

GENESEE COUNTRY SCRAPBOOK

PUBLISHED BY

The Rochester Historical Society



"WOODSIDE"

A Brief Account of "Woodside" From 1838 to 1962

And Especially the Last Twenty Years

By Hildegard L. Watson



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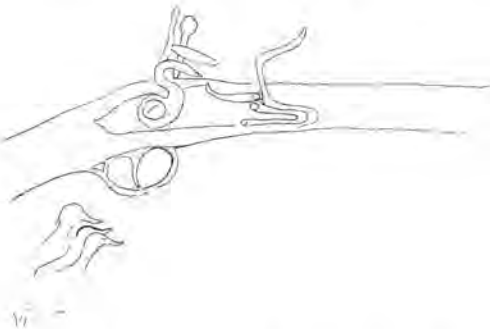


The Swamp

For years the trail that preceded the wagon track that is now East Avenue, Rochester, skirted the northern edge of a marshy woodland known as the Great Bear Swamp. So moist was the ground that when teams and wagons began to pass that way the trail had to be corduroyed. The Great Bear Swamp extended southward to the foot of Pinnacle Hill and westward to a line now marked by Alexander Street.

A child came in with a large bone dug up one day in the garden. Could it not have been from the leg of a bear? It was added to a few other delectables; —a long clay pipe blackened with use, a thick piece of mica taken from nearby, and a thin delicate silver cross given from his collection by a learned historian and collector of local antiquities.

If a French Jesuit cross, why not a lock of Audubon's hair? In his diary Audubon mentions having been "fre-



quently importuned by friends "to cut his hair which he had always worn in ringlets falling to his shoulders. He

sent out an obituary card with a three-quarter inch black border:

March 19, 1827

The day my hair was sacrificed and the will of God usurped by the wishes of man. As the Barber clipped my locks rapidly, it reminded me of the horrible times of the French Revolution, when the same operation was performed upon the victims murdered by the guillotine. . . . My heart sank low.

John J. Audubon

Was he thinking of the lost Dauphin with whom he was sometimes identified? In his diary he says, "my own name I have never been permitted to speak," and again, "the precise period of my birth is yet an enigma to me."

In Audubon's diary dated August 15 and 28, 1824, he noted—"Arrived at Albany . . . Engaged a passage at 7 dollars on a canal boat for Rochester, N. Y. . . . I obtained some new birds by the way and in 6 days I arrived at Rochester."

"Rochester, August 22. Five years ago there were few buildings here, and the population is now five thousand: . . . The beautiful falls of the Genesee River, about 80 feet high and 4 times as broad, I have visited, and have made a slight sketch of them." Would that this drawing had survived and was now in the possession of the Rochester Historical Society!

Another artist and pioneer wandered through American woods at this period and over some of the same territory, perhaps often over the very forest trails taken by Audubon.

Chester Harding was born in 1792 in Conway, Massachusetts. (He too kept a diary which he called "My Egotistograph"). When he was 14 his family settled not far from Rochester in Madison County. "Our first business was to build a log house and to clear a patch of ground and fit it for seed." Moving still nearer Rochester to Caledonia later with his wife and child he writes, that—in their great struggle for

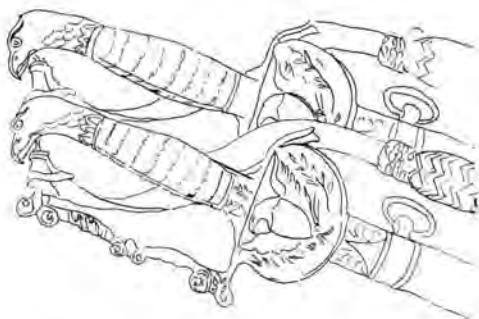
existence and in order to escape a debtor's prison in nearby Batavia—"I took leave of my wife and child and left for the head waters of Alleghany River. I took passage on a raft and worked my way down to Pittsburgh. Here I was at a loss what to do—times were hard—I finally got a job of house painting but I felt lonely and unhappy. As soon as I had saved a few dollars I started for my wife and child. I walked over mountains and through wild forests with no guide but the blazed trees. Bear, wolves, deer and turkeys I met so often that I would hardly turn around to look at them."

The House

Not all of the New Englanders who journeyed to Western New York passed on through. Many settled in Rochester and prospered. Among these was a linen merchant, Silas O. Smith, who by 1838 was sufficiently established to build a house for himself and his family in the woods at the edge of the swamp on what is now the corner of East Avenue and Sibley Place.

He imported the builder Alfred Badger from Portsmouth, Mass., who drew up his plans modelled on one of the cupolaed mansions by the sea. The house was called "Woodside," suggesting a surrounding country freshness of fields and forest trees as it then must have been, and within the wood sounds of animal cries and many singing birds.

Mr. Hobart Atkinson became the owner of Woodside in 1875. At his death in 1908 he willed the house to his daughter Marie Louise, who lived there



all her life. She and her second husband, Ernest Willard, on summer evenings often dined with friends by candle light on the veranda added at the rear of the house by Claude Bragdon. The

veranda overlooked a comparatively new garden that had been designed by Sibley Smith, Marie Willard's nephew, born in the house next door. The garden is circular, 47 feet in diameter, and surrounded on the sides away from the veranda by a wooden trellis. In the center is an octagonal stone fountain from which radiate small pebble paths that invite but lead nowhere. In summer sweet briar, viburnum, and wistaria grow there, and violets of the fragrant English kind. Many generations of cat birds have built nests in the tangled syringa and lilac bushes by the square residence of the Historical Society.

Every spring and fall the wild geese fly back and forth over Woodside. Above traffic noise, their slow rhythmic cries continue along a flight undisturbed by the visible change and unrest of the world below. Here surely is permanence and a guide to pure instinct.

A gilded arrow weather vane seen circa 1822 on the original Rochester Court House, now flashes and turns in the wind, like a dropped feather over



the turreted widow's walk of Woodside.

"In the place where the tree falleth," we are told in the book of Ecclesiastes, "there it shall be." But not any more, at least not for long. There now resides, to our startled gaze,—a bulldozer. We stand with the crowd gaping into a yawning gap. The sirens no longer entice, no longer sing; they scream, and we follow. Like phantoms the vapors of legend rise and obscure the past.

Museums fan out their lore. Here alone one finds a bridge with the past, supported by the objects of our ancestors.

The Historical Society

A century ago, on April 14, 1861, the surrender of a fort in Charleston harbor ended the opening military action of the Civil War. On the following day in Albany, the legislature passed an act, introduced by Lewis H. Morgan of Rochester, incorporating a body to be known as "The Rochester Historical

Society." The date was not a lucky one for the new society which is believed to have succumbed at once to the times, and in fact was not heard of again, so far as we know, save as itself an item of history.

Some 26 years afterward, when Mrs. Gilman N. Perkins (née Carolyn Erick-

son) called a meeting at her East Avenue home for the purpose of organizing her own Rochester Historical Society (the one we know today), no mention of the earlier society appeared in the minutes; and it is quite possible that

none of those present had ever heard of it. Nevertheless, priority was, in a sense, memorialized, for it so happened that the meeting was held on December 17, 1887, the sixth anniversary of Lewis Henry Morgan's death.

The Link

We have seen that Woodside, the house on East Avenue, eventually became the property of Marie Louise, younger daughter of Hobart Atkinson, and we have seen that the Rochester Historical Society as we now know it was founded and watched over by Mrs. Gilman Perkins. The event which, more than any other, was to link the Society to the house and the house to the So-

son to H. H. Perkins of Smith, Perkins & Co., son of Gilman Perkins.

"The bride is a member of St. Andrews Church and the wedding took place there at about half-past seven. The church was elaborately lighted with arches of gas jets over the middle aisle and banks of candles in the windows. Many ladies in evening dress made the seats in the middle aisle splendid with handsome gowns and flashing jewels.

"For a quarter of an hour or more before the ceremony the church was filled and the organist, Mr. Atkinson, got himself very generally admired by the music he made. Presently he struck up a solemn march and the choir and clergy emerged in procession from the chapel door at the side of the chancel. Headed by a cross bearer, carrying a tall brass cross, they marched slowly two by two, smallest boys to the front, and the clergy bringing up the rear, around and up the chancel steps, and took their places in the singers' seats. The choir, numbering a score or more and in fresh white surplices made a fine appearance. The audience which rose to receive



ciety was reported in the Rochester Union-Advertiser of November 15, 1889:

"A Pretty Wedding . . .

"A link was forged last evening between two well known families by the marriage of Miss Marie Atkinson, youngest daughter of Hobart F. Atkin-

them, sat down for a moment, and then the wedding party appeared. First came the ushers—the Messrs. A. E. and G. N. Perkins, the groom's brothers; the Messrs. W. G. and E. N. Nichols, his cousins; Mr. George Wilder, and Mr. James S. Watson. The bridesmaids who followed were Miss Fanny Durbin and Miss Carolyn Perkins, Miss Whitney of New Haven, and Miss Frances Cogswell. Next to the bridesmaids came the bride's maid of honor, Miss Clara Durbin of Montclair, New Jersey, and then the bride, leaning on her father's arm.

"The groom, waiting with the best man, Henry Lorrillard Camman of New York, met the bride at the chancel steps and the ceremony followed. It was performed by the Rev. A. S. Crapsey, rector of St. Andrews, assisted by Rev. C. G. Snapp and the full choir of the church, which sang an anthem. The service was impressive and the scene brilliant and imposing, but in all the after comment it was agreed that the most charming part of it all was the bride's smile as she came back again down the chancel steps with her veil thrown back and leaning on her husband's arm.

"Among those present at the church and afterward at the reception at Mr. Atkinson's house on East Avenue were: Bishop Coxe, Mr. A. Wentworth, Erickson Wentworth, Mr. & Mrs. Willoughby Stuart, Hon. Alexander Rice and Mrs. Rice of Boston, Mr. & Mrs. J. W. Cornell of New York, Miss Keen of Philadelphia, Mr. & Mrs. Wm. S. Nich-

ols of New York, Mr. & Mrs. N. K. Fairbanks of Chicago, Mr. & Mrs. Henry Watrous of New York, Mrs. Walter Cary, Miss Love and several hundred representatives of the families of Rochester.

"Fiddles, folks and food combined to make the reception lively and pleasant. The bride's wedding presents, many of



which were beautiful, were shown to her friends in an upstairs room. About 11 o'clock Mr. & Mrs. Perkins took their departure in a shower of rice and slippers for some destination to themselves best known. A great many good wishes went with them."

Notice of Union Advertiser November 25, 1889:

Married — Perkins-Atkinson. On Thursday, November 14, 1889, at St. Andrews Church, by Rev. A. S. Crapsey, Henry Hubbell Perkins to Marie Louise Atkinson, daughter of Hobart F. Atkinson, all of this city.

Although the young bridegroom died untimely a very few years later, and al-

though his widow was married again in 1903, the affectionate relationship with her first mother-in-law remained an important factor in her life. At her death in 1940, it was learned that she had willed Woodside to the Rochester Historical Society.

Mrs. George Selden, then President of the organization which at that time was located on Lake Avenue, invited me to become Director of Woodside. In 1941 we were confronted by the rather formidable problems of establishing this array of historical museum material in a private dwelling; bicycles, portraits, costumes, furniture and barrels of treasures of every description accumulated by the Society during the preceding years. A plan was suggested for exhibitions of the society's material to be held and shown in cases of differing sizes throughout the house.

It was decided to hang in rotation not only pictures from the society's large collection but on occasion, some of the work by present day artists of Rochester. These shows of modern artists' work have been held in the front parlor where many young painters and artisans have since been given their initial openings.

Supported, encouraged and sustained during the last twenty years, the Rochester Historical Society owes its continuing inspiration to the following presidents and officers—listed below with their years of tenure.

For Presidents

Mrs. George Selden 1940-1945

Mrs. Herbert Ward 1946-1949
 Miss Virginia Jeffrey Smith 1955-1957
 Mr. Delancy Bentley 1956-1957
 Mr. Sherman Selden 1957-1958
 Dr. Carl K. Hersey 1958-1961
 continuing in office—

As Vice Presidents

Mrs. Don Colt 1948-1956
 Mrs. J. S. Watson 1956-1961

As Curator of Woodside

Major William Wheeler Case was in office from 1940 to the year before his death in 1959. Dr. Blake McKelvey acted as Secretary Historian from 1939 to 1957.

Mr. Delancy Bentley was Treasurer from 1948 to 1952.

Miss Helen Brooks has been Secretary from 1957 to the present.

Mr. Milton Holm from 1952 to the present.

Mr. Andrew Wolfe was Editor of the Scrapbook from February, 1951, until April, 1961. This office is now held by Miss Virginia Jeffrey Smith.

Mrs. Harry Segal has acted as Publicity Officer since April 26, 1957.

Mrs. Ralph Cole has been in charge of the Membership Committee since September 8, 1954.

Miss Clara Sayre Selden was associated as Secretary Historian from 1944 until the year of her death in 1948.

Miss Clara Knittel has been the secretary at Woodside since 1950.

Mrs. Anne Olmstead Peet has acted as the Society's Historian since 1954.

Miss Clare Carson was the corresponding secretary at Woodside from 1958 to the spring of 1961.

This anecdote about her parents was recorded by Chester Harding's daughter. Their wedding day had been fixed for February 15, 1815—Presently the bridegroom elect drove up to the door in a sleigh—He announced that he had come to be married on that day; for the snow was melting so fast that if they waited 24 hours they could not get back to Caledonia . . . So they were married the day beforehand. My Mother was accustomed to say "And it has been the day beforehand ever since"—And the day after . . .

HISTORICAL GROUP GREETS NEW FRIENDS IN NEW HOME.

Let it snow, let it blow—March weather at its most lionlike proved no detriment to the success of the reception and tea with which members of the Rochester Historical Society greeted hundreds of friends yesterday afternoon in their new home, "Woodside" in East Avenue. The spacious house was crowded with guests until the dinner house-guests who had come to wish the society well in its new quarters and "oh" and "ah" over the lovely furnishings and bibelots which fill the historic old home. (1941)

* * *

At Woodside, on November 8, 1941, 700 persons viewed an exhibition entitled "Projective Ornamentation" by Claude Bragdon. In his own words

these were, "The direct outcome of the classical in art." This was followed by his talk, "Art in the Machine Age." (1941)

* * *

The thanks of the community are due to the Rochester Historical Society for its gracious act in making available for Red Cross work, the first floor of Woodside, the society's headquarters in East Avenue. The use to which Woodside will be put is particularly appropriate in that Ernest R. Willard, whose home this spacious mansion was for many years, for two decades was chairman of the local Red Cross. (1941)

* * *

WATERCOLOR "Portraits" by Virginia Jeffrey Smith of rooms in a number of Rochester homes will be shown through December 15 at Woodside, Rochester Historical Society, in East Avenue. Miss Smith will speak at 8:15 o'clock, tonight at Woodside, on "Reminiscences of the Third Ward." (1941)

* * *

In order to revitalize the past, there should follow a connection with the creative life in the present. In addition to the society's own collection, there will be other exhibitions at Woodside by Rochester artists of today.*

From the Director's Report 1941.

*Since then, between 40 and 50 Rochester artists have exhibited their works at Woodside.

* * *

A tangible link between the past and the rapidly changing present is to be found at "Woodside," former home of the late Mr. & Mrs. Ernest B. Willard in East Avenue, now the permanent home of the Rochester Historical Society, in the displays, show cases and memorabilia of Rochester families. (1942)

* * *

Rochester, August 22 — Something unique in sports shows was placed on exhibition today by the Rochester Historical Society—a comprehensive collection of sports paraphernalia of pioneer days, when fishing, hunting and camping was a serious business of life and not the recreational activity it is today.

Collected in its entirety from the Genesee Valley, the exhibit contains many items of compelling historical interest, such as the fishing tackle used by Rochester's Seth Green, America's Izaak Walton, and the fowling piece used by Mary Jemison, the "White Woman of the Genesee," during her long period of captivity by the Seneca Indians before the turn of the 18th Century.

One of the cases contains the model of a typical pioneer's camp of the early 1800's. The knife in the exhibit was an essential item in the pioneer's equipment and frequently the user fashioned his own handle after buying the prized blade. Hanging from the wall are a birch bark moose call and two beaver pelts. Both of these animals were plentiful in the Genesee Valley in those

days, providing the pioneers with much of their food and clothing. (1942)

* * *

An important feature of an exhibit which will be on display at the Rochester Historical Society Museum at "Woodside" for several weeks is a "Jonathan Child dinner party," with the table laid out with his historic silver, fine Wedgwood china, and delicately engraved glassware, on a white damask cloth.

The display of kitchen equipment is no less fascinating. It includes giant iron toasters and waffle irons, with long handles, to be used before an open fire; an enormous coffee mill; a curious device of wooden rollers used for flattening the straws with which our great-great-grandmothers made the summer hats for their families; old flatirons, fowls, iron stilyards used for weighing long before the advent of modern scales, and scores of other items.

Costumes of the past century also are featured on models in the basement museum. One model wears a calico daytime dress, straw bonnet and paisley shawl; another an exquisite Victorian evening wrap of pink faille brocaded with bunches of purple violets and edged with wide lace. (1942)

* * *

What promises to be one of the high spots of the fall season for members and friends of the Rochester Historical Society is the lecture slated for Monday

evening, November 30, by Dr. Dexter Perkins, head of the history department of the University of Rochester. Dr. Perkins, departing somewhat from the fields of history which he usually explores, will discuss the history of spiritual revivals and religious movements in and around Rochester. The lecture will be given at Woodside, the society headquarters in East Avenue. (1942)

* * *

Rochester's Past will invade the present for members of the Rochester Historical Society and their guests when a talk on "Rochester, Yesterday and the Day Before" will be given by Fletcher Steele, noted landscape architect, of Pittsford and Boston.

Following the talk an informal supper will be served. Presiding at the coffee table will be Mrs. Rush Rhees, Miss Emma Wilder, Mrs. Henry G. Danforth, Mrs. Thomas G. Spencer. (1942)

* * *

IN 1942 THE DINING ROOM AT WOODSIDE REDECORATED. Turquoise blue paint covered with another blue glaze to permit a transparency has been used on the walls which contrasts pleasingly with the oyster white of the woodwork and plaster decorations of the carved pilasters, a lighter tone of the same color being used for the ceiling.

Further accent is provided by the black marble fireplace and large over mantel mirror, and the imported crystal chandelier, fitted with candles, which has been installed in place of the ornate

gas and electric fixtures with which the house had been equipped in more recent years.

A corner of the restored dining room at "Woodside," home of the Rochester Historical Society, featuring the handsome turquoise drapes of brocaded silk which were made to order in Paris many years ago. The two Empire chairs were the gift of Mrs. Whitney Allen and came from the home of her great-grandfather, Warham Whitney, pioneer Rochester citizen.

The dining room will be opened to members, Wednesday night, September 30th, 1942, at a reception and concert by Sandor Vas of the Eastman School of Music. (1942)

* * *

A new bedroom will be opened on the second floor furnished in Colonial manner. Figures wearing the costumes of the period will be placed around the rooms while on either side of the staircase there will be others wearing ensembles in style over the past 100 years, with the center path cleared for guests to mount to the upper floors. (1942)

* * *

Paintings by Kathleen Cunningham may be seen at Woodside, 485 East Avenue. . . they will also be on view for those who attend the lecture to be given at Woodside next Wednesday, by Dr. Howard Hanson. All are direct, vital and interesting.—Amy H. Crough-ton. (1942)

* * *

OLD ROCHESTER PARADE. Those who have seen the lifelike figures in their harmonious setting at Woodside can appreciate the significance of the exhibition. The architecture of another day, with its suggestion of permanence and generous spaciousness, affords a frame into which the figures and costumes fit as naturally as did the ladies and gentlemen of an earlier Rochester. The very forms on which the authentic costumes are displayed bear witness to the more gentle living of a period in which ladies went out seldom except in private conveyances and when feminine waists were tortured to wasp-like slenderness.

In arranging the exhibition, the Historical Society has performed a task of major importance. (1943)

* * *

Guests with never a qualm about "gas rations" are arriving at "Woodside" for the wedding of one of Rochester's favored daughters.

In the drawing room where an aisle has been roped off with white satin ribbon is gathered a brilliant assemblage of ladies and young people gaily exchanging the latest bit of gossip as they listen for the strains of the wedding march which will start the procession down the red carpeted stairs.

Meanwhile, the bride and her maid in the bed chamber above are putting some last minute touches to her veil of heirloom lace, while mother in wine-colored taffeta and matching bonnet

looks on with misty eyes. Grandma, in her best blue velvet, has come to put her stamp of approval upon the match.

Downstairs, a bit nervous at the part he must play in giving the bride away, is father, all dressed up in formal clothes, awaiting his signal in the library.

"Here-comes-the-bride" — we move out of the 19th Century, realizing that it was just a drama, a dream of the Rochester Historical Society.

GOWNS FEATURED. Featuring dozens of early gowns and millinery, worn by models which are the handiwork of the museum director, the exhibit has turned back the hands of time to change the high ceiling Victorian rooms of Woodside into a gala wedding scene.

Guests in elaborate wraps may be seen mounting the handsome circular staircase, chatting in the drawing rooms, and flocking into the dining room to partake of refreshments and a bit of wedding cake to take home and dream on.

The table is sparkling with silver and crystal on a yellow satin damask cloth which, though not exactly period, makes a charming effect against the turquoise blue of the walls.

Seated at one end of the table, a pink lady presides over a silver tea set which was made to order by Gerardus Boyce, early New York silversmith, for Jonathan Child, Rochester's first mayor, and pours some steaming beverage into the most fragile pink luster cups.

Pictures, many of which had never been shown at Woodside before, were hung on the stairs and all through the various parlors and halls. Two of the pictures had been restored by Fritz Trautman and three other pictures had been recently presented to the Rochester Historical Society, two of these were portraits of Mr. & Mrs. Charles J. Hill, painted in 1830 by Grove Gilbert. (1943)

* * *

Eighty-two years ago next September 19, the Veteran Union Guards, newly mustered into the Federal Army as the 140th New York Volunteers, marched out of Rochester with flying colors.

Today those same colors, carefully preserved under glass, hang on the wall of "Woodside," East Avenue home of the Rochester Historical Society, to which they were given in 1913 by the late Urban Thoma, then the only surviving member of the Guards. (1944)

* * *

MEETING OF ANTIQUARIAN LEAGUE—Dec. 5th. Soft strains from a Swiss music box greeted us as we entered Woodside Tuesday night and stepped out of this warring world into a past of lavender and old lace.

For the charming old East Avenue home of the Rochester Historical Society, built of "pink brick" in 1838 by Silas C. Smith, Rochester's pioneer dry goods merchant, had come to life as the Rochester Antiquarian League held open house for members and guests. . . .

In the dining room the portrait of Jonathan Child, first mayor, looked quietly down upon the festive scene and smiled at the table set with his old silver tea set, made to order by Gerardus Boyce. . . .

Turquoise blue drapes made in Paris and brought to America by Herter, New York City importers, blend with the lighter blue of the painted walls contrasting with the white woodwork. Further accent is provided by the black marble fireplace, for which the marble was imported from Vermont, and the large gold overmantel.

Other heirloom silver, owned by the Society, sparkled in the candlelight reflected by hundreds of prisms in the imported Irish crystal chandelier, which has been installed in place of the ornate gas and electric fixtures with which the house had been equipped in more recent years. (1944)

* * *

Rochester, August 26, 1944 — The 123-year old weathervane that flipped about in the wind atop Rochester's first Court House, is being refurbished and soon will point out the wind direction at "Woodside," the East Avenue home of the Rochester Historical Society. (1944)

* * *

On February 15th, a replica figure of Susan B. Anthony, wearing her favorite garnet velvet gown and surrounded by five figures of women also dressed in gowns of that period, were placed for

two weeks in the Main Street window of Sibley, Lindsay & Curr Company at their kind invitation. All gowns were the property of the Rochester Historical Society. (1945)

* * *

On the third floor, one of the rooms facing East Avenue has been converted into space for some of the Society's extensive collection of paintings. Long racks on either side of the room have been constructed in a simple but efficient manner with wires strung between heavy frames, on which every one of a collection of 250 unframed canvases can be hung and each one so swung that they may be slid along the wire into the open for study purposes. Large lights are arranged to fall directly on these pictures. They may be seen in a way that we have not been able to show them before. The racks will very well take care of all of our frames. These pictures have now been listed and matched to their own frames for exhibition purposes. Our next project will be to hang the large collection of costumes, also for study purposes and in a well lighted and bright colored room, each costume on its own figure. (1945)

* * *

During the past summer the activities in the Rochester Historical Society have been concentrated in preparing and repairing the house at Woodside. The roof has been entirely covered with a sheeting of weather proof asphalt paint which has been tested for over ten

years on other houses and found very durable. The cupola and woodwork have been partially painted white and with the blue-green shutters the effect against the blue sky is indeed a triumph. All the water drains have at last been repaired.

The two drawing rooms have been scraped to the smooth dry bone of its marble textured perfectly applied original plaster and painted with two coats of white, giving these walls and pilasters a texture of alabaster. New yellow curtains, a replica of antique brocade, will within a few days be hung in the six windows of these rooms. (1945)

* * *

During the past few weeks several changes and renovations have been made at Woodside. A new oil heater has replaced the quite dilapidated gas-heater relique.

Also the walls and ceiling of the third floor rooms have been painted white, as were the walls of the second floor office room assigned to the Junior League group. (1945)

* * *

The top floor of Woodside is now entirely settled, and the gowns hung in two separate rooms, redecorated for the purpose, in the southwest corner of the house. The northwest room is used for storing trunks, boxes, and chests of material, some of which, including the gowns, are in the process of recataloging in book form, every chest or room with its specialty. For instance, on the



MRS. GILMAN N. PERKINS
who revived the Rochester Historical Society on Dec. 17, 1887.
Painting by Grove Gilbert, Circa 1860.

ROCHESTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY,
FOUNDED IN 1860.

Rochester, 21st Nov^r 1860

Dr. Ely

East-Port

I have the honor to inform you that you have
been elected a Resident Member of the Rochester
Historical Society. Should such Membership be agreeable to
you, please signify the same as early as convenient to

Your Obedient Servant,

George G. Munger

George G. Munger

OFFICERS FOR THE YEAR 1860-61.

President,

LEWIS H. MORGAN.

Vice-Presidents,

FIRST — LYSANDER FARRAR.

SECOND — HENRY O'REILLY.

Recording Secretary,

JARVIS M. HATCH.

Corresponding Secretary,

GEORGE G. MUNGER.

Treasurer,

GEORGE F. DANFORTH.

Custodian,

JARVIS M. HATCH.

STANDING COMMITTEES.

On Memberships.

GEORGE G. MUNGER,

LYSANDER FARRAR,

GEORGE S. RILEY.

On Communications.

HARVEY HUMPHREY,

E. PESHINE SMITH,

REV. GEORGE N. CHENEY.

On Expenditures.

JOSEPH A. EASTMAN,

ETHAN A. HOPKINS,

SETH H. TERRY.

On Publications.

JOHN W. DWINELLE,

HENRY O'REILLY,

CALVIN HUSON, JR.

On Library.

FREDERICK L. DURAND,

WILLIAM S. BISHOP,

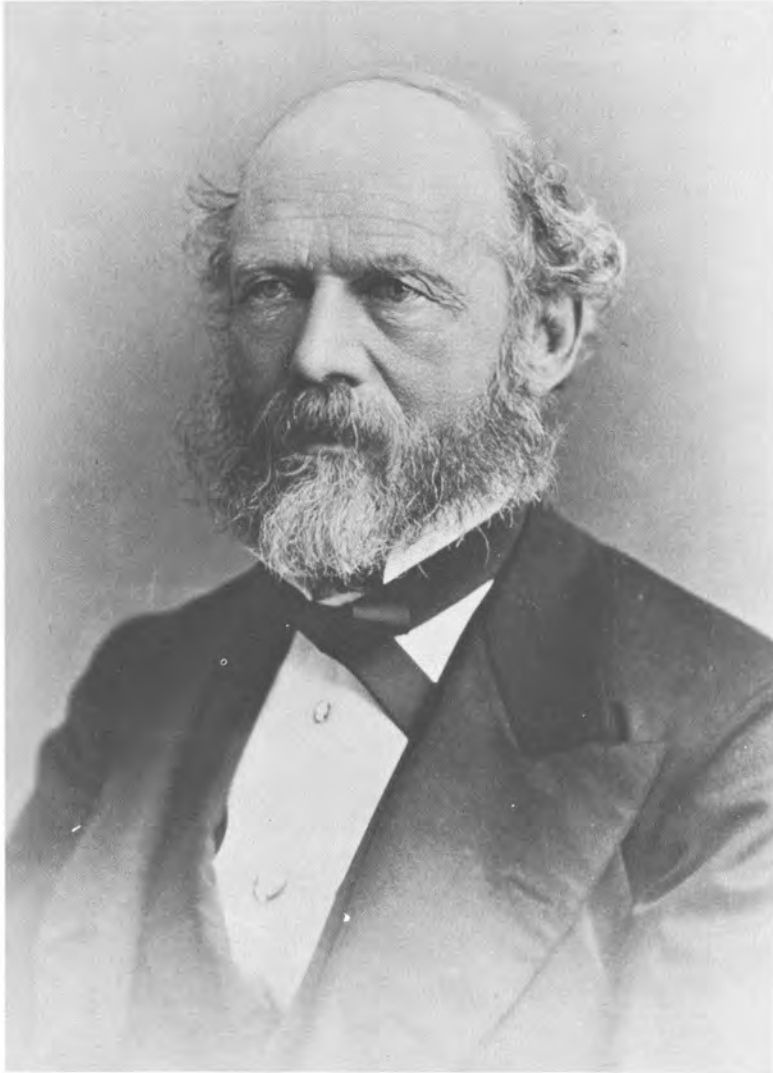
GEORGE F. DANFORTH.

On Collections.

JARVIS M. HATCH,

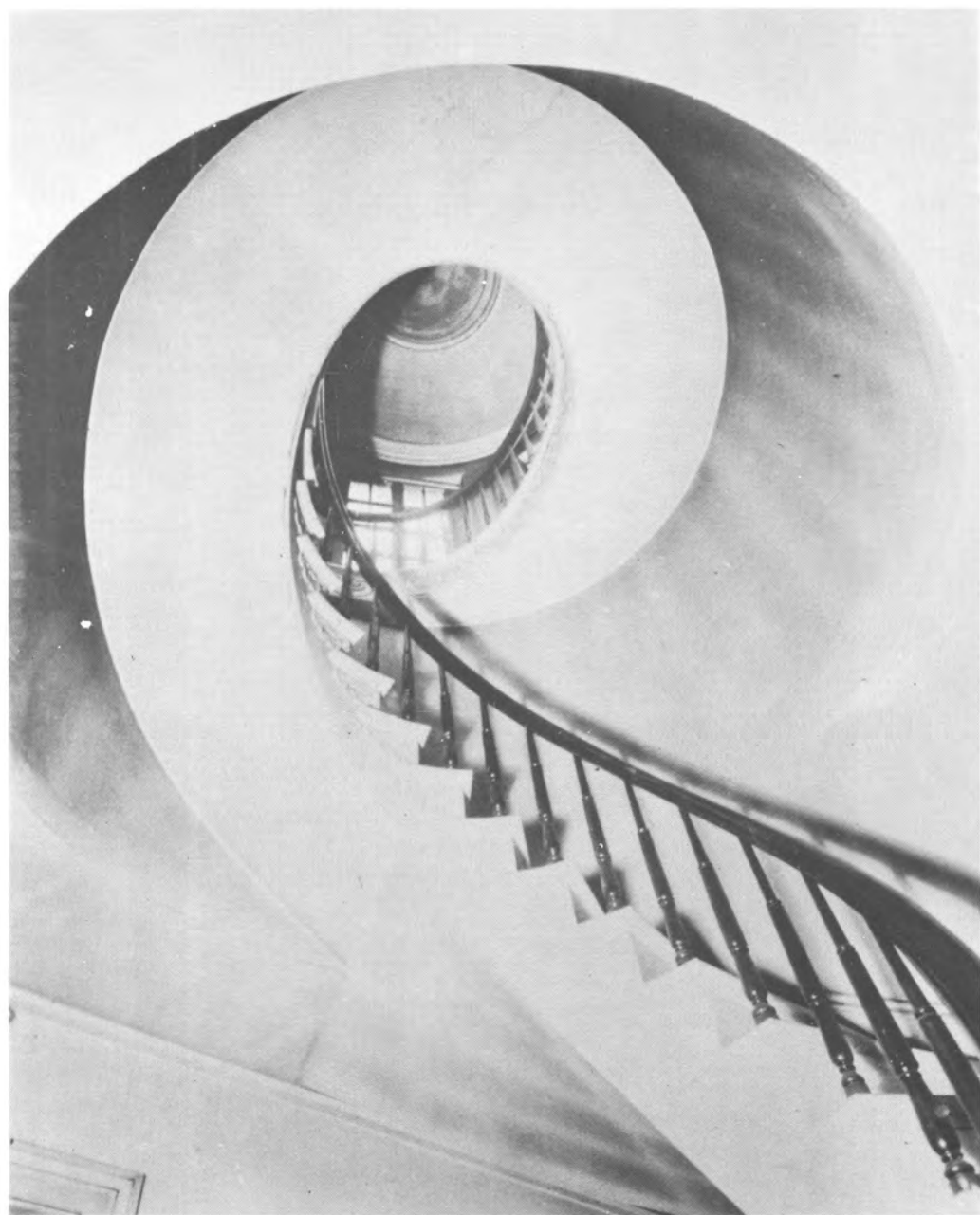
JOHN H. MARTINDALE,

JAMES C. COCHRANE.



LEWIS HENRY MORGAN
Founder of the
Rochester Historical Society
1861

Opposite Page: Just received, further evidence of the early days of the (first) Rochester Historical Society. These revealing items were presented by Dr. Norris G. Orchard of South Harwich, Mass.



SPIRAL STAIRCASE AT WOODSIDE
Photograph by Dr. Carl K. Hersey

second floor, a small room on the north side will soon be able to exhibit in cases, the hats and some wearing apparel such as fans, parasols, etc. All the jewelry, watches and snuff-boxes, and the valuable collection of daguerreotypes, have been card-indexed, most efficiently, by Mr. William Caldwell, and every box and contents most carefully labelled. In the few cases where the names of donors are in doubt, the articles are placed, for further research on the matter, in a box marked "Unidentified." Many of the mysteries are thus being cleared. (1945)

* * *

From a Letter to the Members of Rochester Historical Society, September 1, 1945 by Mrs. George B. Selden, President:

"Although war-time restrictions have curtailed some of our activities, the Rochester Historical Society has endeavored to carry on those aspects of its normal program which cannot detract in any way from the war effort. Lectures on local subjects and exhibits by Rochester artists have been presented at Woodside, and displays in our cabinets have been changed from time to time. We have relied entirely on volunteer service for the work involved in this program."

* * *

ROCHESTERIANS ACT HISTORIC ROLES. The spirit of Father Rochester, who lived in Dansville before he came to the lower Genesee country, went back to Dansville Monday to view

a parade in which the Rochester Historical Society entered two of his "contemporaries" correctly garbed for riding out in an early 19th century victoria. (1946)

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On October 24th, 1946, Miss Elsa Jordon, instructor at the University of Rochester, will give a lecture on Modern Dance with demonstrations by her pupils. She will be introduced by Virginia Smith of the Third Ward, who we hope will give us a touch of the Rochester polka, schottish days of her own early teaching. (1946)

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"Friends of Music" was started in Rochester by Mr. Luigi Silva in collaboration with the Rochester Historical Society with this concert:

Friends of Music of Rochester
have the honor of inviting you
to a concert by
Mr. Romolo de Spirito
at Woodside, 485 East Ave.
at five o'clock
Sunday, November 16, 1947

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One feels more and more how well fitted Woodside is with its atmosphere of hospitality and remarkable convenience for formal as well as informal entertainment. (1948)

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On May 26, a very fine meeting was held and a party given at Woodside for

the Old Guard of Rochester, who formally presented to the Rochester Historical Society the stand of colors of the 3rd N. Y. Volunteer Infantry of the Spanish-American War. This party was given in honor of Major Case as well as his friends in the Old Guard. (1949)

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An important exhibit of old paintings was hung in Woodside's front parlor. This includes portraits of famous Rochester men painted between 1850 and 1854 by Colby Kimble. These portraits were selected from a collection of several others by the same artist that hang in our upstairs gallery at Woodside. (1949)

* * *

At this time, an exhibition of 150 years of children's toys and three figures in costume were arranged in a tableau on the second floor. A little girl in a white alpaca Victorian gown facing a small boy dressed in his brown velvet suit with its Paris label played with toys placed between them on a table. The mother, in an Empire gown, stood watching her baby lying near her in an old crib of the period. (1950)

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On September 21, a reception was given for the New York State Historical Association. At least 75 people came and were most appreciative of Woodside and the tea given in the dining room, which looked particularly picturesque, served on a table with yel-

low brocaded cloths and a rose-red set of Bohemian glass loaned for that afternoon. (1950)

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With the exception of the third floor walls most of the restoration and re-decorating of the interior of Woodside has now been completed. Last year the crown of the house with its intricate detail and balustrade, an endless task, was painted white. (1950)

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Mr. Beaumont Newhall gave an illustrated reading from Mrs. Newhall's new book "Time in New England." (1950)

* * *

There is now in the front parlor at Woodside an exhibition of paintings including several of the various owners of Woodside, starting with Silas O. Smith, for whom the house was built in 1838, and a print of Alfred M. Badger, the contractor who built the house.

A beautiful miniature of Seba Hand Ward, wife of Silas Smith, has recently been presented to the Rochester Historical Society by one of her descendants, Mrs. E. Selden Leach of New York City, and is also shown in this collection. (1951)

* * *

On September 7, 1952, the Rochester Historical Society gave a large "open house" tea. At least 400 people were present, and a troop of Boy Scouts, asked to guard the rooms. . . . There was an exhibition of Old Third Ward

portraits. China, jewelry and silver, given by families of the Third Ward, were shown in separate cases. Another case displayed rare manuscripts and autographed letters, including such signatures as Nathaniel Rochester, Lewis Henry Morgan and Jonathan Child.

(1952)

* * *

On September 14, 1952, the Rochester Historical Society sponsored a tour of historic houses in the Third Ward. Permission was kindly given to show the Campbell-Whittlesey house without the usual charge. The tour included The D.A.R. House, the Jonathan Child House, The Homes of Mrs. Charles Winslow Smith, Mrs. Clinton Fish, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Fisher, Dr. Holtfreter's garden, The Livingston Park Seminary, Abelard Reynolds House, Lewis Henry Morgan House with its important replica of Scott's Library at Abbotsford, and many others.

* * *

During the summer months it was found necessary to have many repairs made at Woodside, headquarters of the Rochester Historical Society. These included a new tin roof, the rebuilding of four chimneys, the repointing of cracks on the outside walls, and the replacing of outside cornices. The front halls in the house and the four main floor rooms were repainted.

The outside trim, balustrade and cupola of Woodside have been repainted white. The old blinds, worn out beyond

repair, have been removed. According to old prints the house was originally without blinds.

Two newly acquired and beautiful old chandeliers have been hung in the Woodside back parlor and the dining room. These chandeliers came from the old Livingston Park home of Mrs. Henry Buell. (1954)

* * *

Dr. Dexter Perkins was the center of attention last night when he spoke at Woodside, Rochester Historical Society, and was taken on tour of the new collection of dolls and costumes now on exhibit at 485 East Avenue.

With the dolls are costumes from all parts of the world. There are two Italian costumes from Sorrento, kimonos worn by Japanese brides, and gowns from Morocco, Algiers and Tunis. A Korean dress is also a vivid part of the display. (March 19, 1955)

* * *

More than 50 old paintings at Woodside, Rochester Historical Society headquarters on East Avenue, came out of the dusk last week to have their pictures taken. The photographs will be added to a vast collection of the Frick Art Reference Library in New York, for the use of scholars from all over the world.

The walls of Woodside and a third-floor storage room yielded the romantic subjects for a two-day job of photographing by Mr. & Mrs. Thurman

Rotan, a team of field workers who have roamed historical places throughout the East for years in search of materials for the famed Frick Library files.

The Rochester collection was one of the largest new "finds" that the Frick Library team had encountered, they said. With such riches at their disposal, they could afford to be "very selective," they added, and confined their photographing to a mere sixth of the lot. (June 19, 1955)

* * *

History, art and children have found a meeting ground in a small room filled with wonderful sights at the Rochester Historical Society museum, Woodside, on East Avenue. It's a room full of toys, as fascinating to grownups as children, for these are toys that go back into history. And some of them are young enough in time to stir some visitors' memories of almost forgotten attic treasures of childhood.

The oldest doll in the collection, probably, is a small one with head carved of wood and with hairdo and gown in the fashion of Empress Josephine and is presumably about 165 years old. A rocking crib, a tiny Victorian trunk with gay, velvet-covered compartments and a rocking horse are there, along with a miniature Victoria carriage with tin horses, miniature iron boots, a flowered doll bonnet from Paris, the wooden model of the first vessel that sailed on Lake Ontario, the

schooner "Jenina." (July 10, 1955) Jean Walrath.

* * *

Almost touching elbows, the fishermen will be lining the banks of Catharine Creek this day that opens the trout season in the Finger Lakes Country. A merry old man with a big hat and a Santa Claus beard will be with them—but only in spirit. For Seth Green has been in his grave for nearly 80 years. He was called "the father of fish culture."

On the second floor of Woodside, the gracious old East Avenue mansion that is the home of the Rochester Historical Society, a large floor case and a wall case are filled with objects connected with the life of Seth Green, who was born, lived and died in Rochester.

On exhibit are the reel he devised and which was manufactured in Rochester; his tackle box and hand-made creel; assorted hooks and leaders, including the famous Seth Green rig; reels for drying lines, shuttles for making nets, his fly hooks, lines, bobbers, spoons for trolling, spinners, all the accoutrements of "the compleat angler."

There are pictures and clippings and some interesting letters from notable people. (April 1, 1956)—Arch Merrill

* * *

An all-star ensemble of illustrious visitors will "gather" this week under one roof, that of Woodside, the East Avenue home of the Rochester Historical Society. Of course, such celebri-

ties as Jenny Lind, Buffalo Bill, Ralph Waldo Emerson and General Grant won't be there in person. But they, and many others just as famous, will be represented by pictures, autographs, letters, diaries, posters, newspaper accounts and other memorabilia linked to their Rochester visitations and gathered from many sources.

The exhibition, which is titled "Distinguished Visitors to Rochester in Its History," will open Saturday on the first floor of Woodside, 485 East Avenue. It represents one phase of the Historical Society's participation in International Museum Week, sponsored by the Inter-Museum Council.

The second part of the Historical Society's contribution will be a second floor exhibit of costumes, both of adults and children, from all over the world. Arch Merrill, (September 30, 1956)

* * *

From all over New York State people interested in canals of the past have converged on Rochester. For these "canallers" two interesting exhibitions have been arranged.

The large and important one at the Rochester Museum of Arts and Sciences includes documents, models, pictures and varied objects connected with the old canal days.

Smaller but no less interesting is the exhibit at Woodside, 485 East Avenue, home of the Rochester Historical Society, whose treasures include many objects to elicit nostalgic memories.

There is a pocket map and canal guide for tourists published in 1826. It contains time tables of the packets which reduced the time of travel from New York to Buffalo to the unheard-of short time of nine days. (Jan. 27, 1958)

* * *

Tickets will go on sale tomorrow for the exhibition of 200 doll houses collected by Mrs. Homer Strong. The showing, at Mrs. Strong's Allens Creek Road residence, will be from Friday, May 16, to Sunday, May 25, from 1 to 5 p.m. each day.

Rochester Historical Society is sponsoring this first showing of the renowned Strong collection, that has earned the plaudits of fanciers throughout the world.

Proceeds will go toward replacement of the Historical Society building's furnace. (May 25, 1958)

* * *

You have no romance in your soul if you are not thrilled by the exhibit of old fans at Woodside, home of the Rochester Historical Society, 485 East Ave.

In these hot summer days, you might even wish that these dainty little "air-conditioners" of earlier generations might return to fashion.

—Joan Lynn Schild (July 22, 1959)

* * *

Magnificent silver of great historical significance to Rochester is on display at Woodside, East Avenue home of the Rochester Historical Society.

The exhibit, which opened Saturday at a reception commemorating the 125th anniversary of the incorporation of the city, includes many fine pieces used by Jonathan Child, first mayor of Rochester, and his lady at their home on South Washington Street.—Joan Lynn Schild (August 20, 1959)

* * *

A pitcher which was part of the household equipment of Mrs. Abelard Reynolds, wife of Rochester's first postmaster, has been given to the Rochester Historical Society by her great grandson Rinaldo Kenyon of East Ave-

nue.—Joan Lynn Schild. (August 17, 1960)

* * *

The clock has ticked off a century of events for the Rochester Historical Society. In observance thereof, the society has issued invitations for a centennial celebration Friday afternoon at Woodside, its official home since 1940.

Mrs. Gertrude Herdle Moore, retiring director of the Memorial Art Gallery and longtime member of the society, will be guest of honor and with officers and the Board will receive in the back parlor in front of the handsome pier glass full-length mirror.—Ruth Chamberlain. (Dec., 1961)

* * *

Our deepest gratitude and appreciation belong to Mrs. George B. Selden, President of the Rochester Historical Society from 1940 to 1945. She it was who supervised the removal of the society's collections to their new home at Woodside. Without her knowledge of the nature and whereabouts of virtually every item in the house, the arrangements and exhibitions of historic material hereinafter described would hardly have been possible. Again it was Mrs. Selden who inventoried the entire contents of Woodside.

Similarly, may we express our gratitude to Mrs. Charlotte Whitney Allen, who, as Librarian of the Society for the past five years, has upgraded not only Woodside's book collections, but also its garden.

We are extremely grateful to Mrs. Mortimer Peel, who, as the Society's Historian, has written so many fine articles for the "Scrapbook" and unearthed much valuable material for our exhibitions.

We are greatly indebted to Nancy, Carl, and Rudy Struever for their work in filing the society's many prints and photographs, and for the major operation involved in cataloging numerically and alphabetically in a separate book and card index system the society's more than 1,000 paintings.

We should also like to thank Miss Virginia Jeffrey Smith for special and invaluable help on many occasions, and, most recently for processing this report for inclusion in "The Scrapbook," of which she is the distinguished editor.

Our warm appreciation to Miss Clara Knittel for her faithful service as house secretary to Woodside for 11 years.

WOODSIDE

1941-1961

A Condensed Survey of Woodside Activities
taken from
Newspaper Articles and the Director's Reports

LECTURES AT WOODSIDE

1941 - 1962

| <i>Date</i> | <i>Speaker</i> | <i>Topic</i> |
|-----------------|-------------------------|---|
| 1941 November | Claude Bragdon | "Art in the Machine Age" |
| 1942 January 3 | Dr. Howard Hanson | "Some Trends of American Music" |
| March 26 | Virginia J. Smith | "Modes of the 19th Century" |
| November 30 | Dr. Dexter Perkins | "Rochester, the Birthplace of Religious Isms" |
| December 30 | Fletcher Steele | "Rochester, Yesterday and the Day Before" |
| 1943 June 1 | DeWitt Manning | "The Montours—A Saga of the Old Frontier" |
| December 6 | Carl F. Schmidt | "Cobblestone Houses of the Rochester Area" |
| 1944 January 14 | Claude Bragdon | "Master of Revels" |
| October 28 | Dr. Walter Clark | "The History of Photography" |
| November 8 | Virginia Jeffrey Smith | "Evil and Eve" |
| 1945 March 5 | Claude Bragdon | "Reminiscences of the Third Ward" |
| April 5 | Dr. Blake McKelvey | "Susan B. Anthony's Rochester Career" |
| May 2 | Prof. Willson H. Coates | "Historical Survey of the Liberal Tradition in the Last Half Century" |
| November 20 | Dr. Carl K. Hersey | "Rochester Architecture in the National Scene" |

| | <i>Date</i> | <i>Speaker</i> | <i>Topic</i> |
|------|-------------|------------------------|--|
| | December 5 | Claude Bragdon | "Reminiscences of Old Rochester and of the Broadway Theatre" |
| 1946 | January 24 | Alexander M. Stewart | "Wilderness Annals of Our Rochester Area Before 1700" |
| | March 26 | David Diamond | "Contemporary Music, Its Problems and Functions in a Changing World" |
| | April 29 | Dr. Robert A. MacLean | "Refinements in Greek Architecture" |
| | October 24 | Miss Elsa Jordon | "The Modern Dance in America" |
| | November 4 | W. Stephen Thomas | "The Amateur Historian" |
| | November 9 | Dr. Dexter Perkins | "Post War England" |
| | November 21 | Hiram W. Sibley | "The Effect of History on the Present Greek Situation" |
| | December 9 | Dr. Dexter Perkins | "Post War England" |
| 1947 | January 10 | Carl Schmidt | "Greek Revival Houses" |
| | January 29 | Dr. Blake McKelvey | "Rochester's Splendid Tradition of Charity" |
| | February 27 | Henry R. Glynn | "The Gettysburg Campaign" |
| | March 24 | Albert B. Corey | "Some Historic Houses in New York State" |
| | October 29 | Friederich H. Haak | "The Theatre in Rochester" |
| | November 12 | Mrs. Gertrude H. Moore | "Here Lyeth" |
| | December 2 | Dr. Blake McKelvey | "When Science Was on Trial in Rochester" |
| 1948 | January 3 | Fletcher Steele | "Common Sense Guides the Designer" |
| | February 24 | Harwood B. Dryer | "Camping and Sketching in Glacier National Park" |
| | March 18 | Louis M. Condax | "The Romance of the Violin" |
| | May 26 | Giovanni Polizzi | "The Artist and the Citizen" |
| | November 16 | Beaumont Newhall | "The Daguerreotype in America" |
| | December 3 | Roswell H. Ward | "The Baffled Biographer" |
| | December 29 | Fletcher Steele | "Comments on Planting as a Fine Art" |
| 1949 | February 23 | Albert B. Corey | "Liberal Tradition in New York" |
| | April 29 | Stephen Thomas | "Thoreau, What He Means to Us Today" |
| 1950 | January 25 | Carl F. Schmidt | "Historic Wheatland in Color" |
| | February 23 | Dr. Dexter Perkins | "The Importance of Rochester History" |

| <i>Date</i> | <i>Speaker</i> | <i>Topic</i> |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| March 23 | Charles Carruth | "Dr. Came, Genesee Physician, Lecturer and Furniture Maker" |
| April 19 | Maj. Wheeler Case | "Some Aspects of Gunpowder and Guns Taken Genealogically" |
| May 10 | Mrs. Willson H. Coates | "Journalism in Rochester in the 1890's" |
| May 25 | Erik H. Krause | "Nature Forms as the Source for All Art Forms" |
| June 2 | Thomas S. Tibbs | "American Primitive Painting—Old and New" |
| November 3 | George S. Brooks | "Western New York Humor" |
| November 17 | Dr. Albert B. Corey | "The Place of Local History in the Community" |
| December 15 | Beaumont Newhall | "Time in New England" |
| 1951 January 26 | Major Wheeler Case | "Erie Canal" |
| February 21 | Dr. Blake McKelvey | "Seneca Time of Troubles" |
| June 7 | Louis Condax and Howard Graves | "The History of the Violin" "The 17th Century Harpsichord at the Rochester Historical Society" |
| October 22 | Dr. Louis Jones | "The Cooperstown Idea" |
| November 7 | Dr. Blake McKelvey | "A Local Historian's Reflections on Some European Cities" |
| November 29 | Dr. Carl K. Hersey | "Woodside and the Greek Revival" |
| 1952 February 15 | Alexander M. Stewart | "New-found Cayuga Bronze Effigy" |
| October 23 | Dr. Carl K. Hersey | "The Architecture of Woodside" |
| November 7 | Virginia J. Smith | "Do You Remember?" |
| December 12 | Mrs. Gertrude H. Moore | "Hill Towns of Italy" |
| 1953 January 22 | W. Stephen Thomas | "Museums and Culture in Japan" |
| February 27 | Homer Bliss | "Impressions of the Orient" |
| November 6 | Dr. Blake McKelvey | "The Birth of Rochester" |
| November 20 | Virginia J. Smith | "Spain, Yesterday and Today" |
| December 18 | Mrs. Harper Sibley | "Across Both Oceans" |
| 1954 March 26 | Carl F. Schmidt | "Moorish Architecture of Spain" |
| October 29 | Virginia J. Smith | "Portugal" |
| 1955 January 7 | W. Stephen Thomas | "Hospitality in Pioneer America with Reference to Western New York" |
| January 28 | Major Wheeler Case | "A Recent Invasion of Britain" |

| | <i>Date</i> | <i>Speaker</i> | <i>Topic</i> |
|------|-------------|------------------------|--|
| | February 22 | John K. Tilton | "National Shrines of America Associated with George Washington" |
| | March 18 | Dr. Dexter Perkins | "The Salzburg Seminar" |
| | April 29 | Erik H. Krause | "New Vision in the Garden" |
| | May 18 | Arthur H. Crapsey | "Life of Frederick Douglass" |
| | November 9 | Mrs. Herman Bakker | "Your Responsibility for the UN." |
| | November 26 | Miss Jean C. McCurdy | "A Glimpse of the Mediterranean" |
| | December 2 | Dr. Carl K. Hersey | "The Spirit of Nationalism in the Architecture of the Early Republic" |
| 1956 | January 18 | Howard S. Merritt | "American Prints and Paintings" |
| | February 6 | Dr. Emanuel Winternitz | "Bagpipes and Hurdy Gurdies in Their Social Settings" (This was at the Memorial Art Gallery) |
| | March 7 | Miss Gerda Peterich | "Origins of Cobblestone Architecture" (This was at the Memorial Art Gallery) |
| | November 10 | James Card | "Music for Films" (At Eastman House) |
| | December 17 | Beaumont Newhall | "The Four Corners in 1851" |
| 1957 | January 21 | Dr. Emanuel Winternitz | "Angel Concerts in the Art of Renaissance" (At Memorial Art Gallery) |
| | April 11 | Langdon F. Clay | "Rochester Architecture and the Erie Canal" (At Memorial Art Gallery) |
| | May 10 | Carl F. Schmidt | "Early Stories of Monroe County" |
| | May 23 | Erik H. Krause | "Rochester's Green History" |
| | November 22 | Minor White | "Information Plus, or Excavations in Historical Photographs" |
| 1958 | February 14 | Dr. Kenneth Hickman | "Problems of Fresh Water at Home and Abroad" |
| | March 25 | Minor White | "Image and Nature of Pictorial Photography" |
| | May 2 | Dr. Carl K. Hersey | "A Pilgrimage to Ancient Shrines" (At Memorial Art Gallery) |
| | May 23 | Paul Vanderbilt | "Historical Perspective in a Modern World" (At Memorial Art Gallery) |
| | December 4 | Paul Vanderbilt | "An Acquired Taste for History" (At Memorial Art Gallery) |

| <i>Date</i> | <i>Speaker</i> | <i>Topic</i> |
|-----------------|------------------------|---|
| December 17 | Erik Hans Krause | "The Silent Pioneers" |
| 1959 February 3 | Virginia J. Smith | "Dr. Lewis Henry Morgan, Father of Anthropology" |
| March 23 | Dr. Emanuel Winternitz | "Opera in Mozart's Life" (At Memorial Art Gallery) |
| May 22 | Dr. Carl K. Hersey | "Bronze Age Greece of Legend and Fact" |
| October 22 | W. Stephen Thomas | "It's Fun to Learn" |
| November 20 | John A. Leermakers | "The Oregon Trail in Nebraska and Wyoming" |
| December 17 | Carl Schmidt | "The Octagon Fad" |
| 1960 May 26 | Harwood B. Dryer | "Old New England Houses" |
| November 15 | Dr. Frederick Fennell | "Marching 60's" |
| 1961 May 19 | Howard Van R. Palmer | "Father Rode with Sheridan" |
| 1962 January 26 | Louis M. Condax | "Evolution of the Violin" |
| March 19 | Dr. Emanuel Winternitz | "Theme and Variations in Art and Music" (At Memorial Art Gallery) |

