

GENESEE COUNTRY SCRAPBOOK

P U B L I S H E D B Y

The Rochester Historical Society

A LANDMARK VANISHES

A memoire in words and pictures of the old City Hall annex

ABELARD REYNOLDS AND THE ROCHESTER RAPPINGS

by DR. ARTHUR C. PARKER

THE GREAT AUBURN TOURNAMENT

by HESTER HOPKINS COCHRANE

REMINISCENCES OF THE ROCHESTER OF THE EIGHTIES

by CLAUDE BRAGDON

CAROLINE ERICKSON PERKINS

by VIRGINIA JEFFREY SMITH

A BOY'S VISIT TO ROCHESTER IN 1857

by CHARLES HENRY SMITH

FOR YOUR ROCHESTER BOOKSHELF

by BLAKE MC KELVEY

Volume II

Rochester, N. Y., 1951

Number 2



CONTRIBUTING TO THIS ISSUE

DR. ARTHUR C. PARKER, one of the nation's foremost authorities on American Indian history, is director emeritus of Rochester Museum of Arts and Sciences. Now living in Naples, N. Y., he continues his writing and his participation in historical organizations.

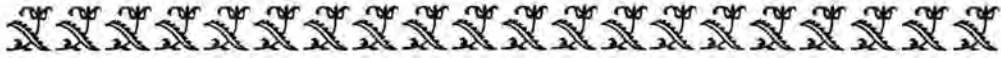
MRS. HESTER HOPKINS COCHRANE is a Rochesterian whose flair for digging interesting stories out of local and family history is reminiscent of that of her famous kinsman, Samuel Hopkins Adams.

CLAUDE BRAGDON, who died in 1946, was one Rochester's most distinguished sons, gaining an international reputation as an architect, stage designer and writer.

MISS VIRGINIA JEFFREY SMITH, a director of the Rochester Historical Society, was a friend and admirer of Caroline Erickson Perkins, whose life story she recounts in this issue.

CHARLES HENRY SMITH, whose diary of a visit to Rochester in 1857 starts on Page 18, was a precocious young man who later became a professor of history at Yale.





Abelard Reynolds and the Rochester Rappings

A Bref Recit of the days When Ghosts and Okis Roamed Rochester
By ARTHUR C. PARKER

IT is the year 1850 and the locale is the city of Rochester. When the music ceased and the singers with sighs relaxed in the gloom, a momentary hush fell over the little group gathered about the drawing room table at the Draper home.

"Will the spirits speak tonight? Hark!" There was a signal of assent.

Rachael Draper who had been "magnetized" softly spoke. "I hear someone say Abelard. It seems . . . Ah, your mother says Abelard, Clarissa and Mary. I can't speak as she does."

It was thus that Abelard Reynolds wrote down the account in his notebook, discovered only when the old Arcade which he built was torn down. An enterprising pioneer, Abelard was the city's first postmaster, a clever politician and a dutiful son, fond of his mother. That her spirit was now standing before him was a matter of deep concern.

"Does her voice sound natural?" he asked the medium.

Mrs. Draper, who seems to have known the elderly lady, replied, "It sounds just as she used to speak. She says 'Abelard, you wish to know more about these things.'"

Abelard did, and his mother's spirit exerting its psychic force through the brain and vocal cords of the medium went on to say, ". . . I was not sorry to see you seated at the table where spiritual knowledge is obtained; your credulity is worth more than all the boasted knowl-

edge of those who are skeptical."

That settled it, and from August 16, 1850 to his death in 1878 the revered Abelard lost his skepticism, attended seances and became a confirmed, though unlisted, Spiritualist. At least his notes and transcripts of spirit messages would so indicate. One of the bright lights of a growing city, he was a leader of thought, a business promoter, a builder and owner with his son William of upstate New York's largest office building, the Reynolds Arcade. If such a man could be enlisted in the fold there must be more than chicanery in the rappings that occurred when the winsome Fox sisters, Margaretta and Katherine, arrived from Hydesville, a hamlet in Wayne County.

The Hydesville crossroads must have seemed a dreary place for the younger daughters of John D. Fox after the earthy smell of the grand canal town of Rochester, where they had lived but a scant three years before. The new home had once been occupied by Michael Weekman, who later said that though he had heard noises there, nothing really disturbing had happened to him. With the coming of the Foxes, however, as we shall see, the house developed rappings, and it was revealed that a peddler had disappeared after visiting the house some years before.

When Margaretta and Katherine looked over their new home after their parents had entered it on December 11, 1847,

they may have wondered what opportunities for fun and mystification there were when lights were out. At any rate, knockings were soon heard on floor, walls, bed and door. A table had raps and so did other furniture. A clipping from the *Despair of Science* pasted in Abelard's note book relates that in January, 1848, the sounds became loud and startling. Furniture began to rattle, there was the sound of feet and covers were rudely jerked from a bed.

Blacksmith Fox arose from his couch to investigate, but in vain. *Rap—rap—rap!* and yet no rapper could be found. On March 31 the sounds came again, this time coming from the girls' bed. Katy snapped her fingers, shouting, "Now Mr. Splitfoot, do as I do and count one, two, three, four . . ." The invisible Splitfoot rapped back the numbers, whereupon the awed mother cried out "Count ten!" The ghost obliged.

Aha, she'd catch it now with a trick question. "Tell us the age of Kate," she commanded, and nine distinct knocks came as an answer. What could all this mean? What was behind it, under it, in it?

The mystified Mrs. Fox testified later "I then asked if it was a human being that was making the noise and, if it was, to manifest it by the same noise. I then asked if it was a spirit, and it was manifest by two sounds."

By such questions Mrs. Fox ascertained that the unknown noisemaker was an injured spirit and that its body was buried under the house. Perhaps mother Fox had some evocative power herself, for it is said that her maiden name was Routan, and that she was of French origin, several ancestors having been endowed with second sight. Be this as it may, by more questions Mrs. Fox gained permission to invite Mrs. Redfield into the house, and soon other neighbors came, the Deuselers,

the Hydes, the Jewells. There were raps, taps, rumbles, and the record states that Mrs. Redfield found the Fox girls agitated. Mrs. Fox seemed even more so, asking Mrs. Redfield what she should do. "We have heard the noise for some time," she explained, "and now it answers all our questions, and we cannot account for it."

Before giving any opinion Mrs. Redfield herself asked a number of questions and all were answered correctly, whereupon the singularly agitated girls blurted out, "We are innocent—how good it is to have a clear conscience!"

By the next morning the news of the spirit rappings had reached almost everyone in the vicinity, and wagging tongues had spread the tidings far and wide. Numerous persons came on Saturday to listen and wonder. At first the signals came only during the evening, but on April 2, 1848, the rappings were heard throughout the day. Mr. Deusler, a friendly neighbor, was as puzzled as Mr. Weekman had been, for he, too, had once lived in the house, but had never heard a sound.

The situation soon began to develop with rapidity. Margaretta moved on to Rochester to live with her married sister, Anna L. Fish, and as might be expected the Fish home at 11 Mechanics Square began to develop raps. Oddly necromantic noises were now heard elsewhere. For instance, a certain Mr. G., a prominent church member began to hear rappings when neither Fish nor Fox was present. The daughter of Mr. G., when placed under mesmeric influence, so it is recorded, became clairvoyant. Rappings were heard in the town of Greece, and then the rat-tat-tatting, like the voice of the woodpecker, skipped over the land and tapped at Auburn, catalyzed no doubt by a visit of Katy Fox to that city. Sennet, its suburbs, not to be outdone quickly produced rappings in the home

of Herman Beaver, whose son, a 12-year old lad was a necessary presence. Sounds were heard on the ceiling and under a table. To further astonish everyone the table moved, "with no visible hands touching it." (Ibid.)

Back in Rochester enough was happening now to stir intellectual and religious circles profoundly. With rappings to the East, to Buffalo in the West, and in its midst, the agitated town called for demonstrations, wanted the Fox girls investigated, wanted truth. There were mass meetings in Corinthian and Temperance Halls with the Fox sisters present and under the eyes of the investigating committee. No fraud could be detected, and no explanations found for the answering raps. More meetings were held, and another committee found no fraud, upon which the skeptics in the audience tried to storm the stage to do violence to the demonstrating believers. The Fox girls were hurriedly spirited out the backdoor and barely escaped. One result of the demonstrations and the investigations was a petition signed by prominent men and women asking the Congress of the United States to investigate, for it appeared that man and spirit-man had now been put in touch with each other and the undiscovered country had been found, for it could no longer be said "no traveler has returned."

Adelbert Cronsie in his Rochester Historical Society address in 1926 stated that after these demonstrations, ". . . 'Spirit Circles' became common to which an admission fee was charged, and the wonder grew and spread." It was Amy Post who had suggested the propriety of a fee, a circumstance that had not occurred to the little Foxes.

Though believers flocked, it must not be thought that skeptics did not continue to dispute and impute. Both preacher and pamphleteer warned against the rappings

as the work of Satan. For example, in January 1850 Eliab Capron and Henry D. Barron published a booklet under an Auburn imprint with the title, *Explanation and History of the Mysterious Communications with Spirits, Etc.* A page and a half were devoted to a list of prominent citizens who heard the rappings. Not to be scooped, D. M. Dewey of Rochester published his now famous pamphlet on *The History of the Strange Sounds and Rappings Heard in Rochester*, (1850) selling 30,000 copies. Mr. Dewey was frankly explicit in stating that he was in no manner responsible for the doctrinal conclusions contained in the signed statements of those who testified for the new cult.

Phineas A. Smith, a clergyman, suspected skullduggery in the origin of the noises and evocations. He preached a rousing sermon on the devil, to whom he attributed the phenomena. His denunciation was published at Rochester in a small booklet called *Exposition of the Spiritual Rappings*. He wrote, "The excitement became intense throughout the city." Though a scoffer he gained entrance to a circle, and ". . . after having received answers to all questions . . . I wished to ask that evening, I asked if it would show its physical strength by moving the table around which we sat. The answer was yes, and immediately the table which was a very large one began to move toward me, and all moved back from it . . . I asked if it would move back. It moved back as far the other way."

The next evening the adamant parson determined to find out if tables could move upward into the air, fearing that he had been humbugged the night before. "I requested the spirit to let me hold the table," he wrote, "so that I could see how much power was attached to it. I took hold of the table with both hands and then asked the spirit to move it. It did so

and my holding on made little impression . . . I held my hands six inches above the table and said, 'Will the spirit raise the table from the floor,' and it came. When it fell the house was jarred, the table being a large one." Instead of capitulating now, the preacher berated the "influences," but stated that he would not implicate anyone present in carrying out deception knowingly.

For the next several years closed sances and public demonstrations raged. New means of communication were found, first by "magnetized" speaking-mediums and then by "guided" spirit writing. With this helpful advance came sepulchral voices out of the air, ghostly hands that touched believers, horizontal rising of bodies, and then the Indian guide of indeterminate tribal origin, and soon great names of old. Benjamin Franklin condescended to speak to Abelard Reynolds, and so did others. Challenged, Franklin's spirit shocked the medium with a charge of electricity. So states Nathaniel Draper in the Dewey booklet, and corroboration appears in the handwriting of the inquiring Abelard himself.

Sometimes unsuspecting spirits were trapped into statements that were manifestly false, but this came to be charged to mischievous imps of the darkness called *okis*. The *oki* was an Iroquoian phantasy, and *okis* had been noted by the seventeenth century Jesuits. They had come to confound the believer.

Not confounded, however, was Preceptress Mary B. Allen who at one time had Katy as a pupil. "How does my grandmother spell scissors?" asked Miss Allen, whereupon the spirit, (presumably through Kate Fox) spelled out "s-i-s--s-e-r-s." To this Miss Allen exclaimed. "Oh that is just the way Katy Fox spelled scissors when she was a scholar in my school."

Too much of mystery, notwithstand-

ing, was happening to be be downed by misspelling or distortions of *okis*. The cult grew and attracted devout adherents. Margaret became the wife of Dr. Elisha K. Kane, the Arctic explorer, and Kate became Mrs. Jenkins.

Time went on and in 1888 Margaret Fox Kane, then a widow, took the lecture platform to yield to conscience or contrition, and to confess her ingenious deception. With Kate in the theater she affirmed that she and Katy had learned how to crack their big toe joints and had practiced it until the sounds were loud and clear. She demonstrated upon the stage. But this explanation had been anticipated by the Rev. H. Mattison, author of *Spirit Rapping Unveiled*, published in 1855. Mention should be made, also, of an even earlier expose in the *Buffalo Medical Journal* for March, 1851, and the affidavit of Mrs. Norman Culver that Katy had confessed to her that she and her sisters had produced the sounds by cracking the joints of their toes. Then a resounding rap was furnished when R. B. Davenport in 1888 issued his book, *The Death Blow to Spiritualism*. It was an exposé, and the author avowed that Both Katy and Margaret had furnished the information.

Notwithstanding this "death blow" and many other books and pamphlets, Spiritualism as a cult did not die. Exposures could be explained away and such mysteries as the levitation of mediums, their coming through locked doors, seemingly correct predictions and the spirit reading of sealed letters continued to confound the skeptics. How were such things achieved? How could a medium rise in the air and sail through a window to re-enter another window like a floating stream of smoke? Mystery was still in the air, and grieving hearts still yearned for some word from their departed loved ones. Spiritualism feeding on such hopes and

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 22)

The Great Auburn Tournament

By HESTER HOPKINS COCHRANE



IN 1866, my mother, Martha Peck Porter, was sent to Miss Porter's School, Farmington, Conn., following family tradition. Being considerably the youngest of the family, she had always been somewhat babied. And it was, of course, a great letter writing age. Yet even making allowances, the amount of mail she received would stagger modern correspondents. During the two years of her absence, her father, Samuel D. Porter, wrote her very day. Her mother wrote a little less often, but very fully. Her brother, Farley, just out of college, and mainly interested in the theater, sport, and the ladies, wrote several times a week, and her brother, Sam, back from the Civil war with four wounds, and working hard at business, whenever he could find time. A sister, Mary Pond, sent a letter every week or so, and her brother-in-law, Charles Pond, nearly as often. In addition, cousins, aunts and friends contributed irregularly.

Mother kept all these letters, and they present a gay and pleasant picture of a Rochester which had come back to "normalcy" very successfully after the war. There were weddings and balls, chestnutting parties and rows on the river, quail hunts, croquet matches, canal boat rides, and many calls to be paid "even as far east as Mrs. Butts' home." Mr. Roswell Hart died, a Boston family purchased "Lakeview House," Mr. Kidd's old place, \$2200 was raised for the mission school,

Martha Whitney's meals all featured oysters, the "Home" board met, Ira Harris of Albany addressed local Republicans, Charley Achilles failed of nomination as county treasurer, Clara Barton lectured in Corinthian Hall, where Wallack and other tragedians drew huge crowds, while Ristori and Davenport brought Standing Room Only to the Opera House.

But the reigning diversion was baseball, and Rochester seems to have surpassed all cities in the western half of the state in its enthusiasm. There were at least seven and probably several more local teams, including the Excelsiors, the Atlantics, the Pacifics, the Mutuels, the Mystics, the Alerts, and the Enterprises. Sam and Farley played catcher and baseman on the Excelsiors, which the family naturally represented as Rochester's Number One team. They practiced in Jones Square, and Grandmother's letters often noted that "your father has gone down to the Square to watch the Excelsiors." Sam and Farley gave constant reports of the team's doings; even Mary wrote of her mistaken attempt to entertain an out of town guest by taking her to see the boys defeat Central City, the Syracuse team. Unfortunately the boys lost. "I can assure you" wrote Mary, "It was harrowing in the extreme." Often matches were going on simultaneously in Jones, Brown, and Franklin squares. In Irondequoit they even went so far as to play on Sunday, and agitated observers protested to the paper.

In October, Auburn invited Rochester to take part in a western New York tournament. This occasion has a double interest for me in the fact that my father,

a precocious ballplayer of fourteen, and his two older brothers were members of the Auburn nine. Thus, my mother's two brothers were to play her future husband and brothers-in-law. If she later recalled what her family wrote her about the great tournament, it is a wonder that she ever encouraged an acquaintance with John Hopkins when they met years later.

The Excelsiors, the Pacifics and the Atlantics all went on to Auburn, thus entering more contestants than any other city. Syracuse sent two teams and Utica, Springport, Hobart College, Albany, Auburn and Buffalo one each. The Niagaras from Buffalo were the Excelsiors' chief rival, and according to united Porter opinion, were most partially treated by the ignorant- or venal-umpire and judges. The third day of play had brought volently strained relations. The Excelsiors beat the Niagaras with four runs in the eighth inning, at which point the umpire declared it was to have been a seven inning game and was therefore a tie. It was then replayed, and although suffering from sprained ankles and broken fingers, the Excelsiors won again, 28-26. Only two teams now remained undefeated, the Excelsiors and the Pacifics, and it seemed certain that whoever won in the play-off, both the gold and the silver ball, the trophies for the winner and the runner-up, would go to Rochester. At this point the judges announced a new ruling. If the Excelsiors did not beat the Pacifics by more than the two runs by which they had beaten the Niagaras, the Niagaras were to have the silver ball. This was followed by a second ruling. If the Pacifics beat the Excelsiors, it would not count and must be played over. The Rochester teams discussed this outrage half the night, and the next day upheld their injured honors by withdrawing from the tournament entirely, leaving the Niagaras and Auburns to play for the cham-

pionship, which went to Auburn. The announcement of "best player" awards added the final touch of infamy.

"Clearly," said the editor of the Democrat next day, "'best catcher' should have gone to S. Porter, 'best baserunner' to Sullivan, and 'best fielder' to O. Hilton." But the judges decided otherwise. 'Best catcher' went to Hopkins of Auburn (my Uncle Grosvenor) instead of my uncle Sam Porter.

The Excelsiors, Pacifics, and Atlantics returned to Rochester and to the crowds awaiting them at the station, bearing large pumpkins instead of the gold and silver balls—and their indignation was reflected in the next morning's papers. Syracuse editorialized almost as feelingly as Rochester on the subject. "Considerable dissatisfaction is expressed at the action of the committee, inasmuch as, by the decision given, it will be seen that the Niagaras, that should have retired from the contest after being twice fairly beaten, get the silver ball . . . There can be no doubt that the sympathies of the public at present are with the Rochester clubs. The system seems to have been to confer rewards upon the conquered and insults upon the victors." The New York World observer agreed that "the honors were all carried off by Rochester, even if they had no balls to bring home."

On the other hand, the Auburn Advertiser assured the contestants placatingly that "the report of the judges will explain satisfactorily the whole matter," while the Buffalo papers professed to have learned of a Rochester plot to get around the ruling that the Pacifics must equal the Niagaras' score against the Excelsiors, by having the Excelsiors throw the game to the Pacifics, "an arrangement hardly worthy of the grooms and stable boys of the race track."

Spirits were not the only bruised parts of the Rochester players, and a very bat-

tered group came home from Auburn. I know from my father's descriptions that baseball, eighty-five years ago was no game for weaklings. He never got over a mild contempt for any player (except a catcher) who used a glove, and for a catcher who used a mask and chest protector. Sam's eye was badly cut by a ball, his mouth by a thrown club. Farley's hands were cut up, the "cords" of one leg strained, and an ankle sprained, so that in the second Buffalo game, Sullivan had to run for him when he batted. In addition Sam had one of his recurrent attacks of fever and pain in an old wound on his return, so it was probably as well that improving and grading started on the diamond in Jones Square, and play stopped for the season.

In May, 1867, thoughts turned again to the great American game. The Excelsiors reorganized. "At our meeting," wrote Farley, "We elected the banker, D. W. Powers, president of the Association. Last autumn Mr. Powers presented to our club the sum of \$25. Quite handsome." Since Excelsior dues were 5 cents a month, and often in arrears, no wonder Mr. Powers' munificence was felt to be outstanding.

Farley wrote on May 22 that he had just received a letter of invitation from the chairman of the Auburn tournament, "inviting us to visit Auburn, and contend with the Buffalo, Syracuse, and Auburn clubs for the gold ball (which *we* won last year). They propose to exclude the Pacific club of this place from participation. It reminds me of the man, who having stolen a man's goods, proposed to return them at double the original price.

It is one of the most impertinent propositions of which I ever heard."

Happily we can end this sad story of the Auburn tournament on a true Horatio Alger note of true worth rewarded and justice triumphant. (Naturally if I had access to letters of my father's family on the same subject, I might not feel so certain that the story was sad.) Nothing in the whole affair had created so much bitterness as Buffalo's capture of the silver ball. Though the Excelsiors refused the "impertinent proposition" to play the Niagaras at Auburn, they welcomed the chance to play them in Rochester. All members of the Porter clan were present with the "enormous crowd" attending the game. The Excelsiors won, 18-13. "It is generally conceded it was the best played match ever seen on the square," wrote Farley, modestly. "I never batted better and Sam did great execution. It would have required a *very* heavy nine to beat the game we played."

The Excelsiors' stationery, (on which Farley, the club secretary, occasionally wrote his sister) was headed by the warning, "No entertainment given or received," which I interpret to mean that they believed ball should be played and celebrated in a state of strict sobriety. After the glorious defeat of the Niagaras, the Excelsiors must have mellowed to an unprecedented burst of goodfellowship, —or perhaps Mr. Powers in his enthusiasm chipped in another twenty-five dollars. "We entertained them very handsomely when they were here," wrote Farley, "and the best of feeling now exists between the two clubs."

Reminiscences of The Rochester of the Eighties

By CLAUDE BRAGDON

Claude Bragdon, famed Rochester architect, author and stage designer, wrote these memories of the Rochester of his youth shortly before his death at the age of 80 in 1946. He had moved away from the city many years before, but, as this article shows, his memory of the city and his affection for it remained strong.

THE FLOWER CITY

OF Rochester, the F-l-o-u-r City, I remember nothing, of course, but as the City of Flowers in the 1880's it was a place of pleasant umbrageous streets, gardens, nurseries, small parks and sanitary suburbs; land of wide, elm-shadowed avenues flanked by stately residences of the early Classic Revival period, or late General Grant. The Genesee River bisected the city into East Side and West Side, and the Erie Canal and the New York Central tracks into North and South Sections. Between the two were Main Street and the Four Corners, that "X" which marked the spot where the main body of business was found.

The Powers Building stood — as it stands today—on one of these corners, the first completely fireproof office building in Western New York. It contained an elevator—one of the first of those contraptions. It took one up to the Powers Art Gallery, which occupied the mansard. A great "Expulsion from Eden" acted as "come on" to this place of entertainment, where, besides pictures, were stereoptican views of foreign parts and lascivious tinkling music boxes playing Strauss waltzes. On one of the other

corners was the Elwood Building, which contained the very first mail chute, that device out of which architect James G. Cutler made a fortune after the advent of the skyscraper.

The New York Central Station was on State Street, lying between it and the river. State Street was then a thoroughfare quite co-equal with Main. The Third Ward had not awakened from that slumber first disturbed by the spirit-rappings of the Fox sisters, and though Trade already menaced the quiet of East Avenue where it joins Main, the dignified old houses presented an unbroken front like Napoleon's Old Guard, which "dies, but never surrenders."

Above Elm Street were many vacant lots where we boys used to play ball, and Mr. Cutler was criticized for his optimism in building his house as far to the east as South Goodman St., even though the Warner mansion, its architecture inspired by some Rhineland castle, already occupied the corner of that street and East Avenue. Culver Road marked the city's eastern limit, and from there it was a nice long Sunday afternoon walk to Brighton Village. Reservoir Avenue, then a dirt road, marked the city's southern boundary, while to the west and north it soon lost itself in the surrounding flat country—growth being in general to the east, unlike most other American cities.

SCHOOLMATES

I lived on George Street and attended School Number Twelve. One of my school friend was Tommy —. He was the highest hitch-kicker in the school, and

every time he entered the basement entrance to his house on Court Street he left the mark of his shoe on the lintel above his head. He used to come down the school aisle between classes, spinning his arithmetic on the finger of one hand and his geography on that of the other. Sometimes he varied this by walking on his hands when the teacher wasn't looking. After he left Number Twelve, Tommy became a barkeep in a Front Street saloon, where, with slicked hair and a white apron he polished glasses and asked each customer the canonical question: "And what is yours, Mr. A-a-a?"

Art Brock I remember chiefly because he could run along a brick sidewalk and turn a complete forward somersault. He later joined the Comedy Four, a vaudeville team doing a refined act running seventeen minutes with a strong finish, vanishing forever out of my ken.

SPORTS AND AMUSEMENTS

With playmates such as these, and Thede Milstead, a banjo player, it is small wonder that my interests centered about the circus and the theatre. We spent our scant pocket money on tickets to the gallery at Variety Shows, where we could see The Happy Hottentots, Frank McNish, and the Spanish Students from Cadiz, who in knee breeches, Spanish cloaks, and large feathered hats played on mandolins and guitars such pieces as "Secret Love," "The Turkish Patrol March," and "The Forge in the Forest." I learned to play the mandolin and the banjo myself, after a fashion. The stacatto plunkety-plunk of which latter instrument always has seemed to me more the voice of the American Spirit than any that I know.

On pleasant Sunday afternoons we used to foregather at a certain sawdust pile near the Canal on South Avenue and there practice ground and lofty tumbling without the danger of breaking our

necks. In winter we went skating on the upper river or the Eastern Widewaters. I succumbed to the roller skating epidemic which swept the country with particular virulence in the Eighties and Nineties, and was equally a victim to the bicycle craze which followed. I witnessed Frank Barber make the circuit of the Race Track down Lake Avenue way on a single high, nickel-plated Columbia wheel, he being the first to master that art, which was considered a great achievement in that day. The advent of the Circus was a major annual event of importance, particularly its early morning arrival and the putting up of the vast tent. I remember how the tempered sunlight filtered down through the yellow canvas, the characteristic circus sights and sounds, and more than all, the *smells*, of which, in general, a word may here be said.

NOSTALGIC MEMORIES

It seemed as though every human occupation had its characteristic odor: The tannery, the brewery, the blacksmith shop could each be identified by its smell. That of the livery stable was compounded of hay, ammonia, and harness leather; a saloon smelt of stale tobacco and beer, cheese and ham and hard liquor. The corridors of the hotels seemed haunted by the ghosts of old boiled dinners, and in the theatres there was always the odor of escaping gas, which still inspires in me a voluptuous sensation, associated as it is with so much pleasure. Sounds have a similar effect of awakening old memories: The sound of a steam calliope recalls circus processions down Main Street hill, and that of a street band playing a march, the linen-dustered and plug-hatted minstrel men with their canes, imparting somehow an air of big-city urbanity and sophistication to our town which we hadn't realized it lacked. I can still hear in imagination the pre-matinee music of

a band in front of the "Corinthian," playing a long-forgotten tune:

"Sweet wedding bells are ringing,
They have a joyous sound for me—"

But why go on?

THEATRES

Of theatres there were only two: The Corinthian Academy of Music, entered from Main Street through the glass-roofed Reynolds' Arcade, and the Cook Opera House on South St. Paul Street. They were both dreadful fire-traps, the Corinthian being approached only by a steep flight of steps underneath which was a saloon. Upon the sawdust floor of this saloon, between the acts, the male members of the audience used to make patterns with the overflow of their beer glasses and salivary glands.

The auditorium above was not without architectural pretensions: The two enormous proscenium boxes at stage right and left were flanked by fluted and gilded columns of a style happily unknown in Corinth, sustaining broken pediments with lyres for their central features. Heavy crimson plush curtains were draped back by means of a gilded cord the size of ship's hawser. The drop curtain represented a scene on the lake of Como, a ruined temple in the background and in the foreground dancing contadini—all painted in arsenical greens, flaming reds, and chalky blues.

Backstage, where once I was permitted to go, was a place of enchantment, with the glare of its footlights and the gloom of its deep recesses. But what remains most vividly in my memory, after the lapse of all those years, is this cinquain, scribbled doubtless in a moment of exasperation on the plaster wall of the star's dressing room:

A hick little one-night town,
A stick little one-night town;
Uncle Tom, Tan Joey,

Burnt cork and banjoey,

Make-me-sick little one-night town.

Travelling companies never carried their own scenery and properties in those days, but used whatever the house afforded. These were therefore calculated to meet a great variety of needs. The box-set was a thing unknown, the scenery consisting of flats which shoved together, wings from which the actors walked on and off, and borders which hid the overhead rigging and gridiron. There was first of all a Palace Scene, and, descending the economic scale, an apartment of inferior elegance; a Kitchen Scene, which would answer either for the home of honest poverty or for a thieves' den. The Prison Scene was represented by stone walls, one high, barred window, and painted-on chains heavy enough to anchor an ocean liner. The Street Scene was in one-point perspective, a typical section of that Main Street which according to Sinclair Lewis extends from Portland, Maine, to Portland, Oregon. The Woods Scene, complete with wings, ground row and borders was for the enactment of such old-timers as "Nick of the Woods," or "the Jibbon-anisy."

The entertainment offered consisted of Tom shows (Uncle Tom's Cabin, Humpty Dumpty shows, featuring some well-known pantomimic clown, and Minstrels, of which the San Francisco Minstrels were the most famous. They were well loved in Rochester particularly because one of its star performers, Billy Backus, was a Rochester man. There were also the stock dramas, such as "East Lynne" and "Under Two Flags," and Denman Thompson in "The Old Homestead." year after year.

The Cook Opera House was the home of entertainment somewhat more sophisticated and refined: Fanny Davenport in "Fedora," "Frou-Frou," and "Camille";

and Genevive Ward in "Forget-Me-Not." It was before the days of suppressed emotion: "It's a small stage, but I'll die all over it" expressed the sentiment of the Thespians of that time.

BURLEQUE SHOWS AND AMUSEMENT PARKS

On North St. Paul Street there flourished for a time a burlesque theatre known as the Casino, the chief function of which was the sale and consumption of a local Beer. On the stage voluptuous blondes in tights and the lowest of low comedians dispensed entertainment for males. Though the show was hot, the music was not—but sweet, and the songs were fairly dripping with sentiment. At Falls Field and at Ontario Beach Park were table-filled auditoriums where for 25 cents one might hear light opera of the type of "La Mascotte," "Billie Taylor," "Fatinitza" and "The Merry War" well sung and well acted according to my uncritical taste. A tight rope performer walked the Lower Falls on a steel cable—a longer trip, it was said, than Blondin's across Niagara. The Upper Falls was the scene of Sam Patch's fatal leap at an earlier day, the first of a curious series of fatalities, in Rochester, of famous entertainers of one sort and another. For Hermann the Great, died after a final exhibition of his skill at the Genesee Valley Club, and Paderewski gave his last public recital in Rochester. It is said that near the close of Edwin Booth's career he was taken so ill on the stage of a Rochester theatre that Lawrence Barrett, who was playing Iago to Booth's Othello, had to come out of his part and dismiss the audience. This at least is a legend at the Players' Club, but of the truth of it I do not know.

CHARACTERS

But more important than *things* are *people*, and in the Rochester of my younger days were many well-known characters

—I call them that because they *had* character; a fast-vanishing commodity, in the sense in which I mean it. Prominent among these were Messrs. Frederick Whittlesey and Samuel Wilder, whose names I couple together because of their great friendship. The former was in the habit of going about in the coldest weather minus an overcoat, his bare hands thrust into his coat sleeves as he shuffled along the icy Third-Ward sidewalks. He was the president of the Genesee Club. One day, the wife of Chris, then the steward of that August organization, observed this pathetic figure and said to her husband: "I'm going to give that old man your heavy overcoat."

"Why you can't do that," answered Chris, in consternation, "he's the president of the club!"

Stories are still current about the European journey of Mr. Whittlesey and Mr. Wilder. The one I like best is the reply of the latter to someone's inquiry if he had had a good time while in Paris: "Yes, but not as good as I would have had if I hadn't experienced religion."

Sherlock Andrews was the center of a group of choice spirits at his dignified old house, long a landmark on North St. Paul Street, where he dispensed a liberal hospitality to the local lights and visiting firemen. George Ellwanger's house on Mt. Hope Avenue was another port of call for gourmets and connoisseurs not alone of food and wine, but of art and literature as well. Harvey Ellis, beloved vagabond and revered master, was the greatest artist and wit of them all. Like so many other pioneers and precursors he had to die in poverty before he was appreciated. Like Louis Sullivan, whom he so much resembled in certain ways, his fame among the cognoscenti has been growing ever since.

But why continue? I speak of things
(CONTINUED ON PAGE 22)

A Landmark Vanishes

The steep roofs, the frowning smoke-grimed walls, and above all, the towering, Mercury-topped chimney of the old City Hall Annex have vanished from the Rochester scene, making way for progress, but leaving the city without one of its most picturesque landmarks.

For 71 years the old building, known to many as the Kimball tobacco works or the Cluett, Peabody collar factory, had been a familiar part of the downtown landscape. Delapidated though it may have become in recent years, it nevertheless had a charm and character which lifted it out of the class of the run-of-the-mill factory building.

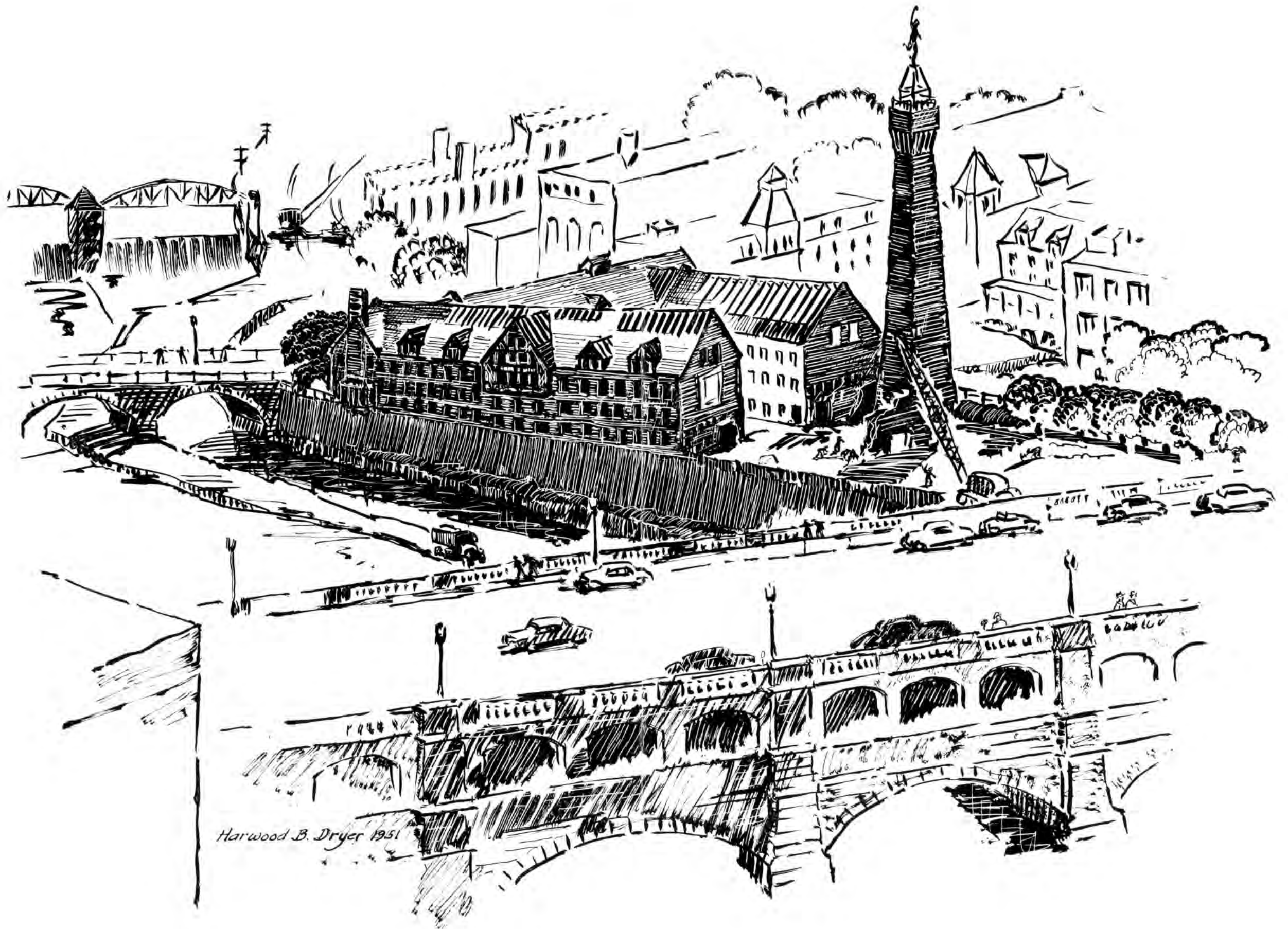
Many a Rochesterian has liked to pause on the bridges across the Genesee River, or on the bridge across the old Fitzhugh-Carroll race to study the old structure, seeing in it a quaintness fast disappearing from the city.

As older residents remember, the building was constructed in 1879-1880 as the Peerless Tobacco and Cigarette Works of William S. Kimball & Company, then one of the largest tobacco firms in the country. Designed by James G. Cutler, the architect who became famous for inventing the mail chute and also served as mayor of Rochester, the factory is said to have cost \$193,000. CONTINUED ON PAGE 22.

"No true"
The mail chute was
suggested by Frank Edwood
for the Edwood Building -
Cutler was the
architect and
designed a patent
John A. Mullen

Next page: Mercury atop the
City Hall Annex chimney.
Center fold: Demolition of the Old
Structure, by Harwood B. Dryer.





Harwood B. Dryer 1951



CAROLINE ERICKSON PERKINS

from the portrait by Grove Gilbert

Caroline Erickson Perkins

By VIRGINIA JEFFREY SMITH

FAMILY histories have little appeal to those outside the clan, but occasionally one is found that provides so much of local background and of sidelights on the manners and customs of the past that it presents something of universal interest. Such is the case of the life story of Caroline Erickson Perkins, founder and first president of the Rochester Historical Society, perhaps the last example of the grande dame of the Victorian era in Rochester.

Caroline Erickson was born in a house on South Clinton Street, then a fashionable residential district, December 31, 1835, one of eight children. Her father, Aaron Erickson, was one of the outstanding business men of Rochester, having amassed a fortune as commission merchant for the purchase and sale of wool. Later, he became a banker. It was in the latter role, as president of the Union Bank, that he advanced money to three young men, recently arrived in Rochester, who wanted to start a dry goods company under the name of Sibley, Lindsay and Curr Co. He also provided capital for the expansion of the storied catering business of Isaac Teall.

Caroline Erickson's mother was Hannah Beckoven of New York. There were eight children in the family, four of whom attained adult age (a high percentage for those days).

Little Caroline received her early education in private school, attending Miss Seward's Seminary on Alexander Street (where the Genese Hospital now is). When she was seven years old her father bought property in the country and built a great house which was to be from that time to this one of the proudest homes

on East Avenue—the present Genesee Valley Club. It took the better part of two years to build the house and lay out the grounds, but the family moved into the mansion in 1844, so that a large part of Caroline's childhood was spent amid those delightful surroundings.

The house in general appearance was much as it is today but a long section stretched to the rear (where the Sports Club is now). An amusing feature of the home was that the out-house was of two stories and could be entered from either upstairs or down. The dining room was double with great folding doors, built for entertaining on the grand scale with groaning board and elaborate table decorations. The big double parlors were filled with all that was considered splendid and artistic in those days, including an alabaster clock, candelabra and vases which were willed to Caroline.

Here she gained the intimate knowledge of growing things which was to be one of her major interests. She climbed the trees, helped the gardeners, and took special interest, when she was fifteen, in the building of the grapery, which was the finest in Western New York. There were twenty great vines in that hothouse, and she learned that a vine can safely bear one bunch for each foot of its length. For the next sixty-nine years she would be sending those gorgeous Hamburg grapes to her favored friends. George Ellwanger, fresh from his apprenticeship in Germany, worked for Mr. Erickson soon after starting his own nurseries, which were to bring renown to Rochester.

As was but fitting, Caroline was sent to New York to "finish" her education at the establishment of Monsieur and

Madame Conde near University Place. Fortunately, she was one of those whose education is never "finished," and remained so alert to all about her, so interested in all phases of life, that in a real sense her education continued to the moment of her death.

She was a very beautiful girl, as the Grove Gilbert portrait attests, and there were gay times and swains a plenty, as well as trips to the various fashionable watering places. She loved travel all her life. Her "coming out" trousseau was the last word in style and elegance—some of it may still be seen at the Rochester Historical Society. It must have been a happy girlhood, and one can picture her from the start as a leader of her social group. We see hints in early letters that the unhappy love affair of one of her sisters was due to the fact that the suitor found Caroline more to his choice.

Among her suitors was a young man who lived at 58 South Fitzhugh Street, in the heart of the Third Ward, by the name of Gilman Hill Perkins. He had been born in Geneseo in 1827. His mother had died when he was four, and he had lived with his grandmother in Connecticut until his father remarried. He had left school at fourteen and took a job in the book store of John Turner at twelve shillings a week, a sum which he augmented by folding the *Geneseo Republican* at twenty-five cents a week.

In 1844 he came to Rochester to seek his fortune with two suits of clothes and a capital of \$3 in his pocket. He travelled by open stage, leaving Geneseo at nine in the evening and arriving in Rochester at eight the next morning. He first clerked for the E. P. Smith Co. and then took lighter work with Harry Williams, a miller, because of ill health. But by 1848 he was back with Smith and Perkins, wholesale grocers. The Perkins of the firm was his elder brother, William,

whom he joined in partnership four years later.

At first he attended the First Presbyterian Church, but later joined St. Luke's and sat in the box pew, at right angles to the congregation, with John H. Rochester, William Pitkin, Edward Smith and Frederick Whittlesey—a position, be it admitted, which had an excellent view of those sitting in Mr. Erickson's pew.

Gradually this suitor gained in favor and took first place. He and Caroline Erickson were married July 17, 1856. The morning of their marriage, the bridegroom sought Caroline but could not find her anywhere. She had climbed a cherry tree whence she watched him. But she did not want to be found in so undignified a position and came down only after he had given up the search.

Their entire bridal party accompanied them to Niagara Falls and saw them off from there on their trip to the east coast. Was there ever such a honeymoon? They travelled to Maine, all along the Massachusetts coast and leisurely proceeded south with the migrating birds. Mr. Erickson followed their wanderings with increasing anxiety.

"I do not think," he wrote to his young son-in-law, "that you are wise taking Carrie fishing before breakfast. She is young. If she preserves her health she can travel another season." But weeks passed and finally on September 10 he wrote:

My dear Children,

I have this moment received Gill's letter of the eighth from Stonington and Carrie's for Lizzie also.

I am quite out of sorts with a bad cold in my head and on my lungs and have not slept for two nights.

We shall NOT meet you in New York and you must come home. Both of the Smiths are absent and Gill should be at his business. THERE IS

REASON IN ALL THINGS. Carrie, come home without delay or hesitation. Duty, propriety and common sense DEMAND it. Come, come home. My dear Daughter, it is time you rose above the feelings of the moment to the contemplation of your true position. Your friends and acquaintances will form their opinion of your character in the next six months. Make a mark that neither yourself or family will be ashamed of. DIRECT ALL YOUR ENERGIES TO YOUR DUTY. Gill, my dear boy, you have spent more money now than would have sufficed for a tour to Europe. Stop where you are and return to your business.

Your affectionate father,
Aaron Erickson.

At the end of this yellowed letter of parental admonitions, we find these words in Mrs. Perkins' fine writing: "These letters were written on our wedding trip. We remained away two months and your father spent \$2000. We would not have returned then if William Perkins had not sent a peremptory telegram."

Having had their unforgettable "fling," they returned to do what "duty, propriety and common sense demanded." Part of this was making a happy family home which would eventually house eight children, six of whom grew up. They lived at 38 South Washington Street, a house built by a Mr. Pitkin who had married Colonel Rochester's daughter. Here they kept open house in the manner in which she had been brought up, and it was a rendezvous for much of the social life of the period. The children were, Erickson, Harry, Gilman, William, who died in infancy, Caroline, who lived only a few years, Carolyn (later Mrs. Thorton Jeffries), Berenice (Mrs. Van Wyke Wickes) and Gertrude (Mrs. J. Craig Powers).

In spite of caring for the needs of a large family, in spite of lavish entertain-

ing, in spite of being so good a housekeeper as to be the despair of her friends, Mrs. Perkins was never oblivious to the needs of those less fortunate. She spent a large part of her time and energies in philanthropic efforts.

There is no question that she lived up to what her father expected. The first year of her married life, she founded the Rochester Industrial School (now the Children's Nursery of Rochester). It has always occupied the same house on Exchange Street. She was the recording secretary of this organization all her life. At first it was financed by an annual "Donation," which ranked only second to the Hospital Donation as a social event. Later this was discontinued, and appeals were sent through the mails. Mrs. Perkins did much of this begging herself and kept a record of her letters so she would not repeat herself. Here is one which she wrote Mr. Hiram Sibley:

"Begging for charity's sake makes me feel like a gypsy moth or a San Jose scale or other country pest which ought to be exterminated and if you should see fit to squelch me with Bordeaux or other suitable mixture I should think it entirely appropriate. This giving up of a Donation by the Industrial School and substituting a personal appeal has become a fixed habit and I probably have got to write you just such a note as this every year I live. I send it on Sunday hoping to find you pious and not inclined to week-day intolerance and turn my head away as I ask for a contribution, being sensitive as regards this kind of blackmail."

To which Mr. Sibley replied:

"It is worth the whole sum of my subscription enclosed to get such a charming and breezy note from your hand."

Another subscriber who had forgotten to send her check before going to New

York received the following note without the usual beginning or end:

"The temptation to write and tell you you forgot to send me the Industrial School check promised is very great but I do not mean to yield to it. So you will never know anything about it."

Another donor received the following:

"I have been waiting for the weather to grow worse in the expectation that you would cough up without any other influence but despair of that—or ice. You got away from me in November, but don't hike off again without crossing my palm."

No wonder the school was well supported!

In 1876, in order to have educational facilities for her daughter and other deaf children, she was instrumental in founding the Rochester School for the Deaf. Alexander Graham Bell, who was interested in this work, was their guest and asked Mr. Perkins to invest \$500 in his new invention, but Mr. Perkins said they had so many expenses for their large family that he decided against it.

In 1879 Mr. Erickson died. In a will (not the final one) he had written:

"Although my grandson is the only lineal descendent bearing my name I make no further provisions for him (a trust fund had already been established) for the reason assigned and the further reason that he is the heir presumptive to much more than all I possess and his grandfather Wentworth having told me not to give him money as he should leave him 'enough to ruin him.' In the place of money, I charge this grandson with the responsibility of honoring his name and I would impress upon him by all the solemnities of the occasion that virtue and happiness are inseparable and I enjoin upon my daughters and their families to cultivate and keep

up with this grandson the most intimate family relation and to endeavor to promote his intellectual, moral and social welfare as they love and revere the memory of their father and his fondest wishes."

Mrs. Erickson continued to live in the big house with her grandson until she had pneumonia and was brought to Washington Street to convalesce. In 1885 the Perkins' sold their house to the newly organized Genesee Valley Club and moved into the Erickson home (also to be sold to the club years later). Certain changes were made at that time. The rear part was torn down and a wing built on. A lavatory was installed on the ground floor and a bathroom upstairs.

Again Mrs. Perkins devoted much time to horticulture, and the gardens thrived under her management, with two full-time gardeners and third in summer. This interest was to culminate in 1915 in the formation of the Rochester Garden Club in the home of Mrs. Josiah W. Bissell, first of a large number of garden clubs which guard Rochester's renown as the Flower City.

Never in robust health, Mrs. Perkins nevertheless had tremendous energy. She used to lie down after breakfast to gather strength for the day, but gather it she certainly did. She was something of a nighthawk, and in those hours she kept up a correspondence which reached around the globe. In later years she had a stenographer several evenings a week to keep up with these letters.

In 1887 she founded the Rochester Historical Society, and became its first president. The meetings were usually held in her home with about fifty attending. A "collation" was always served, with salads, ices and so on, a form of entertaining not always popular with her growing daughters.

More popular were other forms of en-

tainment, such as a birthday party given in honor of Mr. George Ellwanger's fiftieth birthday in 1892 when three large tables were put together and the piece de resistance as decoration was a stork's nest and a stuffed stork! When she was well over seventy, one of her granddaughters brought home ten friends for breakfast after an all-night dance. The breakfast was forthcoming, and Mrs. Perkins' only remark was that she hoped that next time she would give her a little advance notice. No wonder the house was known for its unlimited hospitality.

In 1898 Mr. Perkins died, respected and loved by his community. He had been vestryman and then warden of St. Luke's most of his married life, trustee of the Episcopate Fund, the Reynolds Library, the Church Home, the Industrial School, the City Hospital (now the Rochester General Hospital) and treasurer of the Deaf Mute Institute.

Soon after her husband's death she took her daughters, Carolyn and Berenice, abroad for the "grand tour" spending the better part of a year. Another of her European trips was taken in 1914 with a cousin. As war clouds drew near, her family cabled her to return because of conditions. Typically she cabled back, "Perfectly satisfied with conditions," and remained. However conditions were soon NOT to her liking, and she found herself in Germany at the outbreak of hostilities. Fortunately her rector, Dr. Rob Roy Converse, was also there. But he proved something of a broken reed as he was arrested because he looked like an Englishman and had a Scotch name. Her letter of credit could not be honored, so she sold enough of her clothes to buy

tickets to Holland where she was able to borrow money from an old friend, Dr. Henry Van Dyke. All this at the age of seventy-nine.

As early as 1896 she and her husband had gone south for the winter. Later an estate at Crewe, Virginia was purchased. Here her daughter, Carolyn, met and married Mr. Thornton Jeffries. Later, Mrs. Perkins sold this property and spent years finding the perfect winter home. Virginia, Georgia, North Carolina and Florida—she tried them all—buying or building and then selling. The house which she built in Beaufort, North Carolina had fourteen bedrooms so that all her family could visit her at once. On some of these prospecting trips in search of real estate she took her son-in-law and grandson with her, but they returned exhausted while she remained fresh and serene. She travelled so rapidly that they told of occupying three beds in one night. In each place she carried on extensive agricultural and horticultural experiments, but she did not have uniform success as she found northern husbandry and southern labor did not always mingle well.

During the last few weeks of her life, all her family visited her in Palm Beach. She had sold the property just before her death there on March 21, 1919.

To those who knew Mrs. Perkins, there will ever be present the memory of a gracious personality. She remained beautiful all her life, her finely wrought aquiline features mirroring the dignity of her life and bearing and giving little evidence of the roguishness which lay beneath. A lovely person—product of an era which has passed.

A Boy's Visit to Rochester in 1857

By CHARLES HENRY SMITH



Charles Henry Smith, the author of these diary abstracts, was 15 years old when he visited his grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Moses Chapin, in Rochester in August and September of 1857. He had only just previously returned from the Near East where he had spent a large share of his early years. As the diary indicates, he was having trouble adjusting himself to American ways, and seemed to prefer books and the company of elders to the companionship of boys and girls his own age. Later he was to become a professor of history at Yale University.

Aug. 15, Saturday

Went with Dr. and Mrs. DeForest to the Graveyard. Left Troy in the A. M. expecting to dine at Utica, but on the road we were detained $\frac{1}{2}$ hour by a freight train on the track right before us with a broken wheel so that they didn't stop at U. Nearly left behind at Syracuse. Grandfather at [Rochester] depot.

Aug. 16, Sunday

Went to the 1st Presbyterian Church with Grandfather 2ce [twice], in the evening to hear the Methodist preacher. How he did shout! Uncle Charles called GrandP. P.Q. "sans repons" — His children remember-

ing faults for Sunday. Heard for the 1st time the cir'tan's of my baptism.

Aug. 17, Monday

Went to Grandpapa's office. No. 10 Gould Buildings. Rochester is a beautiful place. Not so pretty as my dear home Beirut. It rained today so that I could not go out to ride with Grandmama.

Aug. 18, Tuesday

Fine day. Went to ride with Grandmama. Turning around nearly upset. Went to Mt. Hope with Uncle Kibbie. There is a splendid view from the observatory, of Lake Ontario and all the country around.

Aug. 19, Wednesday

Yesterday I went to see Great-Grandfather [Dr. Levi] Ward, and a great many other friends. Mrs. Arink. Rain prevented my going to ride. The way they make sewers in this "Land of Liberty." !!!

Aug. 20, Thursday

Uncle and Aunt DeForest had tea with us, and I enjoyed myself more than I had at any time before, talking about home, in Arabic. It seemed so much like home that I did not wish them to leave. I am sorry that they are going so far away.

Aug. 21, Friday

Went to ride with Grandmama. Took 2 Ambrotypes. Took tea with Mr. and Mrs. Rumbell and drunk water out of one of the cups that belonged to my Mother. The Ambrotypes are beautiful. I gave up tea and coffee entirely in New Haven the 5 of Aug.

Aug. 22, Saturday

Rain. No ride. Uncle Hibbie took me to the Telegraph, and showed me all about it. Held a conversation with the operator at Buffalo.

Aug. 23, Sunday

Went to 1st Presbyterian Church with Grandpapa twice. In the evening to Congregational which I enjoyed very much. Ladies singing the stanza of "Rock of Ages" quite amusing! Pumping the organ. Resolution of giving 1/7 of all my money au Dieu.

Aug. 24, Monday

Grandpapa took me to see the Clarkes and some others. Ridiculous questions. Invitations. Wish they would let me alone. I do not wish to make any more acquaintances than I can possibly help, especially among the boys, for they are a very bad set here in America.

Aug. 25, Tuesday

Went with Grandpapa to see the site of the suspension bridge. Talk with Mervin about Mrs. Packard. He detests ballons, flounces, short sleeves and low necks. I perfectly despise them, how they would shock a rude Arab woman! Told me of some bad boys here.

Aug. 26, Wednesday

Went into a book store. Slavery unveiled. Most shocking incidents it relates. Took Grandmama to ride. It is more than a week since I have heard from Mama, and I am quite anxious. O! How I long to see her and Mennie and all the dear children.

Aug. 27, Thursday

Long ride with Uncle Hibbie to Sulpher spring. Began French again, reminded me of Miss Watson. O! How I long for my dear, dear home. Don't like this "Land of Liberty" !!! one bit. Alarm of fire. Great fire bell.

Wrote a composition, which Grandpapa pronounced good.

Aug. 28, Friday

Left Rochester at nine, for Corning where I am at 12:30. Aunt Caroline at Depot. Uncle C. was out berrying. Corning is quite pretty. Mountains which remind me of the Metu of dear Mt. Lebanon. Wrote to Mama and Mary.

Aug. 29, Saturday

Went in the afternoon to the hill behind Uncle's house, and found there was no top to it. Started two partridges. The hardest work in the world is to have nothing to do and I have found it so from experience. Very dull and quite hot.

Aug. 30, Sunday

Went in morning to Uncle's Church which is the Presbyterian. Heard him preach. In the evening to the Baptist.

Aug. 31, Monday

Went to Painted post. Hurt my eyebrow. Began a composition on happiness. Nothing to do. Aunt was complaining that there were no young people here for me to associate with. Right glad of it. If there were, I would go back to Rochester.

Sept. 1, Tuesday

Yesterday evening we were at Mr. Smith's to tea. Train of 41 cars. Went to a Methodist class meeting. The first I ever attended. These Methodists think that if a person has nothing to say, he has nothing at his heart. That if he feels anything, he will of course say it. Very great mystery, for though I *feel* much, I can *say* nothing.

Sept. 2, Wednesday

Received letters from Mama, Lydia and grandpapa. Wrote to Mama, Lydia and Alvah. O! how I long to see him and talk about home. Our visitors left today for their home at

- Mt Morris, and invited me to visit them. Which I may be able to do.
- Sept. 3, Thursday
Went fishing with Uncle C. early in the morning. Cut my hand. 10 fish. Uncle went to Elmira to the fair. He was sorry I was not with him. Ride in omnibus. Presbyterian pray meeting. Went to the stable of the iron horses—turn-table.
- Sept. 4, Friday
Letter from Grandpapa and Mr. Jess-up. Answered both. Went to depot. Nothing to do. I think that my cousins Maria and Cary are very badly behaved. They have not good training. They do a great many improper things without a word of reproof from their mother.
- Sept. 5, Saturday
Went to depot. In the evening I took a walk on the other side of the river. Came back late. Missed the omnibus. Eddie C. is the greatest little nuisance I ever saw. I am so glad that my own dear brothers and sisters are not like my cousins, and the reason is that they have had better training.
- Sept. 6, Sunday
A very happy day to me. Went to Presbyterian in the forenoon. Monthly concert in the afternoon. Methodist in the evening. I never saw a set of ladies carry on as that four did. They were laughing all meeting time. Think the Ladies in America are not at all such ladies as our Arab ladies, who know how to behave.
- Sept. 7, Monday
Nothing particular happened today. Went to the depot as usual as I have nothing else to do. I spend a good part of the time at the depot, riding back and forth in the omnibus. I find a good deal of amusement in watching cars going back and forth.
- Sept. 8, Tuesday
Went to the depot as usual. I take a walk every evening after sunset, and it is to me the pleasantest part of the day. Whittling at the depot. Carry is one of the most ill-mannered children I know of and yet everybody says "what a nice pretty little girl!" Just like 'em.
- Sept. 9, Wednesday
Parade of the fantasticals. Perfectly ridiculous. Satan. Codfish aristocracy. Lost his head crossing the line. The way young men and women in America talk to their parents. I hope I shall never be obliged to live in this country.
- Sept. 10, Thursday
Left Corning at 10 A. M. with Mrs. Wakelee and son for Rochester. Emigrant car. Empty passenger car. Black berries. At Avon had to take 5 more cars. Crowded covered platforms on top of freight car. The way "beautiful" American ladies behave! Reached Rochester at 8 P. M. 10 hrs.
- Sept. 11, Friday
Went to office. Studying latin and geography. Wish Grandpapa would send me to school, for I am quite sure I could do better. Tried to swim for the 1st time. Not much success, except that it showed me the importance of learning how to swim as soon as possible.
- Sept. 12, Saturday
Studied all day. Grandpapa thought I had enough exercise during the week. I find that the only way for me to get along quietly and comfortably is to do just as he says, so I never object to what he tells me in the least.
- Sept. 13, Sunday
Presb[byterian Church] twice. Con[gregational] once. Joined the Bible class. It was quite amusing to hear

the teacher explain those parts relating to the manners and customs of the east. It plainly showed what ideas people have here about the east. History of the covenanters.

Sept. 14, Monday

Today I sent the Childs paper to sister Mary thinking it would remind her of our dear, dear home. In my letters to her I always speak of Beirut, thus hoping to keep up her interest in it. Went and spent the evening with Mrs. DeForest and enjoyed myself very much talking of home.

Sept. 15, Tuesday

Today fire company number 7 set off on a spree to Canada. Made quite a show. The Dutch band played them down to the depot. I often think, "only 10 years," and then by the grace of God all my fondest anticipations will be fulfilled. And I will be at *Home*.

Sept. 16, Wednesday

Today I wrote to Mama. Sent 2 little cards to Mary and Sarah. Dear children! How sad it makes me feel to think of what they will have to go through in this country. I think of it a great deal. It is almost, if not quite, impossible for children to be brought up in this country with unblemished morals and unspotted by the world.

Sept. 17, Thursday

Sabbath school. It was a very stormy rainy day, and it was so ridiculous to see the children all dressed in white, puddling along in the mud, and the rain pouring down on them, and the wind inflating the girl's balloons! Umbrella. Supper at Uncle Charles! Mourning for their gas!

Sept. 18, Friday

Nothing important today. Very rainy and muddy. Mrs. Johans, Grandma's mother, came today. She

is a nice old lady, over 80 years old. She came from Buffalo and is going on to New York.

Sept. 19, Saturday

A balloon was to have gone up today but as the weather is very bad, rain and very windy and cold, it will be deferred til Monday. It is pretty cold today and rains very often. I went today to see Uncle Charles at his office, but did not stay long as he was very busy.

Sept. 20, Sunday

Very cold today. Went to Pres[byterian Church] twice. Wanted to go to the Congregational in the evening but Grandpapa said it was too cold. I was much disappointed, for I depend upon going to the Congregational, once in the day at least. Went to bible class. Mr. Mac preaches about the Presbyterian, making that sect appear the best in the world.

Sept. 21, Monday

Went to the furnace and Uncle Charles showed me all about and I was much interested. The balloon went up today and I went to see it. It was very big and a great many went to see it.

Sept. 22, Tuesday

Yesterday I had a letter from Mama and one from Alvah. Today Sam Wakelee came to see me. Measured for a coat. I am 5-9½ in. height and weigh 120 pounds. A good many remarks were made on that ladies going up alone with the gentleman!

Sept. 23, Wed.

Wrote to Mama. Went to the fair. Machines, stereoscope, horse racing, fat woman, living skeleton—an example of American fairs! The horse racing was very cruel — several knocked over. I did not stay to see it but a few minutes.

Abelard Reynolds

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4)

sustained not only by rappings but by voices from trumpets and by ectoplasm continued to grow and to become a solidly established belief with church buildings and circles, its own clergy and summer assemblies. The mother house of the manifestation went to Lily Dale, where it may still be seen.

From the time of his first seance in 1850 to his death in 1878 Abelard Reynolds, Rochester's patriarch, "communicated." His notebooks record the messages he received up to 1873, messages from his mother, sisters, Ben Franklin and Professor Bush. Long hidden and never published, these notes were found in the rubbish when the Reynolds Arcade was demolished.

Could the joint-slipping toes of two mischievous girls and their elder sister have been responsible for the business acumen of Abelard and his longevity? Could these same bright women still say, "We are innocent—our consciences are clear?"

Necromancy is an old, old cult, and its phenomena are widely imitated by stage magicians. All would be well if okis, Houdinis and skeptics could be silenced, for the credulous, like Abelard, find comfort in voices from the other world which give assurance, hope and sometimes profit to the mediums.

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11)

private and personal, the thrill of which it is impossible to communicate, except perhaps to the few who have themselves participated in such experiences.

"Life, like a dome of many-colored glass
Stains the white radiance of eternity."

These are some of the colors of my pleasure-dome — the far-off music of things remembered.

A Landmark Vanishes

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12)

It was the home of many brands of tobacco famous in the 1880's and 1890's, among them Vanity Fair smoking and Peerless chewing tobaccos.

The Kimball company merged with several other large firms in 1889 to form the American Tobacco Company, and the Peerless works soon after began to lose importance. By 1905 employment was down to 500 from a peak of about 1,200, and the factory was sold. The company explained that Rochester was too far from centers of leaf tobacco supply and that the machinery in the plant was outmoded.

Cluett, Peabody & Company, Inc., took a 10-year lease on the plant in 1905 and occupied it until 1924, buying it in 1922. Cluett, Peabody used the structure for manufacturing collars, turning out as many as 27,000 dozen collars a day. But the stiff collar passed out of fashion after World War 1, and the days of collar manufacturing at the plant were numbered.

In September, 1924, acting anonymously, George Eastman bought the old buildings as a site for a future City Hall or other public building. Various groups had been arguing the question of a location for a civic center, and it is said Eastman acted in order to make certain that the center would be built at the river site. The Kodak founder stressed on many occasions his belief that the Genesee River offered the city a location which could be developed into a civic center of great beauty.

Eastman offered the old building, first free of charge and later at nominal rent, to the city as a city hall annex until the site could be used for a civic building. When he died in 1932, the site had not yet been utilized for a civic building, and

Eastman's will instructed that, if the civic structure were not erected within 10 years, the property was to go to the University of Rochester.

The 10-year stipulation could not be met, but the university, determined that Eastman's civic center dream come true, kept open his offer of the land. In 1949 the land was turned over to the city as part of the site for the Community War Memorial Auditorium, and in the Summer of 1951 the last city office was moved out of the old building. Demolition started soon after.

A reminder of the old landmark, however, will remain in the person of Mercury, the 21-foot-statue which in its long years atop the factory's 182-foot chimney

became virtually a civic trademark.

Designed by James Guernsey Mitchell, sculptor and brother-in-law of William S. Kimball, the statue was manufactured of copper plates by the James Siddons Company. The firm is still doing business at 63 Water St. and its records indicate statue was raised atop the tower Jan. 12, 1881. It was unveiled January 29 with considerable ceremony.

Brought back down to earth on Sept. 19, 1951, Mercury is now being stored while the city fathers decide on a new location. Most favored new perch for Mercury is a proposed 40-foot column on one of the abutments of the Court St. dam.

For Your Rochester Bookshelf

By BLAKE MCKELVEY

ROCHESTER has figured more or less prominently in several books of the past year which are not strictly local but should not be overlooked even by local historians.

We naturally expect to find much about Rochester in any book on Frederick Douglass and the two recent volumes by Philip S. Foner amply reward us. Indeed, his *Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass* (2 volumes, 1950) reproduces practically all the letters and articles written by the great Negro statesman while he was editing *The North Star*, later called *Frederick Douglass' Paper*, here in Rochester. The more than four hundred pages devoted to Rochester manuscripts is the richest collection of source material on Douglass' career in Rochester yet published and throws much light on the anti-

slavery movement here between 1847 and 1860.

Many Rochesterians may have overlooked James H. Cranston's *Etiénne Brûlé—Immortal Scoundrel* published at Toronto in 1949. Whether or not you agree with the subtitle, Brule was the first known white man to visit the Genesee Country and as such attracts a passing interest.

Rochester appears only incidentally in Jerre Mangione's latest book, *Reunion in Sicily* (1950), but no local reader of his earlier *Mount Allegro* will pass unnoticed any of Mangione's books. We are glad to see that Rochester with all its shortcomings (which must have seemed numerous to transplanted Sicilians in the early decades of the century) is now recalled with affection by many of those

who returned to Sicily during the intervening years.

Readers interested in religious trends and in their influence on the history of this city will find much to hold their attention in Whitney Cross' *Burned Over District* published by the Harvard Press in 1950. Here is a close study of the religious revivals that swept across central and western New York in the 1820's and 1830's, of the new sects and other religious and social movements that sprang up in "the burned over district" after the flames of evangelism had spent themselves. Rochester, as one of the two principal cities in the area discussed, receives much attention.

An account of Rochester's part in the Second World War may be found in the

official volume by Karl D. Hartzell, *The Empire State at War, World War II*, published at the tag end of 1949.

Douglas Gorsline's *Farm Boy* pays a visit to Rochester but will prove of chief interest to those acquainted with the features along the southern border of Monroe County.

Henry S. Commager's fine documentary record of the Civil War, *The Blue and the Gray*, hailed as the most moving anthology of that great struggle since Walt Whitman, contains several lengthy passages from Rochester men. Most of these have been quoted with permission from Volume XXII of the Rochester Historical Society *Publications* where interested readers may find the local account rendered in fuller detail.



The Rochester Historical Society

OFFICERS

HARWOOD B. DRYER, *President*
HENRY H. STEBBINS, JR., *First Vice-President*
MRS. DON COLT, *Second Vice-President*
DR. BLAKE MCKELVEY, *Secretary*
DELANCEY BENTLEY, *Treasurer*
MRS. JAMES S. WATSON, JR., *Director of Woodside*
MAJOR WHEELER CASE, *Curator*

BOARD OF MANAGERS

FRANCIS J. D'AMANDA
JUDGE JAMES P. B. DUFFY
MISS JEAN C. MCCURDY
ARCH MERRILL
MRS. GEORGE A. RICHTER
CHARLES SHEPARD
MISS VIRGINIA JEFFREY SMITH
HERBERT P. WARD, *ex-officio*

HONORARY BOARD

MRS. WHITNEY ALLEN
MISS HELEN ELLWANGER
THOMAS H. HAWKS
J. ARTHUR JENNINGS
EDWARD G. MINER
DR. DEXTER PERKINS
MISS HELEN ROCHESTER ROGERS
THOMAS G. SPENCER
JOSEPH WILLIAM TAYLOR

Plans for Future SCRAPBOOKS

The editorial board of the SCRAPBOOK expresses its gratitude to individuals who have made contributions to this issue, especially Harwood B. Dryer and Elmer B. Messner for their drawings, and Joseph Durnherr for his photograph of the portrait of Mrs. Perkins. The board is particularly anxious to have contributions from others who may have interesting stories to tell of the past of Rochester and area. They are asked to contact Dr. Blake McKelvey at the Rochester Public Library. In keeping with the objectives of the Historical Society in starting the SCRAPBOOK, it is emphasized that the editors seek human history and the folklore of the city and surrounding communities.

We plan two SCRAPBOOKS in each year. Free copies go to all members of the Rochester Historical Society. Interested readers who are not yet members are invited to return the enclosed card, indicating the type of membership they would like or, if they prefer simply to enroll as subscribers, they may return the card with their address and \$1.00 for the annual subscription. Members and friends are urged to send in the names of persons who might appreciate a complimentary copy.

ANDREW WOLFE
VIRGINIA JEFFREY SMITH
BLAKE MCKELVEY
Editorial Board

