Mr. Greene's gallery, the outstanding names are Frederick Remington, who specialized in Western scenes; Edward Redfield, a visitor at the Greenes on one occasion; and W. Elmer Schofield. In April, 1926, a group of paintings from the collection was shown at the Memorial Art Gallery.52

Since Hiram Sibley was a patron of art, it isn't surprising that two of his children, Mrs. James S. Watson and Hiram W. Sibley, became interested in art collecting. Mrs. Watson's outstanding characteristic as a collector was her remarkable catholicity of taste. She had a keen appreciation of the best in art, from the early nineteenth century right down to the present day; therefore her collection consists of excellent examples of a number of types of art.

Perhaps the finest painting in the group is a watercolor by the American marine painter, Winslow Homer. Another outstanding work is a canvas by Claude Monet, the leader of the Impressionists, from his series of Waterloo Bridge. Mrs. Watson also owned a Whistler, fine examples of the Barbizon school by Daubigny, Corot, Rousseau, and Diaz, and paintings by the American landscape artists Homer Martin, Alexander Wyant, and Dwight Tryon.

Mrs. Watson's interest in art was likewise expressed in the establishment of the Memorial Art Gallery. She felt that the city needed a permanent center for the art activities of the community, and for this reason in 1913 she presented the Memorial Art Gallery to the University of Rochester for the people of the city in memory of her
son, James G. Averell, a young architect who died in 1904. In 1926 she and Mr. Watson erected an addition to the Gallery, and they have made valuable gifts to its permanent collection.

Hiram W. Sibley, Mrs. Watson's brother, was interested primarily in collecting medieval and Renaissance ivories. He owned a few paintings also, the most important of which were some examples of the English school, including "Lady Wilton" and "Mrs. Thomas Hunter" by Sir Joshua Reynolds, "Lady Frances Benton" by George Romney, and "Portrait of Mr. Miles" by Sir Thomas Lawrence, and examples of the Barbizon school by Rousseau and Diaz.

These seven collections vary in size and in artistic value but each is interesting not only as a guide to the preferences of its collector, but as an indication of the artistic tastes which prevailed among other American collectors of the same period. At the present time there are several other Rochesterians who have purchased fine paintings but in no case have these acquisitions attained the proportions of a collection.

NOTES

5. Information supplied by Mr. Harper Sibley's secretary.
7. U. A., July 2, 1875.
9. U. A., June 25 and July 2, 1875, reviews the exhibition.
10. Rochester Academy of Art, Catalogue of the Works of Art Exhibited at Their Second Exhibition, October, 1875, Rochester, 1875; Catalogue of Works ... Their Third Exhibition, February, 1876, Rochester, 1876. The third exhibition was apparently the last which this organization held.
11. Clipping entitled "History of Monroe County New York." Rochester Historical Society, undated but after 1876, article by Mr. Dewey.
13. Information from Mr. Sibley's secretary.


21. *U.A.*, Dec. 12, 1876; Jan. 9, April 12, Nov. 21, 1877.


26. *U.A.*, May 29, 1886. (Reprinted from the *St. Louis Republican.*)

27. *U.A.*, Feb. 9, 1888. (Reprinted from the *Boston Journal.*)


34. *U.A.*, March 9, 1888.

35. *Valuable Paintings, Sculpture and Grand Clock selected from the Powers Art Gallery Collection to be sold at absolute public sale... New York, 1899; Democrat and Chronicle*, Dec. 11, 1927.


40. Undated clippings from the *U.A.*, Rochester Historical Society collection.


42. D. & C., June 29, 1935.


45. D. & C., June 29, 1935.


47. Illustrated catalogue of... oil paintings... from the collection of the late William S. Kimball... to be sold at unrestricted public sale, 1924; *New York Times*, Jan. 24, 25, 1924.


49. Ackerman, *op. cit.*, p. 461.


52. Material on the Greene collection was obtained from his son, Mr. Marvin Greene.