




Browncroft,

A Beautiful
Section of
A Beautiful
City



This brochure has been prepared by neighborhood volunteers.



A History of The Browncroft Area

By The
Browncroft
Neighborhood
Association
History Committee

P.O. BOX 10127
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK 14610

CITY OF ROCHESTER, NEW YORK
SESQUICENTENNIAL HISTORY PROJECT
1984

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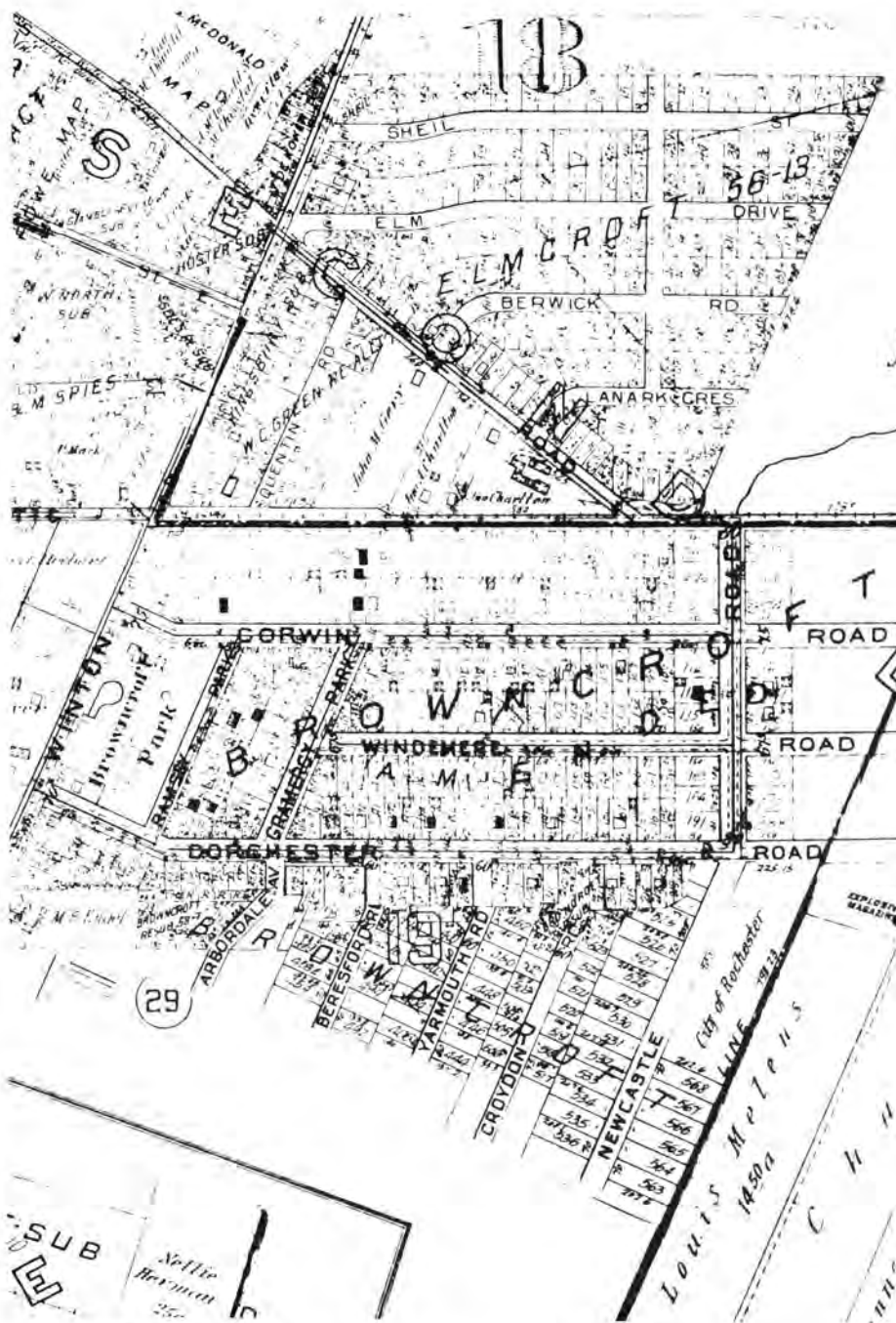
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1918 Rochester Plat Map

North of Atlantic Avenue (Browncroft Boulevard) is the Elmcroft Subdivision, the Kingsbury Subdivision and the W.C. Green Re-allotment. The northern half of the Browncroft Subdivision with the Brown Brothers Company nursery offices are south of Atlantic Avenue.

Browncroft and Surroundings

A Beautiful Section of A Beautiful City



Browncroft history begins in Ellison Park, along the banks of Irondequoit Creek. It was more of a river then, as much as a quarter mile wide when the first French explorers arrived in the early 17th century. The famous French explorer LaSalle is said to have traveled into Irondequoit Bay and Creek during his search for an all-water route to the Pacific Ocean in 1669.

Then, as now, the natural beauty of the area made a pleasing impression. One of the early French missionaries left this description of the Irondequoit Valley: "a pretty river winds between two fine meadows, bordered with little hills, between which we discovered

valleys which extend a great way. The whole forms the finest prospect in the world, bounded by a great forest of high trees."¹

Browncroft was part of that great forest.

UP TO THE MID-18TH CENTURY, the Seneca Indians dominated the area, carrying on trade with the strange, new foreigners, using a well-worn trail leading from Irondequoit Creek at Indian Landing to the Genesee River. Boats and supplies were carried along this trail to avoid the falls on the Genesee. It was part of one of the most important overland routes from the East to the Ohio Valley. For well over a century the area was the scene of conflicts involving the Indians, French, English and Colonists.

Settlers

The Treaty of Paris of 1783, which ended the War for Independence, also helped initiate the organized growth of the area. The land, once claimed by the Massachusetts Colony, officially became part of the State of New York and was opened up for trade and settlement. Trade

routes developed along Irondequoit Creek to connect the early settlement of Canandaigua with Lake Ontario. Indian Landing became a jumpoff point for settlers heading west.

John Tryon, a judge from Columbia County, New York, recognized the potential of the area, and bought land in 1797 for a development just north of Indian Landing. This, the first settlement of any size in the area, grew to become the City of Tryon. The center of this "city" was near the corner of Landing Road North and Blossom Road. It proved a good spot for transporting farm products and trade goods from the rapidly developing western region through Irondequoit Bay to Lake Ontario and points east (i.e. Canada, Europe). In time, the settlement grew to include a warehouse five stories high, an ashery, distillery, cabins, a school house, and other buildings.²

The City of Tryon began to decline after the death of John Tryon in 1808. During the War of 1812, many of the settlers abandoned their homes after Buffalo was burned by the British and Indians. Though it became active again after the war, it was never to become the thriving metropolis envisioned by its founder. The final blow to Tryon, and the stimulus for the next expansion of settlement within the area, was the completion of the local section of the Erie Canal in 1823. It made the Village of Rochester five miles to the west of Tryon the central focus of the region. At Tryon, activity slowed as traders and travelers took advantage of the easy water highways. By 1833, Tryon was gone. All that remains today is a marker designating the spot in Ellison Park and two homes on North Landing Road that were built in 1797 and 1800, one the original Tryon home.

Immediately west of the Irondequoit Creek/Tryon area, three miles east of the Village of Rochester and north of the Village Brighton, lay what is now the Browncroft area. These lands lay in the Town of Boyle, which became Smallwood, which later divided into Brighton and Pittsford.

The only "highways" that defined this area in the 1800's were East Avenue (called "*the road that leads to Pittsford*"), Winton Road (known then as North Avenue), Merchants Road and Landing Road (called "*the road that runs to Canandaigua*"). Merchants Road was originally an Indian trail that was cut wider by merchants who wanted to connect the mouth of the Genesee River (the Port on Lake Ontario which led to western markets) with Canandaigua via Landing Road.

The intersection of East Avenue and Winton Road became the center of the Village of Brighton. The settlement grew steadily because it was located on the Erie Canal.

Through the 1800's the area now known as Browncroft was transformed into farms and nurseries for growing fruit trees and vegetable seeds. By 1885, the land was fully occupied, a quiet place for raising families. Its potential and value continued to increase as Brighton and Rochester grew.

Annexation

In 1894, when the founder of Browncroft, Charles J. Brown, first purchased land in the area, the City of Rochester (which ended at Culver Road) was considering expansion that eventually would incorporate Browncroft - then part of the Town of Brighton.

In 1905 annexation by the City was hotly debated by residents. Brighton over the years had developed its own school, fire department, police and water supply. However, there was urgent need to rebuild the water and sewer facilities and residents were faced with an increased tax bill to finance the activity. The Blossom Road property owners petitioned the City to be annexed so that they could tie into new City sewer lines. They would also receive, they felt, better public services such as fire protection and schools. Others opposed annexation on the grounds that they had moved to the "country" to avoid city taxes.

Ultimately, on April 5, 1905, a majority of voters approved. The annexed territory ran roughly parallel to Juniper Street and was the first part of the neighborhood to become part of the City.

Annexation of more land by the City was debated off and on over the next seven years with no action. However, land value increased and the desirability of "suburban" housing east of the City continued to grow.

THE FIRST THREE MONTHS OF 1913 featured two events which affected the Browncroft neighborhood for many years. A Democrat and Chronicle headline of January 15, 1912 read *"Brighton Residents Object to Gas Tank - Hear That Company Plans to Invade Town."* The Railway and Light Company (which eventually became RG&E) had chosen a site south of Blossom Road just east of Newcastle Road past the City line. After a long and bitter debate, an agreement was made between residents and the company. The lighting company stood by its plans to build but agreed to make a 10-acre park around the structure to help make it more visually attractive. The four-story gas tank was torn down in 1977.

Spies Hotel



Also in 1913 a new annexation plan was unveiled. The City called for incorporation of the area north of Brighton Village, including all of what is now the Browncroft and Elmcroft neighborhoods.

The Brighton Town Board met with property owners at Spies's Hall (formerly know as Hoster's Hotel), at the corner of Winton Road and Atlantic Avenue. There were 250 people inside and 100 outside the hall. The vote by property owners to oppose the annexation was 85-18. But continuing political pressure by the City, and a change in the annexation plan, turned things around. An amended annexation bill was approved by the State Legislature on March 25, 1913. At midnight January 1, 1914, the City expanded to include all of Browncroft.

The Brown Nursery and Subdivision

In 1894 Brown Brothers Company bought land from Steven Corwin, a well known nurseryman. Charles J. Brown had learned the nursery business as a young man employed at the Glen Brothers nursery.³

C.J. Brown operated the Brown Brothers Continental Nursery, which specialized in fruit and ornamental trees. It was a family business which included his brother Robert and sister Mary Jane, and later his sons Leland and Donald.⁴ The nursery employed many people, had branches in Chicago and in Toronto, and had a reputation for providing quality stock. It also specialized in residential landscaping, a new concept to the nursery industry of the time.

The attractive white office building with its many columns, housed 13 different nursery offices in the vicinity of Dorchester Road and Ramsey Park.⁵ Nearby was an 80 foot by 214 foot stone warehouse for cold storage for nursery stock. Adjacent packing houses provided an additional 12,000 square feet.⁶

C.J. Brown lived in a large house at the southeast corner of Winton Road and Corwin Road (the former Steven Corwin house). His parents, John Skelton Brown and Ester Cowles Brown, and his sister, Mary Jane (Minnie J.), lived in another large house at the northeast corner of Winton Road and Corwin Road. Eventually his children built homes in the area: Margaret Brown Kaelber at 480 Winton Road; Leland Brown at 65 Windemere Road; and Donald Brown at 401 Beresford Road.⁷

By 1914 C.J. Brown had decided to subdivide his nursery property by forming the Browncroft Realty Corporation with himself as president and his son-in-law, George J. Kaelber, as secretary-treasurer. Mr. Brown allocated 300 acres of his property to the development of residential lots in an area encompassing the present Browncroft Boulevard (south side only), Corwin Road, Windemere Road, Dorchester Road, Gramercy Park, Ramsey Park, Newcastle Road,

Yarmouth Road and Beresford Road. These English street names reflect Mr. Brown's background as his family came from the Isle of Man.

C.J. Brown constructed streets and cement sidewalks (replacing the plank sidewalks on Winton Road), installed sewer and utility lines, and magnificently landscaped the parkways. The "centerpiece" of the development was Browncroft Park, which was south of C.J. Brown's home in the block bounded by Winton Road, Dorchester Road, Ramsey Park, and Corwin Road.



The park had a duck pond with a fountain, a beautiful rose garden, picturesque foot bridges, a tennis court, a summer house and a 25 foot dovecote (pigeon house)⁸ housing Chinese pheasants, Pouter pigeons, peacocks and other decorative birds.⁹ Neighbors strolled along the winding gravel path admiring the ducks and black and white swans. The pond was fed by Thomas Creek which originated in Willow Pond on East Avenue west of

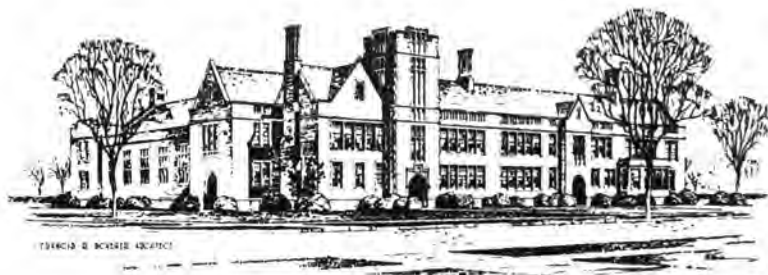
Winton Road. The creek crossed Winton Road at Browncroft Park, and continued north into Palmer's Glen on Irondequoit Bay. C.J. Brown had created the pond on a bow in the creek.

C.J. Brown's dream was to establish a completely planned and developed tract that would be a showplace. Landscaping was especially stressed. On the parkways there were elaborate plantings of lilac, magnolia, wisteria, and roses, as well as spruce, elm and maple trees. New homeowners were encouraged to further landscape their residences to enhance the park-like atmosphere of the area.

In an effort to guarantee that the subdivision would be the best of its kind, C.J. Brown placed restrictive covenants on the land. Houses had to be a minimum 50 or 60 feet from the front lot line and five feet from the adjoining properties. No double houses, Boston flats, apartment houses or any buildings of a commercial nature could be built. Minimum standards were set for the quality and style of the houses, with modified Colonial or Georgian styles preferred. Recommended colors were grey and white with brick houses providing a pleasing contrast. The Browncroft Realty Corporation recommended an architect to review and assist in the preparation of the building plans of prospective homeowners.¹⁰

Sites were indicated in the plans for churches to serve the residents. C.J. Brown also set aside land at the corner of Newcastle Road and Dorchester Road for the erection of a school which he knew would be

needed by families moving into the area. The City's hesitation and delay in the construction of a new school led C.J. Brown to make a donation of the site in an effort to speed up the project. In recognition of the donation, the City proposed that the new school, when built, should be named after Mr. Brown. He declined, expressing his belief that it would be preferable to maintain the then existing policy of naming schools after well-known Rochester pioneers.¹¹



Charles Carroll School Number Forty-Six

In 1932 School #46, the Charles Carroll School, was opened for students in kindergarten through sixth grade. Within two years the seventh and eighth grade rooms were completed and there was no longer a need for children of the area to attend School #28 on Humboldt Street. It was and still is not only the community school but a vital part of the Browncroft Neighborhood.

Life In The New Subdivision

The area was served by trolleys using Main Street, Winton Road, and Blossom Road. There was also a private bus company, run by the Browns, that was very successful because it provided faster service between Browncroft and the center of the city than did the trolleys.¹²

Another service provided for the residents by the Realty Company was a night watchman - who walked the neighborhood until 11 P.M. each evening, checking to make sure the houses, as well as the businesses on Winton Road, were secure.

The Browns had the sidewalks plowed in winter and the parkways mowed in summer. They also maintained the Rose Garden at the intersection of Browncroft Boulevard and Merchants Road, and were involved with planting the first roses there. After John Charlton's

death in 1918, the site of the Rose Garden was given to the City by his family for use as a park.

Browncroft was widely known during its early years for its Christmas light displays. The Browns hired the Laube Electric Company to string colored lights in their large evergreens near the corner of Winton Road and Corwin Road, while individual householders put colored lights in their trees and shrubbery.¹³ Within a short time the display of outdoor Christmas lighting had become so extensive that, according to Mrs. Norma Kleiner, the area was "*just like a fairyland.*" In 1923, this Christmas display attracted so many people from all over the area that an estimated 10,000 cars and many pedestrians passed through the neighborhood.¹⁴ As is true with all popular attractions, this interest had its less pleasant aspects — particularly traffic jams. Police officers had to be brought in to direct traffic but little could be done to ease the problems experienced by Browncroft residents in trying to get into or out of their own driveways.

Browncroft Extension

The majority of the lots in the Browncroft subdivision had been sold by 1926. However, there was so much demand for additional home sites that C.J. Brown developed new plans for what became the Browncroft Extension. The land for this project extended from Newcastle Road eastward almost to Landing Road, and from Browncroft Boulevard southward to Blossom Road. The 200-acre area was divided into 500 lots.

C.J. Brown envisioned a "suburban" extension of his "Browncroft Dream." The area was to be endowed with all the characteristics that made the original Browncroft subdivision so attractive. He built roads and sidewalks similar to those in Browncroft. On Corwin Road, he constructed a beautiful stone bridge over the brook that divided the area. He put in trees and ornamental plants to make the landscaping comparable to that in Browncroft. He did everything he could to convince potential buyers that the Extension was the perfect place in which to build a home "expressing individuality", to find "seclusion without isolation", and to enjoy "rolling hillsides, great shade trees and picturesque streams."¹⁵

The Extension was originally just what its name implied — an extension of the original Browncroft. In the 1950's the State laid claim to a strip of land west of Clover Street. With the construction of the Seabreeze Expressway (now 590) in the early 1960's Browncroft and the Extension were divided. People still find it confusing that Corwin Road, Windemere Road, and Dorchester Road continue on the other side of the expressway.

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Brown Bros. Co. Office, ca. 1915. *(Photo courtesy of Patricia Brown Kaul)*



Charles J. Brown
(Photo courtesy of Joan Brown Fisher)

Christmas lights at the Fenyvessy home on Ramsey Park, ca. 1919.
(Photo courtesy of Albert Fenyvessy)





Jane and Frances Telford at the Duck Pond, 1911. View from Winton Road looking east.

(Photo courtesy of Caroline Caley Huscher)



Browncroft Duck Pond facing south toward Dorchester Road. Brown Bros. Co. Office is at the left, Winton Road is on the right.

(From the Browncroft Realty brochure, courtesy of Donna Melnyk Shinner)



The former Corwin farmhouse, in 1897. Benjamin McGill, third from left, was the superintendent of the Brown Brothers Nursery and lived here with his family. (Photo courtesy of Alberta McGill Bailey Westfield)



Charles J. Brown residence, 540 Winton Road N., former Corwin farmhouse, ca. 1915. (Photo courtesy of Patricia Brown Kaul)



Browncroft homes, from the Browncroft Realty Corporation brochure, ca. 1920.
(Brochure courtesy of George and Lorraine Kuipers)



Aerial view of Browncroft, ca. 1920
Site of # 46 School is in the foreground, Merchants Road is at center right.

(Photo courtesy of Patricia Brown Kaul)

The Depression and Bankruptcy

C.J. Brown and his company were casualties of the Great Depression of the 1930's. He had invested heavily in the new Extension and had developed another subdivision, called "Orchard Park", north of Empire Boulevard. His business was so overextended it was unable to survive when few, if any, lots in the new developments were sold.

Mr. Brown died in 1933. His organization was bankrupt. Browncroft Park, between Corwin Road and Dorchester Road, was left completely unattended. The duck pond eventually became stagnant and a breeding place for mosquitos. The bank, which had taken over the land responded to complaints by filling in the pond in the 1940's. The remainder of the park was neglected and became overgrown and "jungle-like".

The rest of the area also suffered from neglect. Parkways were no longer maintained by the Brown organization. By 1935, many homes had been taken over by the banks. Many others were listed for sale by individual owners. There were few buyers even at prices of five and six thousand dollars. Vacancies remained until the start of World War II when the area began to revive.

Other Subdivisions In The Area

What is popularly known today as the Browncroft area is really made up of several different subdivisions.

The Sheils owned a farm of 41 acres in the area to the northeast of the corner of Winton Road and Merchants Road. In 1923 they subdivided the farm to establish the "Elmcroft" area. The subdivision encompassed Elm Drive, Elmcroft Road (formerly Sheil Street), Berwick Road, Lanark Crescent, and Monticello Drive. The Sheils, like the Browns, imposed restrictions on the land, the most interesting being that "*an elm tree be set out on each lot.*" In the 1960's all the elms were lost to the Dutch Elm Disease.

Ruth Plummer can recall only three houses being on the yet unpaved street when she moved to Elm Drive in 1924. Jim's Hill, a popular sledding spot for neighborhood children, was to the east of Elm Drive and Monticello Drive.

The Charltons were nurserymen who owned land on the north side of Browncroft Boulevard and east toward Irondequoit Creek. They intended to develop the land where the expressway is today. North of Browncroft Boulevard they planned to develop a "Charlton Manor" subdivision which would have included an extension of Newcastle Road as well as several parallel streets to the east of it. While old maps show these streets, these plans never materialized.

The John Charlton home, at 116 Browncroft Boulevard, was built in 1914 and remained in the family until 1978.

Ellen and James Kingsbury bought the area around Quentin Road in 1906 and started the Kingsbury subdivision in 1911. Quentin Road was originally named Kingsbury Street.

The DePotter subdivision was located where Croydon Road is today. Abraham DePotter owned land northward from Blossom Road towards Dorchester Road. The Browns later bought part of the tract, extended DePotter Street to Dorchester Road and renamed it Croydon Road.

Southwest of Browncroft was the Wintondale subdivision which predates the Browncroft subdivision. It included Arbordale Avenue and all the streets running between Arbordale Avenue and Winton Road. Many of these streets originally had names such as Magnolia, Wisteria, and Chestnut.

For more information on these and other subdivisions, see Appendix I.

Post-War Browncroft

The Browncroft area saw many changes in the 1940's, especially after the war. The street car lines that had serviced the area were discontinued in 1940 and replaced with buses. The car tracks were torn up on Winton Road and Blossom Road and the streets rebuilt.

During the late 1940's and 1950's residential construction in the area was largely completed. A number of homes were built along Newcastle Road and in areas to the north and east of Elmcroft Road and Monticello Drive. The Bobrich Apartments were built on Blossom Road on the site of what was formerly the Morrill Farm.

In the 1960's the Seabreeze Expressway (now 590) sliced Browncroft into two major parts. Palmer's Glen west of the expressway was filled in, as was other land along Tryon Park, when small streams were re-routed underground. The "Can of Worms" covered the old subway and canal routes, and cut across other historically significant areas such as Tolan's Woods.

In 1964 a fire at #46 School damaged the auditorium. By 1966 the auditorium was rebuilt and more classrooms added.

In the late 1960's Gaslight Lane, off Blossom Road, was subdivided, and new houses were built there. In 1967 the Brighton Branch Library, which had been located on Winton Road between East Avenue and University Avenue in the old Brighton School #1 building, was moved to a new structure at the corner of Winton Road and Atlantic Avenue and became the Winton Road Branch Library.

Continued

One of the earliest businesses was Hoster's Hotel, a wood frame building that formerly stood at the northeast corner of Winton Road and Atlantic Avenue. Mrs. Alberta Westfield recalls the cracker barrel in the grocery store there around 1905. Elva Hallings remembers the pies sold there. "There was a horse trough right outside on Atlantic Avenue", according to John J. Gery. After Minnie Hoster married Charles Spies it became Spies Hotel and was used later as a meeting hall and Sunday school.¹⁷

Some farm homes of the late nineteenth century still exist in the area. The farms of Frank Morrill and Edwin Terrell on Blossom Road are gone but Abraham DePotter's farmhouse at the northwest corner of Croydon Road and Blossom Road still stands although extensively changed.

Beers 1872 Atlas shows that two homes of Moses Smith are 669 Winton Road and 67 Merchants Road (adjacent to the Rose Garden). Though these houses have been altered throughout the years, they are still at their original locations.



Elva Hallings House

The house at 273 Dorchester Road (near Croydon), according to the late Miss Elva Hallings who lived there for many years with her parents, was originally a tenant house. Around 1910 the Browns moved it from a location near Dorchester Road and Ramsey Park. They added some of the pillars from the original Brown Brothers Company office when that building was taken down.

C.J. Brown renovated and enlarged his home at the southeast corner of Corwin Road and Winton Road. It evolved from a private residence into the nursery office.¹⁸ Later it was a nursing home and now it is an

Continued on Page 24

A HISTORY OF THE BROWNCROFT AREA



The Frank Morrill farm, 943 Blossom Road, built in 1896 near the entrance to the present Ellison Park Apartments.
(Photo courtesy of Norma Morrill Kleiner)



John and Emma Charlton home at 116 Browncroft Boulevard, 1914.
(Photo courtesy of Peggy Charlton Fenlon)



Back view of 67 Merchants Road taken from the Charlton house on Browncroft Boulevard, 1914. The barn complex is in the present Rose Garden. The center background is where Lanark Crescent is today.
(Photo courtesy of Peggy Charlton Fenlon)



View of Rose Garden at Merchants Road and Browncroft Boulevard, facing southwest, ca. 1930.
(Photo courtesy of Mrs. Charles Ferguson)



View of Elmcroft Road from Elm Drive. Mrs. Thorington (Ruth) Plummer, ca. 1925. *(Photo courtesy of Ruth Plummer)*

apartment building. The Italianate features of the original structure can still be discerned in this house which is listed in the 1872 Atlas as being owned by Steven Corwin.

The quality of architecture of many residences in the neighborhood reflect the affluence and tastes of the prominent businessmen who built them in the 1920's. Names of well-known residents included Anderson (bottling), Bausch, Gleason, Hickok, Martin (Hungerford-Smith), Morley (Morley Tools), Olney (Birdseye), Strassenburgh, and Wehle (Genesee Brewing). The style of the neighborhood architecture was influenced by C.J. Brown but also must have been influenced by the firm of Gordon and Kaelber which was responsible for designing at least 20 homes in the area. (See Appendix III for a listing.)

The original dreams of the Browns and the other nurserymen of the area have been fulfilled by the nurturing of its trees, shrubs, and flowers – our living landmarks. There are monumental beeches – split leaf and copper – as well as clumps of Austrian pines. Magnolias in abundance grace two streets. Many residential yards have dogwoods and rhododendrons left from the nursery era. Lilacs, spirea, and wisteria enhance the area between the sidewalk and the pavement along many streets.

This legacy of landscaping as well as the stately homes indeed make the Browncroft area a beautiful section of a beautiful city.

WISTERIA IN BROWNCROFT

By Melissa E. Bingeman

Homes in a garden, that reaches to the wildwood;
That reaches to the valley, and clammers down the Hill.
Homes built for comfort - a paradise for childhood,
Where children play among the flowers or ramble by the rill.

Roadways are winding - they wind among the tulip beds,
They wind among the hyacinths, the crocuses and briar;
On, past the ramblers, and where the early maple sheds
Its blossoms, and the Burning Bush has set itself afire.

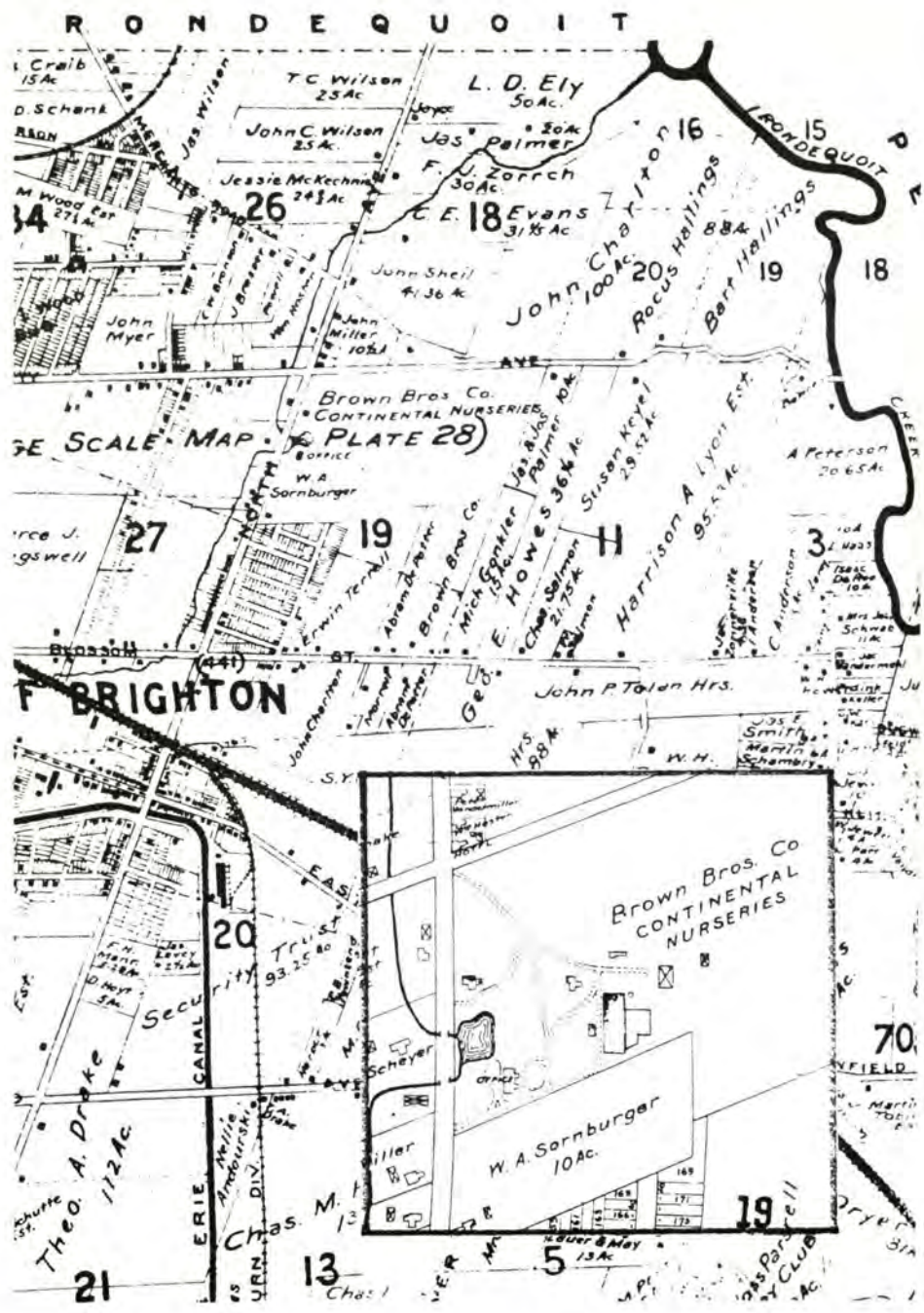
Always a highlight! Today it is the evergreen;
Tomorrow the Forsythia, or Lily of the Vale.
Then the Wisteria, loveliest vine I've ever seen,
Entwining every standard with ethereal foliage, pale.

Sprays of Wisteria etched on every globe of light,
Dripping in profusion from among the lacy leaves;
Twin rows of pillars, reaching to the left and right,
Crowned with glorious capitals no temple e'er achieves.

From the Democrat and Chronicle Series
April-October 1930



1872 Monroe County Atlas
 Brighton Centre, north of the Erie Canal, is at the present intersection of Winton Road and East Avenue. Blossom Road cuts across the southern part of Lot 19. University Avenue is now Browncroft Boulevard. Merchants Road is a dirt path east of Winton Road.



1902 Monroe County Plat Map
 North Avenue is now Winton Road. Brown Brothers Company is at the corner of Browncroft Boulevard (University Avenue on the map). Note that Thomas Creek crosses Winton Road near the nursery office and again north of Merchants Road. Enlargement of the Duck Pond, nursery office, and at lower right, the large warehouse.

APPENDIX I

GLEANINGS FROM SOME EARLY LAND TITLE RECORDS

The end of the Revolutionary War marked the beginning of land investment in western New York State. Nathaniel Gorham and Oliver Phelps bought from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts all the land bounded on the west by the Genesee River, north by Lake Ontario, east by Seneca Lake, and south by the Pennsylvania border. Their surveyors laid out 102 towns, each of which was six miles square. Township Number Thirteen of Range Seven encompassed what is now Brighton which included the Browncroft and Elmcroft areas of Rochester.

In 1789 Phelps and Gorham deeded to Caleb Hyde, Elijah Northrop, Prosper Polly, Enos Stone, and Joseph Chapin:

"All that tract of land ceded to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts by the State of New York and granted to us by said Commonwealth being Township No. 13 bounded westerly on the Genesee River. The first bounds being a small basswood tree standin in the east line of the Range of Townships adjoining westerly on said river and marked No. VII . . ."

which was approximately 18,900 acres. They decided that Township No. 13 should consist of three divisions, each in turn sub-divided into a number of quite large lots. In 1789 the five speculators assumed individual ownership of various parts of the property, with Elijah Northrop obtaining title to, among other areas, Lots 18 and 19 . . . in other words, to the land now bounded by Winton road on the west, Colebourne Road on the north, the Rochester City Line on the east, and a boundary line just south of Blossom Road on the south.

NORTH OF BROWNCROFT BOULEVARD

The area to the north of Browncroft Boulevard was included within the 219 acres of Lot 18. Thomas Creek entered Lot 18 at about the middle of its western boundary (approximately the corner of Winstead and Winton Roads), then ran easterly through the middle of the lot to Irondequoit Creek. At some early date a saw mill was established at the point where Thomas Creek entered Lot 18.

Enos Blossom took title to all two hundred and ten acres of Lot 18 in 1804. In 1814 he deeded 30 acres off the southeast corner to Sarah, Wealthy, and Philander Perry. In 1817 he deeded "the bottom $\frac{3}{4}$'s of Lot 18 to John and Solomon Hatch, reserving for himself " $\frac{1}{2}$ of the mill lot and $\frac{1}{2}$ of the privileges and appurtenances thereunto belonging".

The title to the 30 acre property passed from Sarah, Wealthy, and Philander Perry through a number of owners to Icabod Smith in 1829 to Moses Smith in 1831. It was obtained by John Charlton in 1885 from his heir Susan Smith together with a 3 acre triangular wedge at the intersection of what is now Browncroft Boulevard and Merchants Road and an additional 20 acres going east of the 30 acre parcel. John Charlton was a nurseryman who also owned land and buildings on University Avenue and 15 acres of Lot 19 on the south side of Blossom Rd. After his death in 1918, his four children dedicated one acre of the wedge of land at Browncroft Boulevard and Merchants Road to the

City of Rochester for use as a park. His daughter Florence Leader continued to own the farm house at 116 Browncroft Boulevard until her death in 1978.

The plot of land that went to John and Solomon Hatch seems to have remained intact through a succession of owners — Amos Graves, Rueben Crosby (1818), Joseph Downs (1826), John Root (1827), Eber Hart (1835), Samuel S. Moore (1838), John H. Martindale (1876). After Martindale's death in 1881, his estate sold off the land in two larger parcels, which covered most of the areas north of Merchants Road, and three smaller pieces, which — together with the wedge owned by John Charlton — filled in the triangle formed by Browncroft Boulevard, Merchants Road, and Winton Road.

One of the larger parcels consisted of 31 acres that went to the Rochester Home of Industry, an institution for the protection and education of young ladies. Winstead Road and Marsden Road are in this area today. South of this, the second of the larger parcels, consisted of 41 acres sold in 1885 to John Shiel. It was kept intact as a farm until 1923, when the Shiel family decided to sub-divide, undertook to plant an elm tree on each lot, and appointed General Realty Service Inc., to sell lots in the tract to be known thenceforth as "Elmcroft". Elm Drive, Elmcroft (formerly Shiel Street), Berwick Road, Lanark Crescent, and Monticello Drive are in this area today.

The smallest of the areas sold consisted of a 165 by 254 foot lot at the northeast corner of Winton Road and Browncroft Boulevard that went in 1884 to John Arend. It passed in two pieces to William and Elizabeth Hoster; in 1887 from Phillip Mack who had purchased it from Jacob Smith, and in 1895 from Rachel and John Kennedy who acquired it from Adrian Verslius. The Kennedy lot contained a house. The Hoster family ran a hotel (saloon) at the corner for many years in the early 1900's that later came to be known as Spies Hall after the marriage of their daughter and only heir, Minnie to Charles Spies.

In 1886 John S. Miller bought 7 ½ acres which encompassed everything, except the lot mentioned in the last paragraph, between Browncroft Boulevard, Winton Road, Merchants Road, and a line parallel to and about 450 feet east of Winton Road. Ella and James Kingsbury bought the Miller farm in 1906 and decided in 1911 to subdivide it into a tract called the "Kingsbury Subdivision", with Kingsbury Street dividing it. Upon the purchase of the area by William C. Green in 1916, the lots were redrawn, Kingsbury Street became Quentin Road, and the tract was designated the "W.C. Green Re-Allotment".

Sandwiched between the Miller farm and the Charlton wedge in the Browncroft Boulevard, Winton Road, Merchants Road triangle was a 3 acre parcel of land that was purchased in 1885 by Jerome Bence. By 1918 the ownership of this land had passed to John Gery whose house was on Merchants Road. By 1927 this land had been split into the Frank and Alice Siller Subdivision on Browncroft Boulevard and the DeCarolus Subdivision on Merchants Road. However Browncroft Realty Corp. owned the Browncroft Boulevard lots between 1921 and 1927.

SOUTH OF BROWNCROFT BOULEVARD

The area to the south of Browncroft Boulevard was included within the 210 acres of Lot 19, which had been deeded to Elijah Northrup in 1790. He disposed of this property in three major parcels.

In 1814 the "top", or northernmost, 60 acres were sold to Job E. Smith who lost it in foreclosure to Benjamin Davis (1815). William Taylor transferred in 1816 to Amos Graves, who transferred to Joseph Bloss in 1818. It was split into two sections (one of 50 acres, the other of 10 acres) in 1840. The 50-acre section

(fronting on Winton Road and Browncroft Boulevard) was owned successively by Ezra Roseburg (1840), Mortimer A.F. Harrison (1840), Stephen L. Francisco (1844), Otis T. Peters (1844), Stephen M. Corwin (1844), and the Brown Brothers Company (1894). The 10-acre section (fronting on Winton Road where Dorchester Road meets it today) went to Samuel O. Cogswell, was transferred three times between 1840 and 1901, and was deeded in 1903 by William Sornberger and his wife, Lucy, to Charles J. Brown. Brown turned this land over to his Brown Brothers Company in 1909. This area is traversed by Corwin Road, Windemere Road, Ramsey Park, Gramercy Park and Dorchester Road and the northern part of Newcastle Road today.

In 1812 a 50-acre parcel constituting the southwest corner of Lot 19 had been sold to Levi Hoyt. That parcel encompassed what is known today as the Wintondale Subdivision, which is bounded by Winton Road, Blossom Road, Arbordale Avenue, and the southern lot lines of Dorchester Road houses.

Even earlier, in 1802, a 100-acre parcel constituting the southern and southeastern part of Lot 19 had been sold to Joel Scudder. The western half of this parcel thereafter passed through the hands of Hosea Parkhurst (1808), Janna Holton (1822), Elisha Miller (1835), and Charlotte Calkins (1867). Charlotte Calkins deeded small parcels to various individuals including a 15-acre parcel south of Blossom Road (which was bought by John Charlton in 1885) and an area of 27.46 acres north of Blossom Road which was owned successively by Charles Salmon (1880), William R. Corris (1881), Erwin Terrel (1888), and Brown Brothers Company (1919). Yarmouth and Beresford Roads traverse this latter area today.

The eastern half of Joel Scudder's parcel was owned and transferred in 1820 by Phillip Moon to Albert Blakeslee. It remained intact until 1872 despite 12 changes in ownership. In 1872, however, John R. Olmstead sold the 28 acres of the parcel north of Blossom road to John S. Kramer. Kramer sold 10 of those acres in 1873 to Abraham DePotter who (1) subdivided the land in about three of those acres along Blossom Road and established DePotter Street (now the Blossom Road end of Croydon Road) and (2) sold the remaining northern section of his land to Frank J. and Bertha J. Geyer who, in turn, sold it to Brown Brothers Company in 1914. The remainder of the Kramer land was used as a farm until, following the death of its owners, it was disposed of by Supreme Court order in 1901 and was acquired by Brown Brothers Company. This land encompassed the Newcastle Road lots (from Dorchester Road South) of today.

APPENDIX II

BROWNCROFT AREA CHURCHES

The Brighton Reformed Church was built at 219 Arbordale Road (On Blossom Road and Heather Street) in 1891 and expanded in 1896. The basement was dug from 1920-1924. The Holland language was used until the 1920's.¹ The brick structure at 805 Blossom Road was built in 1954.²

Bethany Evangelical Church, started in 1912, was located at the northeast corner of Winton Road and Juniper Street.

The Brighton Community Church was formed in 1922 by 149 people who left the Bethany Evangelical Church, leaving only 4 members.³ Their temporary frame tabernacle, with its sawdust floor,⁴ was built in 1922 on what is now

APPENDIX II *Continued*

Nottingham Circle. They built the basement of their church at 420 Winton Road in 1926 and finished the building in 1954.⁵ In 1980 they moved to Penfield and became the Browncroft Community Church.⁶ The Metropolitan Baptist Church is now located there.

St. Matthews Episcopal Church, at the corner of Browncroft Boulevard and Winton Road, was built in 1926, and featured beautiful stained glass windows and a slab from Shakespeare's tomb.⁷ Before the church was built, the Sunday school class met at the office of the Browncroft Realty Corporation. In 1920 they leased (with option to buy) the Spies Hotel, meeting in the sitting room and closing the doors to the saloon.⁸ The Episcopal Church left in 1965⁹ and several congregations have occupied it since then. The church is now the Holy Name of Mary Catholic Church.

The Rochester Christian Reformed Church built a beautiful gothic structure at the corner of Browncroft Boulevard and Newcastle Road in 1951. In 1982 the building was destroyed by fire and the 105 year old congregation relocated to Penfield.¹⁰

The Emmanuel Covenant Church at 310 Browncroft Boulevard was built in 1957-1958.¹¹

Many area residents also attended St. John the Evangelist and Brighton Presbyterian Churches. St. John the Evangelist Church, with its school, was built on Humboldt Street in 1914.¹²

Brighton Presbyterian began as Brighton Congregational in 1817, and became Presbyterian in 1870. After their church on Hoyt Place burned in 1867, they built a sanctuary on East Avenue in 1872. The present stone sanctuary was built from 1912 to 1915,¹³ and the education wing was started in 1944, replacing the 1872 structure.¹⁴

1. *The Forty-Fifth Anniversary Year Book of the Brighton Reformed Church* (Rochester, N.Y., 1937) pp. 4-6.
2. Russel Pater, interviewed by Sharon Bloemendaal, April, 1984.
3. "Cut Loose from Old Church Ties and Start Anew" Newspaper article date unknown, probably 1922.
4. Mildred Farmer Woodgate, interviewed by Sharon Bloemendaal, April, 1984.
5. Maude Thornton, *The History of the Brighton Community Church* (unpublished, 1934).
6. W. Millar Crawford, interviewed by Sharon Bloemendaal, April, 1984.
7. "Slab from Shakespeare's Tomb Brought Here". *Democrat and Chronicle and Rochester Herald*. October 18, 1926.
8. "Church Extension Society Gets Option on Former Saloon Property" *Rochester Herald*. January 18, 1920.
9. Episcopal Diocese archives
10. *Christian Reformed Church of Rochester 1877-1952* (Rochester, NY 1952)
11. Ralph Dirksen, interviewed by Holly Petsos, March, 1984.
12. John C. O'Brien, interviewed by Sharon Bloemendaal, April, 1984.
13. John Laird, *The History of the Brighton Presbyterian Church 1817-1933* (Rochester, 1933)
14. Elizabeth Caley Copson, *150 Years of Brighton Church* (Rochester, NY, 1967).

APPENDIX III

The following is a list of some of the houses that were designed by the architectural firm of Gordon and Kaelber.

39 Browncroft Boulevard
75 Browncroft Boulevard
141 Browncroft Boulevard
302 Beresford Road
345 Beresford Road
373 Beresford Road
378 Beresford Road
401 Beresford Road
229 Corwin Road
94 Corwin Road

The firm still exists but is now known as Kaelber, Mayer, Miller, and Unger.

23 Dorchester Road
29 Dorchester Road
43 Dorchester Road
49 Dorchester Road
148 Newcastle Road
340 Newcastle Road
373 Newcastle Road
480 Winton Road
444 Winton Road
390 Yarmouth Road

FOOTNOTES

1. Margaret MacNab, *The Sesquicentennial History of the Town of Brighton*.
2. Margaret MacNab, Katherine Wilcox Thompson & Shirley Cox Husted, *Northfield on the Genesee*, (Rochester, New York, 1981).
3. Dorothy Baschnagle, interviewed by Holly Petsos in Rochester, New York, 1984.
4. Patricia Brown Kaul, interviewed by BNA History Committee in Rochester, New York, January 12, 1984.
5. Mrs. Harold Phelps, interviewed by Sharon Bloemendaal in Rochester, New York, February, 1984.
6. *Brown Brothers Co. Continental Nursery*, A plate book used by salesmen or agents, circa 1905.
7. Kaul, *op.cit.*
8. Carl Kaelber, Information from the architectural files of Gordon and Kaelber, March 1984.
9. John C. O'Brien, interviewed by BNA History Committee in Rochester, New York, August, 1983.
10. Browncroft Realty Corporation, *Extension Brochure*, circa 1926.
11. Kaul, *op.cit.*
12. O'Brien, *op.cit.*
13. Kaul, *op.cit.*
14. *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*, December 25, 1923.
15. Extension Brochure, *op.cit.*
16. O'Brien, *op.cit.*
17. "Church Extension Society Gets Option on Former Saloon Property", *The Rochester Herald*, Sunday, January 18, 1920.
18. Kaul, *op.cit.*

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Beers, *Atlas*, 1872.

Browncroft Realty Corporation, *Extension Brochure*, circa 1926.

Democrat and Chronicle, December 25, 1923.

MacNab, Margaret S., "The Sesquicentennial History of the Town of Brighton"

MacNab, Margaret S., Thompson, Katherine Wilcox, & Husted, Shirley Cox, "Northfield on the Genesee; The Story of a Frontier Town of Monroe County, New York", *Monroe County Historian's Office*, County of Monroe, Rochester, New York, 1981.

Monroe County Clerk's Office, *Land Records*, Rochester, New York.

NOTES

Winton Rd West East		Commercial Sketch of Winton Road North 1920-1950					Winton Rd West East		
1920		1925	1930	1935	1940	1945	1950		
Railroad	75	LEHIGH VALLEY COAL SALES CO.			H.H.BABCOCK COAL SALES CO.			75	
	177		BRIGHTON POST OFFICE			PURE CANDY CO.		177	
	184	ADAMS HOME CO. Real estate						184	
	193			CARL YOUNGBLOOD Gas Station	CLEARY'S GAS STATION		SCANLON OIL CO.	193	
	194		ISADORE LAZAROVSKY Tailor	ISADORE LAZAROVSKY Cleaners		CADET CLEANERS	MAPLE CLEANERS & DYERS	194	
	198		EVERET BYRON Baker	DELIA MEIMEYER Grocer	PERSONAL STATIONARY Printer	RODGERS PRINT SHOP	LYKE SANDWICH SHOP	198	
	200	JOHNCOX & HALLINGS Grocers	JOHNCOX & WRIGHT Grocers		VACANT	VACANT		200	
	203	EMIL STAIB Saloon						203	
Blossom	204	CLARANCE MOTT Variety Store	LEWIS A.KNIGHT Confectionery			GEOFFREY S.KNIGHT Druggist	GEOFFREY S.KNIGHT Druggist	204	
	207		CONSTANTINOS LUKAS Confect'y	SPIRO'S GRILL Restaurant				207	
	211	SAMUEL COCO Fruits		COSTAS ALAPOUDAKIS Confect'y	ANGELO O'HALAGANA Tailor			211	
	212	FRANK BRADFORD Restrauat	WILLIAM McCARTY Barber	BENJAMIN WEINSTEIN Dry Cl'rs				212	
	213	MICHAEL VANDERZELL Barber	BENJAMIN WEINSTEIN Dry Cl'rs	ANGELO PETRIX Shoes				213	
	215			WILLIAM McCARTY Barber	GEORGE OWENS Barber			215	
	222	THOMAS WALDOCK Dry Goods		MARJORIE TWEEDALE Hairdresser	ELIZ VANDORN Hairdresser			222	
	226	HERBERT LAIDLAW Hardware		LEROY WEBER Dry Goods	STELLA KERR Dry Goods	SUNSHINE SHOP Dry Goods	GUYETT & GUTACKER Radios	226	
	228		ALBERT D.MARTIN Hardware			BRIGHTON RADIO & ELECTRIC	KRAUS ENGINEERING	228	
	232	JAMES SKINNER Pool Room	ANGELO PETRIX Shoes	NICHOLAS KIESEL Baker			STICKLES Dry Goods	232	
	235		FLICKINGER STORES INC.Grocery		WALTER LEPSCH Grocer			235	
	237	WEAVER BROS. Masons		EDWIN ASHTON Gasoline	BEAN SERVICE STATION	HAMBLETON TERMINAL CORP Gas	JOE'S LUNCH/WINTON AUTOREPAIR	237	
	246	MERVIN BAKER Grocer	ROCHESTER STERLING GROCERY CO	FRANK WEAVER & SON Mason		FRANK WEAVER Mason		246	
Heather	251	WILLIAM EESLEY Shoes	PETER CLAPAFTIO Confect'y	BEN WEINSTEIN Tailor		ROSS' GRILL	BRIGHTON RADIO & ELECTRIC CO.	251	
	258			ROSS ELECTRIC CO.			BROWNCROFT BEAUTY SALON	258	
	260		HART'S FOOD STORE Grocery		PHILIP LEARY Confect'y		KAI ANDERSON Cleaners	260	
	262	GARRET BOOMSMA Tailor	CHARLES POTTER Confect'y			ANN'S BROWNCROFT BEAUTY SALON	METROPOLITAN DRY CLEANERS	262	
	266	GREAT ATLANTIC & PACIFIC TEA	JOHN HERMAN LANGDON Meats			BROWNCROFT MARKET Meats	BROWNCROFT LIQUOR STORE	266	
	272							272	
	278		MILTON RYDER Barber		ELSIE RYDER Hairdresser	MAE'S MILLINERY	MARG.WOOD Beauty Shop	278	
	280			MILTON RYDER Barber	WILLIAM DUFFY Plumber	BLANCH RYDER Candy Shop	ISABELLE VERKEY Lend'g Libr'y	280	
	282			ELISIE RYDER Hairdresser	HELLIS GRILL Liquors		WINTON BEAUTY SHOP	282	
	284		MILTON LUM Realtor		BERNARD D'AMICO Barber		WINTON BOOK & CARD SHOP	284	
	288	SMITH & ASHFORD Grocers	WILIAM SMITH Grocer		MARY ANTINORO Hairdresser	STANLEY GABLER Barber		288	
Balsam	298						ROBERT MAUER Grocery	298	
	340		SISTERS OF MERCY				BALSAM FOOD MARKET Grocery	340	
	365						FREINDSHIP SHOPPE Gifts	365	
Humboldt	379	JOHN O'BRIEN Druggist	KUBITZ BROS Gasoline				HILES & SHERMAN Fill'g Stat'n	379	
	380	BETHANY EVANGELICAL CHURCH		21st WARD REPUBLICAN CLUB	PURE OIL CO. Gas Station	GILBERT'S SERVICE STATION	VICK'S SERVICE STATION	380	
	383			GARRITT BOOMSMA Tailor		DOROTHEA'S BEAUTY SALON	BROWNCROFT BARBER SHOP	383	
	385	ARTHUR MELEYER Shoes	DONATO SCARCELLA Shoe Repair		COMMUNITY SHOE REPAIR			385	
	389	RILEY HOWELL Grocer	JOSEPH FUNK Grocers	JOHN RIGNEY Grocer	FLORENCE RIGNEY Grocer			389	
	420			BRIGHTON COMMUNITY CHURCH				420	
	484	BROWN BROS CO./REALTY Co.	HAROLD PHELPS Florist					484	
	485				BROWNCROFT FLORISTS			485	
	540	CHARLES BROWN Pres.Brown Bros		VACANT	VACANT		RUTH STEWART Sanitarium	540	
	575					WILLIAM NELSON Gas Station	HARVEY FERGUSON Gas Station	575	
Atlantic	611	BRIGHTON PUMPING STATION		ST.MATTHEWS EPISCOPAL CHURCH				611	
	628				JAMES RYAN Restaurant	BENN'S GRILL		628	
	630		STORE & OFFICE FIXTURE CO.		PHILIP INSALACO Barber			630	
	639		ARTHUR STOLL Hardware		GARRETT BOOMSMA Tailor		PETITTE TAILOR & FURRIER	639	
	640		PERRY NURSERY CO.					640	
	641		HERRICK NURSERY CO.		WINTON CAFE Restaurant	LOBLAW GROCETERIA'S INC		641	
	647		BROWN BROS. NURSERY CO.			NICHOLAS GIAMBRONE Barber		647	
Mayfield	670				ROBERT MAUER Meats	FRANK SCHUTH Plumber		670	
	681	TITE BROS. MARKET	HERBERT KIRCHER Meats				MAX LEVY Tailor	681	
	682	CAROLINE COTSCHEFER Dry Good	PETER LIVADAS Confectionery		EDWIN FILSINGER Grocer	SALLY LIVADAS Confectionery	FRANK SARDIS Confectionery	682	
	683	FLICKINGER STORES INC.Grocery			HERMAN ORSELET Baker		THE SCOOP Confectionery	683	
Main	686	EDWIN ZAHN Baker	GEORGE PERRY Baker			CHARLES SPARACINO Grocer	RED & WHITE FOOD STORE	686	
	688	THOMAS LACOMBA Grocer	THOMAS GROCERY					688	
	692		WINTON PHARMACY					692	
	697		WINTON-MAIN SERVICE STATION		SINCLAIR REFINING Gas Station	VACANT		697	
	714				ANNA DOLMAGE Confectionery		BERTE'S BEAUTY SALON	714	
	720		MAX LEVY Tailor					720	
	722		FRED LISTMAN Meats		RAYMOND HEFFERMAN Meats	JOHN SCHAEFER Meats		722	
	723	PIPER-MARQUARDT Tea & Coffee	NORMAN BEIKRCH Hardware		BLACK & WHITE GRILL Liquors	ELMCROFT GRILL		723	
	724		GREAT ATLANTIC & PACIFIC TEA				GARLICK DELUXE STUDIOS	724	
	725					HART'S FOOD STORE INC.	WINMERE SWEET SHOP	725	
Merchants	739	EUGENE ROYLE Grocer	ARTHUR D'ANNUNZIO Gasoline		COLONIAL BEACON OIL CO.		LeCLARE'S MARKET & GROCERY	739	
	741		HART'S FOOD STORE INC.			LEON TRASK Novelty Shop	MAT & AL'S SERVICE STATION	741	
	745	WILLIAM BOULLLS Gasoline	SALVATORE CARDELLA Shoe Rep'r					745	
	755				NORMAN BEIKIRCH Hardware			755	
	871		JOHN CLARK Talking Machine	JOHN CLARK Radios				871	
	1036				SAMUEL GREENBOURN Druggist	GREEN TREE PHARMACY	JOHNSTONE'S PHARMACY	1036	
	1038				ABR.BERGER Tailor		VICKERY HARDWARE	1038	
Tryon Pk	1040		FLICKINGER STORES INC.Grocery			LEON CAMERON Grocery	O'BIEIN'S RED & WHITE STORE	1040	

Neighborhood History Project

