

GENESEE COUNTRY SCRAPBOOK

PUBLISHED BY

The Rochester Historical Society

"SESQUICENTENNIAL OF ROCHESTER'S FIRST VISIT
TO THE GENESEE FALLS"

See other titles inside

Four Historic Signatures:

*William Putnam L.S.
by his city Johnston*

Ch. Carroll L.S.

W. Fitzhugh L.S.

St. Rochester L.S.



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Anniversary Congratulations





Sesquicentennial of Nathaniel Rochester's First Visit to the Falls of the Genesee

THE founding of a town is never the work of one day or one season, and certainly in Rochester's case it is difficult to pick the most important among several dates closely associated with its birth. Yet a day early in November 1803, possibly the 4th, 5th, or 6th, when Rochester, Fitzhugh and Carroll paid their first visit to the Genesee falls, where Rochester stands today, was one of the key days in the city's history.

Ebenezer Allan had seen the advantages of the site fifteen years before and had agreed to build a sawmill and grist mill here for Oliver Phelps. But the location was too distant from the major east-west trails and roads, along which the earliest settlers were locating, and Allan's mills attracted few customers. Moreover, the proper development of a town site would require investment, promotional leadership and stamina, all of which Allan lacked, as his failure soon indicated.

Rochester, Fitzhugh and Carroll possessed these qualities — at least Colonel Rochester did, as events were to prove — but they had to wait another decade until settlement in the surrounding area had increased sufficiently to justify the planting of a milling and trading town. The town-site survey in 1811, the arrival of the first permanent settlers in 1812, the incorporation of the village in 1817, and the grant of its first city charter in 1834 are all dates for local commemoration. But so is the

date of the first visit of the three proprietors late in 1803.

The story of that first visit was best told by Howard L. Osgood in an address before the Rochester Historical Society nearly sixty years ago. Osgood, an able attorney with a keen interest in local history, had a great advantage over his predecessors and over present-day historians, for he had assembled a number of contemporary documents, some of which have since disappeared, and had at his hand the aging sons and daughters of the principal participants in the event. He was able, with the aid of his documents, to clear up several confusions in the family traditions. Thus these Marylanders had previously visited the Genesee Country and made several purchases in 1800, 1801, and 1802, but it was not until late in 1803 that they came to the lower Genesee. Osgood's account of that visit is worth quoting at length:

Osgood's Account of Colonel Rochester's First Visit to the Genesee Falls

The circumstances of the purchase were as follows: About the 7th of October, [1803], Rochester, Carroll and Fitzhugh left Hagerstown for the Genesee, visited their former purchases, went to Geneva to make payments at the land office, and turned their faces homeward. But Mr. Johnston, the land agent at Geneva, learning that they were interested in water powers in

Maryland, called their attention to the fine power at the Genesee falls. They then agreed with him that they would go to the upper falls and examine the property, and would meet Mr. Johnston at Bath to give their answer.

Rochester, Carroll and Fitzhugh, coming by the rough woods road from Canandaigua, crossed the river on horseback, not without trepidation, at the slippery ford a little north of the present mill dam.

The upper falls (or rather an extended cascade) stretched across the river about where the aqueduct is now situated, and were of a total verticle height of about fourteen feet. They were blasted away to make room for the aqueducts and a water passage under them and there is now only a continuous rapids. On the west side of the river, extending up stream from the top of the falls, was a small island separated from the west bank by a narrow channel, thus providing a natural race-way. From this channel the water was led in a rude flume to the old Allan mill on the flats below. Ebenezer Allan, in the fall of 1789, had built two mills, first a saw mill and second a grist mill. The spring freshet of 1803 had carried away the saw mill and had seriously undermined the grist mill . . .

No more than one-half an acre was cleared of the trees; the stumps still remained; and the tangle of briars, grape vines and saplings in the clearing was broken only by the narrow and thorny path to the mill. What a scene of desolation! An abandoned log house, the roof broken in, the door awry, wild raspberry shoots obstructing the entrance, and a rattlesnake to greet the traveler. Inside the building were the little mill stones, and the primitive, dilapidated machinery; the floor was broken and decayed; and the porcupines

had gnawed the bunks, window sills and benches. Under the mill was a little tub wheel, patched almost beyond repair; and the flume from the fall no longer held water. . . .

But these travelers had not come to examine the aesthetics of the place. They found a fall capable of producing great power and easy to adapt to commercial purposes. The land near the river was elevated above the ordinary stages of water, there were two great falls lower down the river, settlements were advancing to the neighborhood, and there seemed to be evidence that the water power and the one hundred acres of land would be worth the \$1,750 at which they were offered. They decided to purchase the mill lot; and then and there began the germ of Rochester.

The friends left the mill and, returning to the portage, traveled along the west side of the river to King's (now Hanford's) landing and arranged with Gideon King to care for the mill in consideration of having its use. They then turned back and traveled through New Hartford, Big Tree, Williamsburg and Dansville, to Bath. At Bath they met Mr. Johnston and, on November 8, 1803, an agreement was there executed, between Mr. Johnston, as the agent (under Robert Troup) for Sir William Pulteney, on the one part, and Carroll, Fitzhugh and Rochester, on the other part. That agreement is as follows:

A CONTRACT, Made the eight day of November, in the year one thousand eight hundred and three — Between Charles Carroll, William Fitzhugh, and Nathaniel Rochester, of the county of Washington, and state of Maryland, esquires, of the first part — and Sir William Pulteney, of the county of Middlesex, in the united kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, baronet, by John



The Oliver Culver House, built in 1805-1818, stood on East Avenue at Culver Road until moved to East Boulevard in 1906



*Antique Secretary
made by Frederick Starr,
an early Rochester cabinet-
maker. Courtesy of
Dr. Charles Witherspoon*

Johnston, his attorney, by virtue of a Letter of Substitution bearing date the first day of February, in the year one Thousand eight hundred and two, from Robert Troup, esquire, the attorney of the said Sir William Pulteney, by virtue of a letter of attorney, bearing date the 29th day of July, in the year one thousand eight hundred and one, and recorded in the secretary's office of the state of New York, in lib. deeds endorsed M.R. N., page 409, etc., of the second part, as follows, (to wit) First—The said Sir William Pulteney agrees to sell to the said Charles Carroll, William Fitzhugh, and Nathaniel Rochester all that certain tract of land in township number one in the short range on the west side of the Genesee river in the county of Genesee (late Ontario) and state of New York, being the tract commonly known and designated as the Genesee falls mill lot and containing one hundred acres together with all the privileges and advantages of the waters thereon and the mills thereon erected.

Secondly—The said Charles Carroll, William Fitzhugh and Nathaniel Rochester agree to pay for the said tract of land and mills the sum of one thousand seven hundred and fifty dollars in manner following, (that is to say) the sum of three hundred and fifty dollars on the first of May next and the remainder in four equal annual payments thereafter with interest from the first day of May next.

Thirdly—The said William Pulteney agrees that immediately after the full payment of the said purchase money, in manner above particularly appointed, he the said Sir William Pulteney will execute, and cause to be delivered to the said Charles Carroll, William Fitzhugh and Nathaniel Rochester a good and sufficient warranty deed for the said

tract of land and mills, with the appurtenances.

In witness whereof, the said party of the first part, and the said Sir William Pulteney, by his said attorney, John Johnston, by virtue of the letter of substitution aforesaid, have hereunto set their hands and seals, on the day and in the year first above written.

Sealed and delivered in the presence of John Taylor.

It is agreed by the parties to the within contract that in case the within mentioned mills are destroyed by fire or any other casualty the loss arising therefrom shall be borne wholly by the said Charles Carroll, William Fitzhugh and Nathaniel Rochester and in no degree by Sir William Pulteney.

N. ROCHESTER
CH. CARROLL
WM. FITZHUGH

Having concluded these arrangements, they traveled homeward, reaching Hagerstown about November 20th. On this trip they were accompanied by a young Marylander named Thomas Begole, who, in the following spring, was sent back to the Genesee country by Colonel Rochester to take charge of property there. He was instructed to go to the Falls in order to see that the mill was properly cared for by Mr. King, but finding that King had died, he put Salmon Fuller in charge. Fuller made sufficient repairs upon the mill to be able to operate it and occupied it in 1805. In 1806 the mill was destroyed, either by a fire or a freshet, and Mr. Fuller incontinently took the mill stones and machinery to his own new mill on Irondequoit creek. The mill is gone; even its site is buried; the rattlesnake has departed; but the mill stones came back and are still with us.

Charles Mulford Robinson

By VIRGINIA JEFFREY SMITH

AMERICA is becoming acutely aware of the problem of the horse and buggy town which, like Topsy, "just growed," and which is now faced with modern mechanized civilization. One is much more aware of a shoe that pinches than of one which fits perfectly. Just so, the bottlenecks, the overcrowding and ugliness of many of our towns, on which it seems difficult to make any impression, are a source of serious concern. A few seers prophesied this condition before it became acute and tried to stem the tide. Such a one was Charles Mulford Robinson who, by his efforts, recognized nationally and internationally, brought distinction to Rochester.

Born in Ramapo, New York, April 30, 1869, his parents brought him to Rochester as a baby and his home for the whole of his all-too-short life was spent in the old Third Ward. His mother was Jane Porter of Niagara Falls whose family was known both nationally and even internationally. His father was Arthur Robinson, son of a New Haven lawyer. Charles was educated in Professor George D. Hale's private "Classical School" and at the University of Rochester in the class of 1891. Here he was soon distinguished because of brilliance of mind, charm of personality and a delicious sense of humor. He won Phi Beta Kappa, was editor of "Interpres" and class poet and, on the lighter side, wrote the libretto for "Robinhood," given by the students to music written by Allan Robinson. It was, we understand, a forerunner of the better known versions of that tale and

incidentally dealt with college celebrities in a somewhat satiric but always kindly fashion. It makes good reading even today.

It was natural that he should embark on a career of writing and his first employment was as a reporter on the old *Post Express*. In a few months he was advanced to editorial work which he carried on that paper until 1902 and thereafter contributed occasionally a column called "Chats and Clippings" and later "Thoughts on Things." The first articles to bring him local renown were those reporting a European trip taken by him with Ryland Kendrick and which he called "Trip of the Trio," because of an imaginary companion who could be blamed for anything that went wrong! Even then he looked at European cities with a most observant eye, noting such details as the width and layout of streets and the use of natural resources of beauty, for beauty was, to him, of the essence of life, not just a luxury for leisure moments or for a favored group.

He was one of the founders of the Humdrum club in 1897 and, for that group, he wrote a paper on the planning of cities which intrigued his hearers and aroused animated discussion. The study which he did for this paper and the interest his friends showed, determined the whole future course of his life. It was a period when cities first became conscious of the faults of their layout, the needs of the masses for better housing and for places of recreation for both young and old. It is hard for us to realize that fifty years ago

this study was something new in America, where the gridiron block system was so taken for granted that variations were novel and "breathing places" a rarity.

Again he went to Europe, and again he returned with many ideas which could improve the urban conditions here, and he began to put them in writing. He was not entirely the founder of the movement for city planning but he was its prophet. His writing ability made the movement articulate. Here was a man who not only knew the problems and envisaged the answers, but could put it all in such clear lucid and beautiful language that the interest of the reading public was aroused. He wrote a series of articles in the *Atlantic* which were so well received that *Harpers* asked him to go abroad and write for them what European cities were doing. He found so much more material than he could use in this way that in 1901 he wrote "Improvement of Towns and Cities, or the Practical Basis of Civic Aesthetics" published by G. P. Putnam's Sons. It had eleven reprintings before 1916, and in 1903 they published his "Modern Civic Art, or the City made Beautiful" which enjoyed like popularity. In spite of the mass of literature on the subject which has flooded the presses since that time, these books have held their own as the classics of the movement. These were followed by the "Call of the City" in 1908, and the "Width and Arrangement of Streets" in 1911, which was largely incorporated in his "City Planning" in 1916.

During these years, his prolific pen was welcomed by such periodicals as the *Atlantic*, *Harpers*, *House and Garden*, *Architectural Record*, the *Survey*, *Municipal Journal of New York*, *Common Good*, *Educational Review*, *New*

York Evening Post, *New York Tribune*, *Nation*, *Criterion*, *Architects and Builders' Magazine*, *Century*, *Bookman*, *Saturday Evening Post*, *Independent*, *Art and Progress*, *National Municipal Review*, *American City*, *Journal of American Institute of Architects* and many others. In 1904, he went to Philadelphia for editorial work on the *Philadelphia Ledger* and in 1907 for the *Municipal Journal* of New York City. He was for many years a regular contributing editor of the *Survey* and *Architectural Record* and the *Boston Transcript*.

The reputation gained from his writings led to his individual city planning work for municipalities all over the country and even Honolulu. He was called in by more than thirty American cities, so that his influence today is affecting the lives of millions of our people. Among such cities were Denver and Colorado Springs, Colorado; Council Bluffs, Cedar Rapids and Waterloo, Iowa; San Jose, Long Beach, Akton, Los Angeles and Santa Barbara, California; Ridgewood, New Jersey; Omaha, Nebraska; Fort Wayne, Indiana; Raleigh, North Carolina; Fayetteville, Jamestown and Watertown, New York; St. Joseph, Missouri; Greensboro, North Carolina; Columbus, Ohio, and Detroit, Michigan. No critic is without opposition, but Mr. Robinson's personal charm and tact soon won over those who were proponents of the status quo. His wife recalls that when they were being shown over Denver, the city father who was acting as guide drove them through the principal street with obvious pride. Turning to Mr. Robinson he finally said "I see you are impressed with our streets of which we are so proud." "Yes," was the reply, "I AM impressed. I have never seen so many telephone and elec-

tric light poles in all my travels." This was said with such a twinkle of the eye that the man replied without rancor, "Why I never saw them" and soon all wires disappeared in underground conduits. He held that streets should be reexamined with a view not only to those who use them but to those who live on them. They should be wide enough for traffic but not so wide as to be too costly or to rob property holders of gardens and lawns. One of his articles is called "Doctoring the City's Arteries"—an excellent description of this phase of his work.

After a thorough observation of the city and a presentation of its problems and ambitions, he met with any who had special grievances or hopes and analyzed the difficulties which might arise with growth and changed conditions, found out civic assets which should be stressed and civic weakness which should be eliminated, evaluated traffic conditions of the present and the future, found where playgrounds were needed and parks could be placed advantageously, looked after such details as curbing, lighting and planting, and on his return wrote a lengthy and detailed report of recommendations which was always published locally and often republished for a larger public. Roughly the field for such work included existing cities where improvements were needed, new settlements in which mistakes could be avoided and, especially, new developments in the outskirts of existing cities which could be made civic assets instead of mushroom non-entities.

Recognition was not slow in coming. His Alma Mater gave him an honorary Master of Arts in 1905. He belonged to countless clubs and organizations, often as an honorary member, the most notable, perhaps, being the S.C.A.P.A.

of England and the Committee of Nine on Civic Improvement, of the Architectural League of America. He was invited to attend the Council of Town Planning Institute of London, the only other American present being Frederick Olmsted. At that time he was asked to give a paper which, with the discussion it aroused, was the nucleus of his last book.

There had been instruction in city planning in the school of landscape architecture of Harvard, and in the spring of 1910 that university invited him to come there as their guest for research work on problems of residential subdivisions. It was but natural then, that after his death, his widow presented his library and files and studies to that university where they are housed in a "Robinson alcove."

He was the first professor of Civic Design in the country, such a chair having been created for him at the University of Illinois in Urbana.

His personal life reflected the happiest of family conditions. Adored by his parents and three sisters, he was still unspoiled. In 1896, he married Eliza TenEyck Pruyn of Albany while their respective old nurses quarreled upstairs as to the virtues of their former charges. In Mrs. Robinson, he found not only the perfect mate for a marriage in which one could find no flaw, but the partner in all his professional work and the stimulus which supplied the ambition for success which his modesty would never have claimed for himself.

Rochester loved him for himself and for the writing he did here. His first book was "Third Ward Traits," then "Rochester Ways" and the "Third Ward Catechism" all of which are now collectors' items, literally worth their weight in gold. No one knew the old ward he so loved better, nor was more

cognizant of its ideosyncracies, nor more charitable to its foibles. Miss Mitford painted no more charming picture of Cranford, and one can hear his chuckle and see the twinkle in his eye as he penned the lines. He also wrote "First Church Chronicles" at the time of the centennial of that church of which he was a lifelong and devoted member. The old records come alive under his pen.

On demand of his sisters, he brought out "Effusions of Charles Mulford Robinson" in mimeograph form, being a collection of his poems which were later compiled with a short prose selection in a book, "The City Sleeps," published in 1920 by his widow. In it both his serious and his lighter side and the charm of literary prose style are evident.

He died at the height of his career December 30, 1917, of pneumonia in Albany, New York, where he had gone to spend the Christmas holidays with his wife's family. He had completed the rough draft of his report on Greensboro, North Carolina, which was published posthumously. *Landscape Architecture* ended an article on him and his work by saying "He was truly *sans peur and sans reproche*. His friends will always honor his memory as much for his strong sterling character, his unflinching gentleness and courtesy and very lovable personality as for the ability behind his great service."

Dr. Warren Stone, at the time Robinson Drive was dedicated and a bronze plaque unveiled, said he was "the pioneer city planner, a loyal citizen and a

Christian gentleman," and quoted from Mr. Robinson's writing in which he said he strove "for cities that are beautiful by design as well as by accident; for cities that are politically pure by habit, not by starts; for cities where children are instructed and whose people are wise; for cities that have playgrounds for all, beauty for all, education for all and the love of God in the hearts of the people." It seems to us that this sums up much of his life and work for it is our ideals that shape our actions. He did much to arouse Rochester to those ideals, by writing editorials, and by giving unstintingly of his time and professional skills to give shape to those plans. He served on the Park Board and the City Planning Committee, and lent a strong helping hand to any other citizens who were working that Rochester might be a better place in which to live. It was he who planned the curve of the road later to be named after him and influenced the city to add to Highland Park the section between South Avenue and Mt. Hope Avenue.

He once wrote, "We who would raise a beautiful sepulchre for ourselves should find it in fine deeds, fine thoughts and fine words; then no spire of stone will rise so high as the inspiration of memory we leave; no masses on high altars make so powerful a benediction as the tears of those who mourn. A little of nature's greensward then, a bit of God's acre where the flowers may bloom above us is a resting place noble enough for the noblest, if their memory but abide with the living."

The Ellwanger and Barry Office

By MARIAN CARD

AMONG the buildings of Rochester which are closely tied to the economic history of the city there is one which occupies a unique position in the local architectural development. This building is the Ellwanger and Barry nursery office on Mount Hope Avenue. Its distinction lies in that it was designed by Alexander Jackson Davis, one of the American leaders of the Gothic Revival.

The story of the Mount Hope Nurseries is a familiar one. Established by George Ellwanger and Patrick Barry in 1840, the firm soon became not only the leader of the nurseries then flourishing in the Rochester area, but also for a time, the largest nursery in the world. The grounds as yet untouched around the office are still distinguished by magnificent specimens of unusual trees. The nursery continued for nearly eighty years and it was not closed until 1918, after the death of William C. Barry, son of Patrick Barry. The office is still used for business purposes by Frederic and Arthur Barry, grandsons of Patrick Barry.

Why should a business office for a commercial enterprise have been constructed with the outward trappings of a medieval castle? Certainly the proprietors could not have planned to defend their nursery stocks from the battlemented tower of their office. They did, however, wish to build in the height of fashion, and the office reveals several important elements in contemporary taste.

It is difficult to mark an exact dividing line between Gothic survival and

Gothic Revival. The Renaissance in architecture did not appear fully fledged in England until the work of Inigo Jones in the 1620's, and the greatest development of English Renaissance architecture began half a century later with the work of Sir Christopher Wren and his successors. In many places, however, the traditional Gothic forms persisted in homes and churches. Even Jones and Wren produced a few Gothic designs. Perhaps a first hint of "Revival" may be traced in the writings of Wren, in which he proposed the Saracens as the originators of the style of the pointed arch, which Wren believed to have been introduced into Europe by the Crusaders. Here the architect is regarding Gothic construction not as the normal, prevailing fashion of his day, but as a style of the past, to be criticized in the light of history. This is of course a necessary viewpoint in an architectural "revival."

During the eighteenth century the Romantic movement provided the proper setting for the real growth of the Gothic Revival. Pre-occupation with outstanding periods in history, the beginnings of scientific archaeology, a strong aesthetic approach to nature, and the awakening of national pride as England rose to post-Revolutionary prominence made it inevitable that men of taste should become aware of their medieval heritage as a proper object of delight and source of inspiration. A meticulous imitation of Gothic architecture in structure and ornament was not intended by the early revivalists. Batty Langley's famous handbook,

Gothic Architecture, Improved by Rules and Proportions, 1742, contains "rules for forming . . . designs and ornaments in the ancient mode. . . . We shall first exhibit five new Orders of Columns, Plain and Enriched, and then shew their Use in the Forming of Designs for Frontispieces, to Doors, Windows, Chimney-Pieces, Insides of Rooms etc. in the Gothick manner." The first significant building of this period was Strawberry Hill, where extensive Gothic "improvements" were begun in 1749. Horace Walpole, the owner, lavished great care on this country estate in order to transform it to the appearance of a castle. Walpole sought a purer use of Gothic motifs than could be found in the work of Batty Langley, and yet he was forced to admit that the rooms at Strawberry Hill were "more the works of fancy than of imitation."

The popularity of wood and plaster Gothic increased rapidly. The first major American use of Batty Langley-type ornament was in the rebuilding of Trinity Church, New York, in 1788. During the next two or three decades churches particularly were built with Gothic ornament applied to essentially Early Republican structures. As the Greek Revival developed during the same era, there was sometimes a curious mingling of Greek and Gothic on the same building. This apparently casual treatment of historical styles was due in part to the spirit of the Romantic movement. In the hands of the most thoughtful architects, however, it was also due to the search for a style suitably expressive of contemporary American life. Since the borrowing of architectural styles had been a matter of course in the West since the fifteenth century, and since the new nation was borrowing in many other respects from its European background, it is hardly

surprising that American architects did not then make an attempt to be completely "original."

Alexander Jackson Davis (1803-1892) was one of the most influential architects of this period. He began his career as a lithographer and maker of "views" of New York and Boston. His skill as a draughtsman brought him into association with the architect Ithiel Town, and the two men formed a partnership in 1829. Designs for a tremendous number of public and private buildings came from their office until the partnership ended in 1843. Davis used Greek, Gothic, and "Italian villa" motifs in his many house designs. He seems to have regarded his adaptations of the Italian villa as the most truly American of his attempts, since the words "villa in the American style" appear frequently in his diaries accompanying these designs.

The publications of Andrew Jackson Downing gave wide publicity to the designs of Davis. Downing, who entered the nursery and landscape gardening business of his father, published *A treatise on the theory and practice of landscape gardening adapted to North America; . . . With remarks on rural architecture* in 1841. This book won immediate popularity and went into several editions. It was followed by *Cottage Residences* in 1842, which presented the principles of *Landscape Gardening* in more modest form. Design X of this book was for a "villa of the first class, in the Pointed Style," which had been designed by Davis for Mr. J. Rathbone of Albany. Downing also acknowledged indebtedness to Davis for revision of some of the other architectural drawings. In 1846 Downing became the editor of *The Horticulturist*, a new periodical. Many designs by Davis appeared in the publication, and

the close association of the two men may be seen in the diaries of Davis. *The Architecture of Country Houses* appeared in 1850, and Davis prepared a number of woodblocks for the illustration of this book. On July 28, 1852, Downing died heroically in the fire of the Hudson River steamer *Henry Clay*.

In the meantime Patrick Barry had been editor of the Horticultural Department of the *Genesee Farmer* since 1844. Davis' designs for country estates appeared in this periodical too. After the death of Downing, *The Horticulturist* was published by James Vick in Rochester, and Barry served as editor until 1854. The writings of Downing and *The Horticulturist* were in the Ellwanger and Barry library, so that by this time the proprietors of the Mount Hope Nurseries were familiar with the work of Downing and Davis. Even if Patrick Barry had not come into definite association with Davis through the editorship of *The Horticulturist*, Davis was the logical choice as an architect who could plan a suitable office for a nursery.

Letters from James Vick to Davis are preserved in the Print Department of the Metropolitan Museum. Dated February 1, 1853, November 17, 1853, and December 24, 1853, they are concerned with Davis' taking charge of the architecture department of the *Horticulturist*. There is also a rough draft of a communication from Davis to Vick dated December 1853. In the Davis diary, also in the Metropolitan Museum, there is a list of illustrations of Davis houses made for the *Horticulturist*. On the same page (dated 1854, it says: "Feb. 10. P. Barry, with James Vick called at libe. and selected a design for office at Rochester. Feb. 16. Made out a set of drawings for office . . . paid \$30.00." This payment was not, however, made immediately.

A letter from Patrick Barry to Davis, dated November 6, 1854 (now in the Metropolitan Museum) says:

"Dear Sir

I have when in N.Y. called at your office but had not the pleasure of seeing you. I also at various times requested Mr. Vick to ask you for your charge for drawing design for E-B's office - The building is now nearly complete; your design has been executed with some slight variation & we think is going to look well.

Mr. V. has just shown me the "Artists Villa" "Villa for a rocky hill" both pretty things -

I wish when you write if not too much trouble you would send me some of that ruled plotting paper you use in your office. I cannot get it here -

Truly yours

P. BARRY"

Another letter, dated November 28, 1854, now in the Manuscript Division of the New York Public Library, reads as follows:

"My Dear Sir

Your favor of 29th is at hand. I will be in N.Y. next month and will see you and settle up for Design of Office. The Hort matters of that sort I leave to Mr. Vick and will submit your letter to him-

Your criticisms on Austins "Symmetrical Cottage" are quite just. I wish you were out here to see our modern suburban architecture.

It is to be sure a great improvement on old times, but like all efforts of beginners very faulty. Austin, but he is not alone here, leads his patrons into sad mistakes as to cost; His \$2000 houses usually run up to four.

Our Dec. no. is out. I like your artists villa, though such designs are not such as to admit of very general application or adoption. I want to build a house for myself by and by and will want your aid.

Yours

P. BARRY"

So far as is known the letters of Davis to Barry no longer exist, which is a pity, because it would be most interesting to



COLONEL NATHANIEL ROCHESTER

from a portrait by John James Audubon



CHARLES MULFORD ROBINSON

read the New York architect's comments on the work of his contemporary, Henry Austin. As it turned out, it was not Davis, but the English architect Gervase Wheller who designed the house built by Patrick Barry about 1859. The design is close to that published by Wheller in *Rural Homes*, 1851, page 107. This house is a few yards south of the office on Mount Hope Avenue. Davis designed a house for George Ellwanger at about the same time, but this design was never used.

The nursery office seems to have been completed about 1855, judging from an article in the *Rural New Yorker* for October 23, 1870: "The Business Office, (see building near center of engraving,) is a handsome building in the Tudor Gothic style, designed by the well known, accomplished architect, A. J. Davis of New York. It was built some fifteen years ago." A general view of the nurseries is included in the article, showing the original state of the office. It should be added that the woodcut which appears in the nursery catalogues is not a correct view of the office.

It was not until February 4, 1857, that Patrick Barry wrote to Davis in consternation: "Enclosed please find Dft. for \$30.00 in payment for design of office and pardon us for having overlooked the matter so long." (This letter is now in the New York Public Library.) Letters in the Metropolitan Museum testify to a continuing association. On December 6, 1860, Patrick Barry wrote to Davis concerning some plants which Davis received from the nurseries. On January 10, 1865, George Ellwanger wrote to acknowledge a design which Davis had offered and to promise to help Davis obtain architectural commissions in the Rochester area. Finally, nearly twenty years later,

George Ellwanger wrote the following letter on December 9, 1882:

"My Dear Mr Davis -

It gave me great pleasure to receive your favor of the 14th inst, & to learn that you are still pursuing your studies, retaining your interest in Art & Nature.

Architecture has undergone great changes since you & Downing took the lead - All your studies are monuments of good taste that will be admired for all times -

Our city is getting full of that mongeral style of Architecture because it is considered fashionable- It will have its Time-

I did not build after your plans- Soon after you executed them I left for Europe, after my return changes took place, so that I could not build on the location selected so the matter was deferred for a few years, when I built a fine stone house after another plan suitable for the location- When finished I was taken sick, sold it, left for Europe. On my return I purchased a house & fine grounds, where I now reside. I am enjoying good health.

We are growing old & must make the best of what time remains.

Hoping that you may long enjoy your favorite pursuits, and with best wishes I am

Yours Very Truly,
GEO. ELLWANGER"

The office itself is a small building which stands on Mount Hope Avenue, just inside the gates of the old nursery grounds. It is T-shaped in plan and two stories high, built of brick with stucco finishing marked to represent stone. The ends of the building are finished with screen gables. A square tower in the west angle of the T rises three stories in height and is finished with battlements. A triple chimney rises through the ridge of the north part of the building. The entrance was originally on the Mount Hope Avenue side but is no longer used, and the building is now entered by the small porch on the north side.

The general plan of the building has no known precedent in the work of Davis, but this is hardly surprising. The details, however, bear the mark of Davis very clearly. The shapes of doors and windows (some pointed and some rectangular), the motif of the screen gable with triple windows or oriel below, the oculus windows in the tower, the window mullions in a diamond pattern, and the moulding profiles, which remind one of Batty Langley's designs, all appear in the Gothic villas which Davis had built along the Hudson. The Ellwanger and Barry office lacks the elaborate, almost prickly carvings of the larger houses. The oriel window on the south end, for instance, is very close in its design to the window Davis designed for the Harral house in Bridgeport, Connecticut, in 1848. But whereas the Harral house windows are finished with pointed arches and foliate carvings within a rectangular frame, the lights of the Rochester oriel window are plain and there is no ornament. Probably a measure of the restraint in the office design was due to economy. Nevertheless Davis was usually most thorough in planning all the details of a building to produce a harmonious whole, and he may well have decided not to overload this small building with an extravagance of decoration.

The rooms are simply disposed on the inside. The front office runs across the entire street side of the building and includes the lower story of the tower. A narrow staircase hall left of the north entrance opens into another room across the back. The arrangement is similar

in the upper story. The original paneling is in place. A grill has been added to the old counter (rather like a bank counter), but otherwise the interior is substantially unchanged. The strong impression of an original atmosphere reminds the visitor of another old nursery office—that of Comstock Ferre and Company in Wethersfield, Connecticut.

The office has been increased by an addition 32 feet by 16 feet on the east side. This widens the back room, and its roof has been finished with a screen gable on the north side. Care was taken to make the addition harmonious in outline and detail. A tiny engraved view of the office appeared in *Rochester and its suburbs*, published in 1888 by the C. L. Sherrill Company in Buffalo with the approval of the Rochester Chamber of Commerce. The addition does not appear in this view, and it is the opinion of Mr. Frederic Barry that the addition was made early in the 1890's.

Today the building is covered with vines and in its fine landscape setting gives good expression to Downing's thought when he wrote in *Landscape Gardening*: "The English cottage style, or what we have denominated *Rural Gothic*, contains within itself all the most striking and peculiar elements of the beautiful and picturesque in its exterior, while it admits of the greatest possible variety of accommodation and convenience in internal arrangement. . . . To the man of taste, there is no style which presents greater attractions, being at once rich in picturesque beauty, and harmonious in connexion with the surrounding forms of vegetation."

Oliver Culver, Pioneer

By WILLIAM RINGLE

THE stereotype of the pioneer—a rugged, industrious, ingenious, individual seeking new freedom for work or worship—took a beating in college classrooms of the thirties. The debunkers, occasionally carried away with their premise, argued that a large body of pioneers were a lazy, rootless lot who ended up on the frontier because they couldn't make a go of it in the established population centers of the eastern seaboard.

There was doubtless more than a little truth in that view. Quite likely the only pioneers who had come to the attention of chroniclers were men extraordinary in their time for courage or resourcefulness. Those qualities were probably no commoner in pioneer days than today. Legions of early settlers, whose lives went unrecorded, may well have fallen far short of the schoolboy's idea of the pioneer.

But in Brighton schools, the latter day concept of the pioneer would probably find tough sledding. The ghost of Oliver Culver, recalled by numberless associations in the town, would challenge it at every turn.

As embodiment of a legend, Culver fills the bill in every way: When he was young, he killed—by his own account—a 400-pound bear; engaged in fight with Indians; traded with such enterprise and worked so hard that he amassed fortunes in a number of fields; was a ringleader in building a school (so he could attend it); built and sailed his own huge boats; helped build the Erie Canal; was a founder of the Town of Brighton and served it first, and

often, as a supervisor; became a community leader and, pioneerwise, lived long enough to become the guest of honor at dozens of banquets honoring early pioneers.

Like a good many pioneers in the Genesee country, Oliver Culver began life in New England—on Sept. 24, 1778, in East Windsor, Conn. With his family, he moved to Ticonderoga and to Orwell, Vt. As fate had it, the last move was Brighton's good fortune, because it was in Orwell that Culver met Amos Spofford—sometimes spelled Spafford—a surveyor. At 18, Culver was a contemporary of Spofford's son, Samuel.

The elder Spofford was one of the early surveyors of the Western Reserve lands. He hired Culver as a chainman to accompany a group he was leading to tracts owned by the Connecticut Land Company in what is now Ohio. Altogether, the group included some 52 persons, settlers and surveyors, who were to sail in five boats.

With Samuel Spofford, Culver journeyed to Schenectady to board the boats which were to carry the expedition. The vessels, they found, were unfinished. Presumably to divert themselves, the pair decided to, and did, continue on foot to Irondequoit Bay, of which they had heard, for some hunting and trapping. During their stay, they put up at the home of a mulatto, Asa Dunbar.

Later, the main party sailed up the Mohawk to what is now Rome, portaged to Wood Creek, entered Oneida Lake and continued via the Oneida and Oswego rivers to Oswego, where the

vessels entered Lake Ontario. At Irondequoit Bay, the two youths joined the group and went on to what was to become Cleveland. They remained there, surveying, until cold set in, then started home. During their stay, they built a log storehouse and "comfortable log house" for General Cleveland, after whom the city was named.

On the way home, Spofford and Culver stopped at Irondequoit Bay, remained there until snow fell, then headed for Vermont on foot.

The following year — 1797 — in six boats, they returned to Cleveland. During that voyage, Culver added master navigator to his accomplishments. At Erie, four of the boats were hauled over a bar. Skippers of the remaining two decided to sail around the point. One grounded. The other, in Culver's charge, ran well out, put on additional sail and made the harbor. The boat's owner, Seth Pease, reportedly somewhat shaken, told Culver after the adventure, "Young man, I owe you my life; we should all have been drowned if it had not been for you." "His unnecessary fright secured me a good friend," Culver remarked later.

Returning from this trip, Spofford and Culver again stopped at Irondequoit Bay to hunt. One of their prizes was the 400-pound bear. Attempting to elude them, the wounded animal started to swim the bay. They overtook and killed him. Then, too, the pair encountered three Indians who had stolen their traps. In an ensuing free-for-all, Culver acquired a head cut, the scar of which he bore for life.

The journey to Cleveland was repeated in 1798. That year, Culver helped build a road to the Pennsylvania line. The following year he spent in Vermont.

In 1800 he purchased the land in

Brighton on which he was to reside all his life. While farming his plot, he resided at (Orring) Stone's Tavern, still standing in East Ave. opposite Council Rock Rd. By following marked trees, he daily made his way to his farm. During that first season, he cleared seven acres and planted it in wheat.

Disturbed by the notion that his title might be defective, he abandoned his farm and went to work for August Griswold, superintending an ashery in Irondequoit. Now rare in this section, these establishments took in wood or ashes from land being cleared in Bloomfield, Lima and other sections, and reduced it to pearlash (refined potash), or black salt (a sodium carbonate). That this was indeed big business for the times is evidenced by the fact that in 1803 the ashery here shipped 108 barrels of pearlash to Montreal at a shilling a bushel.

Working for either Griswold or "Judge" John Tryon, part owner of Tryon & Company which built Tryon City, Culver remained in the region until 1804. Then, with \$700 savings, he went to Schenectady and bought goods for resale. Augmenting this store with merchandise — rum, salt, brandy and whisky — from Tryon & Company, which he was to resell at a commission, he headed for Cleveland in July. He hauled from Lewiston to Schlosser, around Niagara Falls, and there put his 157 barrels of salt and 13 of liquor aboard the vessel "Good Intent." The ship's captain received \$3 a barrel for the 8-day voyage (Culver piloted him into Cleveland harbor), most of which he took in merchandise.

In Cleveland, Culver opened a store. Buying furs from the Indians, he bartered them with Pennsylvania settlers, got whisky, cider brandy, butter, cheese and honey. He later extended his bar-

tering to Detroit for apples and whitefish. After about a year along the lake shore trading with the Indians—during this time he tells of killing nine ducks with a single shot—Culver purchased a bark for \$55, loaded it with 4,500 pounds of muskrat, mink and bear fur, rigged it with two sails and returned to Irondequoit Bay. Capping the canniness of the entire operation, he later sold the bark—described sometimes as a large canoe—for a sizable profit in Montreal, whence it was said to have been taken to England and exhibited. Other fruits of those 15 months in the West were 15 yoke of oxen which he purchased for five—or some annals says 67½—barrels of salt. They were returned overland.

Another of the oftentold stories about Culver seems to stem from this period. Amos Spofford, who settled in the Cleveland area, held a contract for carrying mail from Cleveland to Huron, said to be a distance of 40 miles. One day, when his regular carrier was ill, Culver volunteered to make the run, with a pack on his back. Tradition has it that he did it on ice skates in four hours.

With a number of other settlers, including Samuel Spofford and his landlord, Stone, plus \$50 from the Town of Northfield—which comprised the eastern half of present Monroe County—Culver built the 4-mile-long road, two rods wide from Orringh Stone's to the Genesee. This later became East Ave.

He cleared his title, then married one Alice Ray, daughter of Isaac Ray, of Pittsford, and did what probably passed in those times for settling down to a quiet, domestic life. In fact, during those years, Culver accomplished many of the acts that are repeated, often in apocryphal detail, in a number of histories.

He built the 47-ton schooner *Clarissa* on the Roswell Hart farm in Brighton, about 1811 or 1812, and then drew it to the bay with 26 yoke of oxen. Later, he built two other schooners, the *Lavanchia* and the *Lady Culver*. At the helm of the *Clarissa*, according to one account, he made Oswego in "a storm and over a route where two other vessels went down."

On March 25, 1814, he was instrumental in forming the Town of Brighton from what was then the Town of Smallwood (a successor of Northfield) and was elected its first supervisor. He was elected again in 1838 and another time in 1844.

In 1822, he built a packet boat, fourth on the canal and the first built this far west. He built the locks in the original Erie Canal at Lockport.

One evening, one of Culver's neighbors was bitten by a rattlesnake. He volunteered to run to the nearest physician, Dr. Ray, of Pittsford, for medicine. On the return, he attempted to ford the river, guided by lightning flashes, then drifted downstream into a deep eddy. He managed to save himself by grabbing some alders and hauling himself ashore. The teller of the anecdote—John Kelsey, author of "Lives and Reminiscences of the Pioneers of Rochester"—was evidently so impressed that he forgot to relate the snakebite victim's fate.

In his thirties and forties, Culver apparently found time for brief service in the War of 1812 (he was later active in veterans' affairs), to farm his land, to operate a distillery in Front St., to oversee operation of a mill in Honeoye Falls, run a tavern at the "end of the corduroy road" in East Ave. and write letters to the newspapers on a wide range of subjects.

Culver's later years find Cleveland

and Rochester newspapermen assaying him as a "patriarch of living pioneers" and the "embodiment of pioneer life."

If his success in the wilderness is amazing, the fact that he later survived banquets honoring pioneers is more so. One such spread, in the house of pioneer Gideon Cobb, included pork and beans, "rich, red" Indian bread, "great chicken pies," pies, puddings, pastries, grapes, coffee and tea.

Culver was, happily, never a prophet without honor in his own country. For his role in opening up new territory, he was, at 81, brought to Cleveland by the Cuyahoga County Historical Society. The society called him the only known survivor of the first 52 persons to prepare Cleveland for settlement. Newspapers hailed him as "a Methuselah come."

And, it seems, if the pioneers weren't being honored by others, they were busy organizing themselves. In 1853 they formally banded together as the "Pioneers of Western New York Association." Culver was vicepresident of the organization, open to those who settled in Western New York before 1820.

His closing years, too, he spent supporting his favorite projects. At a meeting here 100 years ago concerning the Erie Canal, he called for enlargement of the waterway. To back up his case, he offered cash — \$500 to the state if the canal was made seven feet deep, and 70 feet wide; \$1,000 if it became 10 feet deep, 100 feet across. Buttressing his proposal, he noted that wheat rose from

three to six shilling a bushel when the canal was built within 12 miles of Rochester, but when it was brought to the city, wheat rose to a dollar a bushel. It would, he felt, be good for the grain-producing Genesee Valley.

He decided a church, or a "town house," was needed in Irondequoit. He offered a plot of land on Ridge Rd., plus \$100, to any religious society which would erect a \$2,000 building. Culver was "in the habit of doing things of this kind," a newspaper of the day remarked. It recalled that he had previously built a church at Carthage, now part of Rochester. A spokesman for veterans of the War of 1812, he was one of those who asked that each be given 160 acres of land from the public domain.

In 1854, a writer announced that Culver and his wife would "be better content to die" because they had taken a train journey to New York City and New England. The thesis was that they had been "whirled in a few brief hours" over "this mighty space, which in their prime was the journey of about a month," so the Culvers should be ready to end their lives, having "witnessed the wonderful products of a wonder-working age."

Whether the Culvers were "content to die" cannot be discovered. At any rate, they didn't for some time. Mrs. Culver died in 1860 at age 71. Her husband lived in exceptional vigor until 1867, when he died at the age of 90. "No man was probably better known," said a Rochester newspaper of the time.

Pioneer Cabinetmakers of Rochester

By JOAN LYNN SCHILD

MORE than 100 people were making furniture in Rochester between 1816 and 1841 and yet with few exceptions very little is known about them and less about their work. To be sure, not all of them were here at the same time. Many of them were only turners by trade and moved on to more lucrative fields or were just afflicted with the wanderlust characteristic of pioneer craftsmen. Unlike the silversmiths, they seldom signed their work and it is virtually impossible to attribute a piece to any individual workman without supporting evidence from family records.

An examination of the early city directories shows 27 cabinetmakers and chairmakers. By 1834 there were 44 but by the next printing of the directory, in 1838, 10 had disappeared from the scene. Despite this, the business of cabinetmaking must have prospered for there are 64 in 1841 in the various furniture making trades — cabinetmakers, chairmakers, chair bottomers, chair painters, at least one bedstead maker, a pianoforte maker and a chair factory.

WILLIAM BREWSTER

First to arrive was William Brewster, a young widower, who set out from his home in Massachusetts to seek his fortune in the west. Arriving in the infant but thriving village of Rochesterville, he started a furniture shop at 55 Carroll street (now State street) and soon expanded his business to include upholstering and mattress making at which he was highly successful.

By 1841 he had formed a partnership with Harvey Fenn, who came to the

village in 1834, in a "cabinet ware-room" at 51 State street, where they advertised "center, dining and card tables; marble top Pembroke and side tables; sideboards and piano stools; secretaries and bookcases; mahogany and mahogany veneers, black walnut and curled maple chairs; high and field bedsteads, trundle beds and plain and dress bureaus. An extensive assortment of cabinet furniture and chairs, manufactured of the best material and in the latest style." Apparently it paid to advertise even in those early days for the business flourished and both men profited.

At first Brewster kept bachelor hall at 29 North Fitzhugh Street, but after he married a "Mrs. Babbitt" he built a beautiful home on top of the hill on Troup Street, near High (now Clarissa Street). There he lived until his death, when the house was sold to William S. Kimball and removed to make way for Kimball's mansion. Brewster and his heirs owned property in Rochester continuously for 120 years.

Greatly revering his ancestry—he was seventh in direct descent from Elder Brewster of Mayflower fame—he named three sons William, hoping to perpetuate the name, but none of them lived to survive him. The direct family line was carried on through his daughter Pauline Brewster Lee, who returned to Rochester as a widow and lived for many years in Livingston Park in a house which is still standing directly opposite the present DAR chapter house.

Like all pioneer craftsmen Brewster took an active part in civic and religious

affairs and when, in 1826, the village held its first election under the new village charter, he was elected a trustee of the First Ward. When the Bank of Monroe was incorporated in 1829 he became a director, an office which he held until his death. Although an Episcopalian he was one of the 17 men who founded the First Presbyterian Church. Joining St. Luke's Episcopal Church when it was established a few years later; in 1838 he played a prominent part in its affairs, being a senior warden for many years. That same year he was a trustee of Hook & Ladder Co. No. 1 and was an officer of the Firemen's Benevolent Association of which Erastus Cook, Rochester's first silversmith was president. In 1850 he became a charter member of Yonondio Lodge, a Masonic order, which met in Burns Block on the northeast corner of State and Buffalo streets, the present site of the Elwood Building.

Although his name appears as a cabinetmaker in the Rochester directories for quite a period of years, only two pieces of furniture are traceable to his shop, both of which are owned by Mrs. William Brewster Lee, the widow of his grandson. One is a small three-drawer mahogany sewing table, with original brasses and a center pedestal with four legs, ending in lion paws. Handcarved with acanthus leaves, it is typical of the early Empire period. The other piece, also of mahogany, is a high back armchair with gooseneck arms of somewhat later date and no particular period. It was purchased at his store and later given to the late Mr. Lee by a friend who knew of his relationship to the maker.

SYLVESTER H. PACKARD

Very little has been learned about the next cabinetmaker to arrive in the vil-

lage. His name was Sylvester H. Packard, brother of Jonathan or Jon Packard a silversmith who came to Rochester from Charlemont, Mass., in 1816. Whether Sylvester accompanied his brother at that time is not known, but he was here in 1819 when he ran advertisements for his chair factory in the Rochester *Telegraph*, on Mar. 15 and on July 6.

The ads read: "The subscriber makes and keeps on hand a good assortment of Fancy, Windsor and kitchen chairs, warranted good and for sale on reasonable terms, next door to the Mansion House" on State Street.

In 1821 he married Maria Tinker who died in 1824 and so presumably never lived in the house on Ann Street which was his family home for 20 years. Living with him in 1827 were two other men listed in the Directory as chair-makers, Richard Freeland and Lewis Britton, who undoubtedly were employed in his factory.

BENJAMIN F. HURLBURT

By 1822 two more cabinetmakers had appeared. One, Benjamin F. Hurlburt, like those who preceded him found the advertising columns of the weekly paper useful, not only in selling his product but in obtaining help as well. In the Rochester *Telegraph* of Oct. 15 that year he announced:

"B. F. Hurlburt has recently established a chair and cabinet business in Rochester on Carroll Street, a few rods below J. G. Christopher's Mansion House in the new building opposite the Presbyterian Church where he keeps constantly on hand a general assortment of fancy Windsor chairs of every description both for pattern and color and also a general assortment of cabinet furniture consisting of some of the following articles—mahogany sideboards,

bureaus, secretaries, tea tables, dining do., bedsteads of every description. All of above articles will be sold as cheap as can be purchased west of Albany. Most kinds of produce will be received in payment." Hurlburt seems to be the first cabinetmaker to resort to this kind of barter.

On Nov. 3 he made this addition to his "ad." "Wanted — a smart, active boy about 15 or 16 years of age as an apprentice in the chairmaking business." Apparently he found his boy for the "ad" was discontinued after a month, and in the 1827 Directory we find a Benjamin Jenks, chairmaker, living with Hurlburt. Jenks, we assume was the "smart, active boy" who got the job.

Hurlburt was here as late as 1828 when he was secretary of the Temperance Society. He disappears from sight after that and to date no record of his work or that of his apprentice has come to light.

FREDERICK STARR

Arriving that same year, 1822, Frederick Starr became an expert piano manufacturer as well as a cabinetmaker. Born in 1779, he was the son of Platt Starr, a clothier of Richfield, Conn., who followed him to the Genesee country in 1826 and died here twenty years later.

In November young Starr returned to Warren, Conn., to marry the girl he left behind and bring her to Rochester-ville. She died four years later, leaving two sons, Samuel, a victim of cholera at 13, and the Rev. Frederick Starr, who became a famous anthropologist and author of several books on Mexico, Japan and the American Indian.

Starr did not long remain a widower, taking for his second wife, on Nov. 23, 1831, Lucy Ann Hills, sister of Isaac

Hills, 10th mayor of Rochester, whose home at 135 Plymouth Avenue South, was cited in 1935 by the United States Department of the Interior for "exceptional historical and architectural interest." By this marriage he had five children — Sarah, Caroline, George Hills, Henry Platt, and Charles Sackett Starr.

At once identifying himself with community activities, he became an elder of the First Presbyterian Church and a trustee of the village. In 1839 he was elected to the Assembly of the State of New York, where he served one term. Before coming to Rochester, he had "embraced" religion under the influence of Lyman K. Beecher, whom he had met in New York City, and became a zealous champion of temperance. When the Monroe Total Abstinence Society was organized in 1836, with 2000 members and several auxiliaries throughout the county, he became the first president. A forceful speaker and writer he advanced his strict views about Sabbath observance by articles in the press and worked assiduously for the stoppage of mails on Sunday, a cause which met with little popular support. His effort to organize a Sunday-keeping line of packets on the Erie Canal was more conspicuously successful.

The Starr home, next to the First Methodist Church on North Fitzhugh Street, was still standing at the time that edifice was destroyed by fire on May 2, 1933. It escaped damage in the fire but has since been torn down. In 1841 Platt and Samuel Starr are listed as cabinetmakers and boarders at that address.

Two pieces of furniture known to have been made by Starr have been found in Rochester. One, a mahogany secretary desk owned by Dr. Charles Witherspoon, is typical of the late Empire period. The other, a similar piece,

is in the Oak Lane home of Starr's grandson, Charles Frederick Starr, son of Charles Sackett Starr, one time Monroe County coroner.

According to the grandson, Starr's cabinetmaking establishment was at the corner of Main and North Water streets until it was torn down in 1906 to make way for the Bijou Dream, Rochester's first movie palace. The building had previously been occupied by McFarlin Clothing Co. which had purchased it from the estate, after the death of Frederick Starr in 1869.

In 1850 he discontinued the cabinetmaking business and started making pianofortes. It was in this new field that he excelled. He was awarded two silver medals, one in Rochester in 1851, at the New York State Agricultural Fair, for his "sub-base attachment for two octaves to an instrument of 7½ octaves" and the other at Watertown in 1856 for his "semi-grand piano."

Another interesting Starr memento is a small brass coin, about the size of a nickel, which has on its face the facsimile of a grand piano and the inscription "Musical Instruments & Merchandise" around the edge. On the obverse it reads: "Frederick Starr, State Fair, 1851, Premium Pianos. Main Street, Rochester, N. Y." According to numismatists this was a "merchant's token," used as a form of advertising. It is one of two such tokens known to have been used by local merchants. The other was issued between 1850 and 1863 by Olcott Bros. Locomotives.

CHARLES T. ROBINSON

Next on our list is Rochester's first exponent of mass production—Charles T. Robinson.

It was in 1825 that Robinson, a boy of 17, with his five brothers, all younger than himself, landed in Rochester via

the Erie Canal, soon after it was opened.

Naturally a mechanic, full of youthful energy and ambition, he lost no time in setting himself up in the chairmaking business in a wooden building on Brown's Race and soon was operating on a large scale, employing 50 men and turning out 50,000 chairs. Finding this such a profitable venture he began making turned legs, arms and other furniture parts for dealers who assembled the pieces themselves. He also made beds and tables, although chairs of beechwood with cane seats in a simple late Empire style, intended for bedroom or kitchen use, were his specialty. He stamped or burned his label, usually on the back of the upper cross bar and sold his chairs at popular prices, which accounts for the fact that many bearing his name are found today. They have turned up in most of the towns of the area, in Syracuse and Buffalo, in Alabama and as far west as Illinois.

He is variously listed in the early directories as a turner, chairmaker, cabinetmaker and lumber merchant. Although most of his chairs were of the small cottage type he met the demand for more elegant parlor furniture. We have seen a steeple or cathedral style and a sofa with his name on the back as well as numerous bar chairs.

By 1858 his business had become Charles Robinson & Co., the company presumably being his brother Oliver, who had been making chairs on a much smaller scale in the same building. The firm next moved to the House of Refuge, a state school of correction in what is now Edgerton Park. There it became a part of the contract labor system of that institution. Robinson furnished the tools and machines and the school furnished the boys who made cane and flag seats, willow baskets and shoes, for which they were paid the

princely sum of 15 cents for a 7½ hour day. In 1885 indignant citizens protested to the State Legislature and this deplorable practice was discontinued. The House of Refuge was eventually moved to Industry where it became known as the State Industrial School.

Robinson's public career was as notable as his business undertakings. He was an alderman of the Ninth Ward and a captain in the Rochester Rifle Guards, the crack military company of the village, and forerunner of the National Guard.

Robinson died in 1878 at the age of 70 and was survived by his wife, Mary K. Danals or Daniels, of Parma Corners, whom he married in 1831, a daughter and two brothers, Oliver and Cyrus B. Under the firm name of O. & C. Robinson, the brothers carried on, successfully manufacturing, besides chairs, cribs, cradles, rockers, lounges and all kinds of bedsteads, both wholesale and retail from salesrooms over 109 State Street.

They were also the sole proprietors of House's Celebrated Alarm Bed, a strange and ingenious contraption which guaranteed the world's best sleeper that he would never be late. This is the way it worked. An ordinary alarm clock was fastened to the top of the footboard. This was set at the desired hour. All night it ticked harmlessly enough until a few seconds before the zero hour, the alarm went off. If the sleeper was on the ball, he would

jump up and set two bolts which would keep the bed from going into action. By this time he would be wide awake and on his feet. But if he toyed with the idea of a few more seconds of shut-eye instead, the bed took matters into its own hands. Weights moved levers, levers pulled out bolts and down went the lazy duffer on the floor. However wildly he might clutch at the blankets he couldn't save himself. He was awake, out of bed and too mad to go back to sleep anyway.

Robinson brothers did not manufacture this particular monstrosity, but they did make a collapsible bed, minus the alarm features. One of these is owned by Mrs. Daniel Andrews of Scotch Lane. It is a low post bed with spool turnings, made of three different kinds of wood — poplar, maple and pine — and collapses into four separate units. The latch-like hardware which joins the end pieces is marked "O. & C. Robinson, Rochester, N. Y., 1858."

These are some of the men who came to the Genesee country and to a large extent furnished the early homes with Rochester-made furniture. Each had his own styles, expressed his own individuality in the things he made and in the community. All were alike in their youth, their vision, their venturesome spirit, and their keen interest in the civic, political, business and religious life of the virgin territory to which they had come to build their homes. As such they played an important part in the beginnings and growth of our city.

The Most Unforgettable Character I've Met

By ANNA DANN MASON

FORTY-ODD years ago a young, rosy-cheeked Canadian girl knocked at the door of a twelve-room, red brick house on Madison Street in Rochester, New York. The door was opened by one who seemed to the girl to be a very, very old lady. She talked briefly with the girl and then asked rather brusquely, "Well, do you think you can take hold and run the ship?"

That girl was myself, and the old, old lady was Miss Susan B. Anthony. She was at that time seventy-eight, and for weeks I never ceased to marvel at her beautiful gray hair and the sprightly way she climbed the long stairs to her study on the second floor. She never seemed conscious of her age.

Soon after I went to live there, Miss Anthony, with the help of a very competent journalist, Ida Husted Harper, began the compilation of Volume IV of "The History of Woman Suffrage." Mrs. Harper became a part of the family, and the literary work went on on the third floor. Many afternoons I was allowed to help in small ways; sometimes I would read proof and sometimes only count words on pages of manuscript. It was not long before Miss Anthony asked me if I would like to go to business school to learn stenography and typewriting so that I might be of more help to her. Naturally I was delighted, and by the time Miss Anthony celebrated her eightieth birthday I was installed as her secretary and someone else was put in charge of "running the ship."

It was then I learned, if not before, how much Miss Anthony was loved by persons in every State in the Union — and the world. There were literally hundreds of letters of congratulation written to her, and to every one of them she sent a personal reply. There must be many of her treasured autographs in many parts of the world. One time when we had been working long hours and were very tired, we came to a letter whose sender asked for a little token from Miss Anthony's home. Although her birthday was in February, letters had been coming for days afterward, and so, by this time, it was late March and early violets were blooming in a warm, sheltered place by the side of the house, and I, protesting, was sent down to pick a few flowers and a leaf to be pressed and enclosed in this letter *to a stranger*. Miss Anthony's patience and wisdom seemed inexhaustible, and even for the women who opposed the cause for which she gave her life, she did not have denunciation but only a patient sigh.

Miss Anthony was a most hospitable woman and entertained as much as was at all possible, considering all the other activities going on in the home. Nothing was too good for her guests and she gave their comfort her personal supervision. Her guests were many and varied. There was the millionaire's wife from a distant city who came so that she might have the privilege of sleeping under the Anthony roof, and there was the colored woman who was, no

doubt, a person of distinction in her own group, but whom I regarded with a bit of youthful disdain, both because she was colored, but mostly because she poured cream on her dessert dish of sour canned cherries. All sorts of persons came to see her, and once she had me called down from work on the third floor to meet Mrs. Carrie Nation. Busy as Miss Anthony was, she never refused to give time and thought to those who came to her, and she made no distinctions between young or old, rich or poor, for all were welcome to what she could give to them of her understanding.

And Sister Mary, too, gave generously of herself in many ways. In her work for charity, never was a garment sent out from that home until it was clean and in perfect repair. Once when I remonstrated that she should spend so much time mending, saying that "at least they could do that much for themselves," she replied, "Well, yes, but many of them would not have the materials with which to make the repairs."

At this time of which I write, the biggest general social events in their lives were the meetings of the Rochester Political Equality Club, and I believe that, during the time I lived in the Anthony home, I attended all of them, although almost always with the sense of being in the wrong place at the wrong time, except when the meeting was held in the Anthony home, for then I could make myself really useful in helping to pass the cakes and coffee. In the other large homes opened for these meetings, I was most happy when Miss Anthony, perhaps about to give a talk, would take off her lovely red shawl and throw it over my shoulders. With the red shawl draped around me, I would day dream and imagine I was Elisha and that the mantle of Elijah had

fallen upon me, and I would for the time be very content and happy, though I understood then very little of the politics of the Rochester Political Equality Club. I think I would have protected that shawl with my life. One time, after one of these meetings, Miss Anthony made me very happy by saying to her sister in my presence, "Well, our little Anna was the prettiest girl at the party, wasn't she?" But Sister Mary, hoping to deflate any dangerous bubble of pride, replied, "If she is as good as she looks, she will do."

I lived in that home until my marriage and until another book, "The Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony," was almost completed. Almost six years of intimate living it was! On the fly leaf of one of the volumes of "The History of Woman Suffrage" given to me, Miss Anthony has written:

"The declaration of sentiments of Mrs. Stanton gives the whole law and gospel of our claim, and the rule of Lucretia Mott is an unflinching one for friends — and in marriage:

'Let your dependence be equal
Your independence mutual
Your obligations reciprocal.' "

About a year after my marriage I was called to my parents' home by the sudden death of my mother, and while there received a long and sympathetic letter from Miss Anthony. I do not remember ever hearing religion, as such, discussed in her home, although both sisters attended the Unitarian Church regularly. Her whole philosophy of life seems summed up in what she wrote to me at that time. First she told me what a great shock comes with the first break in the family circle and how there had not been a break in her own family for thirty years until the death of her father when, she wrote, "it seemed as

if everything in the world must stop." "Then," she continued, "other partings came in quick succession."

And for me, personally, she added, "It is a sad day when we can no longer say 'mother,' but all must pass through the experience. . . . And so you seven must live and do the best you can in your several places until by and by your father will be called, and then another and another. But all will be well to the soul that has done its duty and cared for others as well as for self. Their end will be blessed as the life has been a blessing to yourselves and to all connected with you."

It is quite suitable that Sister Mary should be mentioned here, for those who knew both sisters could not think of one without thinking of the other, and I can well imagine that Mary's last great and loving sacrifice for Susan was to stand by the Dark River until her sister's boat had safely reached the other shore. These determinations are of the soul, and the soul of Mary was indomitable. She herself crossed over soon afterward, for separation between them was not to be endured.

Innumerable are the lives which have been broadened, deepened, and strengthened because of these two great women, and mine is surely one among the many.

Indian Trails to Thruway

A Brief History of Road Building in Monroe County and New York State

By CHARLES CARRUTH

AS YOU ride on our good state and county roads, do you ever ask yourself how these roads were built? With our newspapers giving great coverage to plans for the Thruway, outer loops, inner loops, traffic exchanges, and tollgates, wouldn't you like to know something of the history of roadbuilding in New York State?

In the 1790s western New York State highways were nothing but Indian trails. About 1795 the Great Genesee Highway was started. A considerable portion of this road is now Route 5 and 20. Money for building it was derived from sale of military land. In ten years enough work had been done on it to permit stages to get through to Canan-

daigua twice a week. In 1800 a law was passed to make this Genesee Highway a turnpike at a cost of \$1,000 per mile. From then on as the years rolled by and settlers flooded westward, a vast network of roads spread out over all the state.

Up until the turn of this century the State's many thousand miles of highways were nothing but dirt roads, in the hands of town commissioners, barely passable except for a few months of the year. Of course, there were exceptions. Some toll roads and short stretches near cities or large villages were semi-improved. The rest were maintained on a hit-or-miss fashion. Highway taxes were worked out by doing so many days work

on the roads each year along with fellow taxpayers when summoned by the town highway commissioner.

The bicycle craze that swept the country in the late '80s and '90s produced an agitation by the riders for better roads. This pressure for improvement was more powerful than that of the regular users. Led by the League of American Wheelmen, cycle paths were constructed along many of the important roads. Cycle path commissioners were created, tags were sold for the cost of upkeep and policing, speeders were arrested and fined (sans radar). The league's official magazine, "The Bulletin and Better Roads," in 1896 had a paid-up circulation of 68,000 and the league was a big factor in the drive for good roads.

Horseless carriages were appearing in the late '90s and the owners joined the movement for highway improvement. Up-to-date farmers swung into the push for good roads. Massachusetts had started improved highway legislation. The so-called Good Roads Train had been sent out to different parts of the country by the United States Government to demonstrate simple highway construction, showing what could be done with local materials and equipment.

In the spring of 1898 a bill was introduced into the New York State legislature called the Higbie-Armstrong Bill. W. W. Armstrong was a resident of Rochester and its assemblyman. Higbie was a state senator from Long Island. This started the State of New York on a highway improvement program that gradually snowballed in the succeeding years into an avalanche of highway construction and political patronage which affected everybody from Montauk Point to Lake Erie, from New York City to the Canadian Border.

The law that started all this was Chapter 115 of the Laws of 1898, New York State, and was passed March 24, 1898. Here are the major provisions of this law:

The Board of Supervisors of any county, upon presentation of a petition stating that public interest demanded the improvement of a road, must pass a resolution and transmit same to the State Engineer. (No part of a petitioned highway could be in a city or incorporated village.) The State Engineer should investigate and determine if the road was of sufficient importance to be improved. If disapproved, the State Engineer must notify the Board of Supervisors and state the reasons. If the resolution was approved, a map and profile of the road should be made showing how much of the road should be improved and specifications made, specifying whether telford stone, macadam or gravel could be used. No road surface should be less than 8 feet wide, nor more than 16 feet.

Here is how a petition could get started as provided in the law. A petition could originate from a town board, or the owners of a majority of lineal feet of property fronting on any public highway could present to the Board of Supervisors a petition to improve a specified road. The cost of the improvement was to be paid as follows: fifty per cent by the state, thirty-five per cent by the county, fifteen per cent by the town asking the improvement. If the petition was started by the landowners, the fifteen per cent was to be paid by them, until assessors determined how much the land had been benefited after the road had been built.

After the road had been improved it was to be maintained as a county highway. Chapter 607 of the laws of 1898, New York State, provided an appro-

priation of \$50,000 for the state's share of the road to be built under Chapter 115, and away they started. In the fall of 1898 contracts were let for the following roads.

Road No. 1 — Troy to Schenectady, Schenectady County near the Shaker Settlement, 16 feet wide, 2 miles: \$16,517.

Road No. 2 — Erie County, Buffalo to Hamburg, 12 feet wide, 6.54 miles: \$30,928.

Road No. 3 — Oneida County, River Road, 12 feet wide, 2.25 miles: \$16,338.

Road No. 4 — Columbia County, Pittsfield-New Lebanon, 16 feet wide, gravel, 1.23 miles: \$9,902.

Road No. 5 — Monroe County, East Avenue-Pittsford, 12 feet, 2.45 miles: \$13,898.

All these roads except No. 4 were macadam type, so-called water bound. Its distinctive feature is a crushed-stone top course filled with screenings and rolled while water was applied by sprinkling carts. The stone used was Hudson River trap rock, the toughest and hardest stone in New York State, often transported on canal boats by the contractors.

At that time all the equipment a contractor needed to become a road builder was a steam roller, a crusher, and some picks and shovels. Regular dump wagons were a luxury. Farm wagons with so-called stick boxes that held about a cubic yard and one-half were the usual conveyance for materials. Team and driver cost about \$3.50 to \$4 for a ten-hour day.

Some of the contractors never tried to live up to the specifications. On one road the contractor just spread the stone and threw on the screenings. On another road the contractor went broke, but he afterwards wrote a book on construction work.

After the first \$50,000 had been expended the legislative appropriations gradually increased. Local politicians saw that the "good roads" movement was a popular bandwagon and climbed on. Petitions flooded the State Engineer. But there was plenty of opposition when the counties came to appropriate their share. Candidates for office used road improvement for political advancement. Promising to get a favorite highway built was good electioneering. To this end state survey parties were sent into districts to make surveys, which were never recorded, in order to make things look as if candidate so-and-so could really deliver. New York State had around 80,000 miles of roads so there was much to be done.

Highway construction continued from 1898 to 1907 in a more or less hit-or-miss fashion, depending on legislative appropriations. In 1903, \$250,000 was the state's share, and as there were not enough contractors to use up this amount, jobs were passed on to favorite sons.

In 1907 the legislature adopted an official map, prepared by the State Engineer in collaboration with county supervisors. On it was indicated the system of highways to be improved. These highways constituted a system of main and market roads equitably distributed among the counties, a total of 8,800 miles.

A bond issue of \$50,000,000 voted by the people became available in 1906 to be used as the state's share. In 1907 the state started to pay sixty-five per cent of the highway cost and the county thirty-five per cent. This construction was all under the State Engineer. Scandals were sweeping the state, so in 1908 a law was passed to repeal all former highway laws, to adopt a highway code



The Ellwanger and Barry Office

East and south views of the Old Stone Warehouse, No. 1, Mt. Hope Ave.



East side (shows the bend of the wall that follows the street)



South side (original wall)

and establish a Highway Commission of three members. They took office in 1909. This new law brought all highways outside of Greater New York into the direct charge of this State Highway Department. The important question of maintenance and repair of the hundreds of miles of roads already built was thus finally placed on a more satisfactory footing.

In 1913 a second \$50,000,000 bond issue was approved. The amount to be used each year was recommended by the commission, but the legislature voted as it saw fit.

In 1916 Congress voted its first federal aid to state road building—\$75,000,000 to be spent over five years. The state could take it or leave it but had to match the government's share. New York State's share in 1917 was \$251,000. Federal aid to the states was based on three factors—area, population and miles of rural post-office roads.

By 1929 New York State had joined other states in collecting a gasoline tax. It has already brought in hundreds of millions of dollars. We still are battling today to have that money go into a special highway fund instead of the State's general fund, where it can be used for any purpose legally appropriate.

Federal aid now has reached a level of many millions a year, and a special fund goes for what is called Urban Aid—that is money which must be spent in cities. That's how we get larger sums for improvements, such as Rochester's rebuilt Lake Avenue and the Inner Traffic Loop now under construction.

For years New York State led the United States in its methods and engineering of highway construction. When federal aid for good roads came and the Bureau of Public Roads was formed, many of its engineers came from the New York State Department

of Highways. When Huey Long was in his prime as governor of Louisiana, his highway commissioner was an engineer whose highway experience had been gained here in Monroe County.

The first highway engineer's pocket handbook was compiled by two Rochester highway engineers—Wilson Harger and Edmund A. Bonney. Published by McGraw and Hill, it was a standard in colleges and states for many years.

An outstanding highway engineer for years was J. Y. McClintock, former Superintendent of Public Works of Rochester where his innovations are lasting. He was one of the first county engineers in the state. Monroe County's highway system was founded by him. His patents on highway materials solved many problems years ago, and his life's story could be an interesting job for an historian. Years ago he tried to promote a bridge across the Genesee about where the Veterans Memorial Bridge now stands. The Stutson Street Bridge was a project in which he took special interest. Its completion opened the northwest section of Monroe County to heavy settlement.

Michael E. Sweeny, a highway engineer and contractor, a modest man, contributed much more to the improvement of highways than can ever be told adequately. His monamac pavement, first used in this county, was the only improvement to bituminous macadam roads in twenty-five years. It was his foresight that started the drainage and improvement of Elmwood Avenue from the Twelve Corners to South Goodman Street when he was a member of the Monroe County Work Bureau in the Temporary Emergency Relief Administration and Works Progress Administration days when state and federal funds were available for relief work. Who will deny that this avenue is the

most important improvement from a traffic point of view in this country in forty years?

Today New York State is in the midst of the greatest roadbuilding program in its history. This program could give New York State a road network fit to

cope with the tremendous traffic problems of the mid-20th century. But vigilance and foresight will be necessary to guarantee that political factors do not warp the program and prevent the people of the state from getting their money's worth.

The Old Stone Warehouse

No. 1, Mt. Hope Avenue

By MABEL G. OLNEY

THE old stone warehouse at No. 1 Mt. Hope Avenue is perhaps the oldest commercial-industrial structure in the city of Rochester; certainly it is the oldest on the east side of the river. Built in 1821 or 1822, this second large warehouse in the village of Rochester stood at the junction of the Erie Canal and the canal feeder which paralleled the Genesee to the south. The canal aqueduct was still under construction when the warehouse opened, and the junction of the feeder and the canal made a natural spot for the storage of freight. Merchandise from the East could move no further by water; produce from the valley could there await transshipment by canal boat to the markets of the East.

The warehouse was built by John Gilbert, and the first merchants to occupy it were David Evans and William Griffith who advertised themselves as storage, forwarding and commission merchants. Their prosperous days were few, however, for within two years the aqueduct was finished and business flowed quite literally across the river to the center of town. The "old" warehouse lost its function and was shortly abandoned. Seldom do business centers shift so rapidly.

Fortunately the growth and expansion of the village on the west bank soon brought a new use for the warehouse east of the river. It was in 1838, four years after Rochester became a city, that William Cheney rented the abandoned structure from Dr. Elwood, its owner, and converted it into a stove foundry. A steam engine, boiler and other equipment were brought by canal from Albany and installed in the old stone building. Soon the first cook stoves made in this part of the country were under construction, and the noise and clatter prompted a startled and yet admiring visitor from nearby Alexander Street to predict a great industrial future for Rochester.

The Cheney stove foundry moved to larger quarters eight years later, and the old building, in the words of one historian, "relapsed into ruin."¹ I found it hard to believe the completeness of that ruin when on a recent visit I examined the original thick stone walls, particularly that on the west, now the back, side, with its tiny windows still equipped today with their poor and irregular but somewhat artistic original

1. Professor W. H. McIntosh, *History of Monroe County* (Rochester 1877) p. 87.

panes of glass. Perhaps ruin, like prosperity, is a relative term. In any event the old warehouse resumed its original function in 1856 when the growth of the city required new commercial facilities. But by this time the railroad was absorbing the freight as well as the passenger business of Rochester, and the old warehouse changed functions again after a short time when it was converted to the manufacture of tile pottery. That use was short lived, too, and I can find no remaining evidences of the kilns — apparently they were cleared out by its next occupant.

The longest occupation of the old warehouse, prior to that of its present owners, was by Henry S. Oothout, brewer, who acquired it in 1864. In order to fit the building for a malt house, Oothout and his associates extended the structure on the south side, increasing its dimensions from 40 by 100 to 75 by 150 feet. He likewise added a story, an iron roof and, the reports say, a tower. Here again I think allowances must be made for the viewpoint of the 1870's. To the historian of that period, when the American Gothic was in style, the small elevation on the south east end may have suggested a tower, as indeed the entire building has always somewhat resembled a medieval bastion.

Although the old warehouse was used as a malting establishment for forty years, little evidence of that activity remains. Perhaps the stone headings which hold the enormous wooden pillars that support the floors were added at this time, since the steam and sprouting grain may have rotted the earlier wooden headings.

The present owners of the old warehouse are the Rochester Storage Warehouses Company. They bought the property from Oothout's successors in the brewing business in 1905 when

plans for an enlarged canal and the construction of the Lehigh Valley Railway nearby prompted a remodeling of the old structure to fit its original function. The canal, as it happened, was not enlarged but was replaced instead by the new Barge Canal a decade and a half later. Before that time, however, the feeder had been filled in and access to the railroad was facilitated. Mr. Blackwell, the present warehouse superintendent, can recall the old canal days when loads of paper were delivered by canal boat by way of the feeder to the warehouse platform. Indeed the present shipping platform of the warehouse stands firmly on the stone wall of the old feeder. It does not require much imagination to see the water in the old feeder running slowly along to join the canal at the northern end of the warehouse, where indeed a portion of the old Erie Canal wall can likewise be seen.

It was after the final abandonment of the Erie canal that the Rochester Storage Warehouses Company decided to remodel the old structure. Most of the officials of the company desired a new front on the north end — a brick front, but George F. Roth, president of the company, insisted that the remodeling be done with stone and in a character in keeping with the old stone walls on the other side of the building. Whatever his motive, this decision did present-day Rochester a great service by preserving the historic character and interesting texture of the old warehouse at No. 1 Mt. Hope Avenue.

Something should be said of the unusual shape of the building. It is not rectangular and not what we think of when we use the word pentagon, though it comes near to that by definition. It was evidently built to fill the space between the canal and the feeder and closely conformed to that space. Later

changes and additions, as far as can be determined, have simply advanced one wall or one end to take advantage of the retreat of the canal or the feeder, without altering the general shape.

The day I visited the old warehouse, crated washing machines stood on its broad and substantial rear platform.

David Evans and William Griffith never handled washing machines in their day, 123 years ago, but they may have had a crate of washboards. In any event I can imagine their joy at the sight of their stone warehouse again bustling with trade.

Rochester's Gold Diggers

By MARTHA E. MONTAGUE

IT was January 24, 1848, just after Mexico had turned California over to the United States that a Yankee named Jim Marshall discovered the first flakes of gold in Coloma County, California. A little later the first big nuggets weighing 24 pounds and worth over \$1500 were found on the Molumne River in Calveras County. Reports were sent to Washington, D. C. which confirmed the findings. Numerous rumors found their way east. Newspaper articles telling of the California riches appeared throughout the country. As early as September 23, 1848, an article appeared in the *Rochester Daily Democrat* telling of the gold discoveries in California.

Hundreds of people caught the contagious gold fever, settled their affairs, and started westward. Many Rochesterians were among these first adventurers. Nathaniel III and John Rochester, grandsons of Nathaniel Rochester, were among the first to go. A Rochester Company was even formed with a capital of \$7500 which sent fifteen young men to California who were to send back the proceeds of one year's labor to be divided equally among the stockholders and laborers. The first nine men to be sent west by this Company were James H. Pratt, Henry F. Smith,

W. Billingham, Dr. Thomas Bradley, Edward McGarry, Jacob Barbydt, R. W. Mansfield and James Hooker.

Numerous letters homeward provide us with a vivid picture of the arduous voyage to California and the countless hardships of the life there. As early as December 1848, articles appearing in the Rochester papers listed those departing for the gold mines, with their method of transportation, and wished them luck.

P. C. Buckley wrote to Joseph Cochran of this city describing the voyage of the *North Star* between New York and California. He said the 475 passengers suffered from overcrowding and poor food. His disgruntled observations disclosed that the captain was usually drunk, the purser a fool, and the waiters saucy. [Could these waiters have been anticipating their own future gold strikes?]

Another description of the hazardous journey was offered by Charles S. Biden in his series of letters collectively entitled "Glimpses of The Elephant." He, together with several other Rochesterians, boarded the *Crescent City* in New York in October 1849. The passengers complained bitterly about their constant fare of sea biscuit and beef. Most of

them were stricken with seasickness and homesickness, yet they entertained themselves with several musicales and celebrated the end of the first week out by forming a line and marching down the deck to the tune of Yankee Doodle. The following day, which was Sunday, was marked by the distribution of Testaments, the appearance of clean shirts, and a quiet atmosphere. Many of these same people, after crossing the Isthmus of Panama, boarded the *Eliza Ann* for California. By mutual consent, religious services were held each Sunday with one of the Rochester men assuming charge. Christmas was described as a cheerless, homesick day, while New Year's was celebrated by the deliverance of many temperance speeches. The ship which arrived in San Francisco on January 12th amid much shouting and cheering, took its place among the many others from various ports.

There were numerous hardships for those taking the overland route. A particularly cruel fate was that of the Oatman family of Henrietta, New York. The family of nine persons, while attempting to reach California by the old Santa Fe route in 1851, was brutally attacked by Apache Indians. Six were murdered. One boy, Lorenzo D. Oatman, who was knocked down and left for dead, afterward escaped, but only with severe injuries. The two girls, Mary Ann and Olive Ann were taken into captivity where the former died of starvation in 1852. Later, after a ransom was offered and paid for Olive Ann, she was restored to civilized life.

These overlanders were also plagued by the elements. In many cases, they suffered from lack of water and their animals often died of starvation.

Everything about San Francisco, said C. S. Biden, had a temporary air about it. Each newcomer set his own mark, worked hard, and planned to leave when it had been accomplished. Nevertheless, religious activities were fairly well organized with the Reverend F. Dwight Hunt, formerly of Rochester, in charge of one congregation. Two former members of the Monroe County Bar who remained in San Francisco were R. A. Wilson who became a judge, and H. H. Haight who was later elected governor of California. Biden himself soon became editor of the San Francisco *Evening Picayune*.

By July 1850, enough had arrived to justify the opening of a "Rochester House" which was accomplished in fine style by A. C. True and his many customers. Biden told of the pathetic eagerness of the miners to meet newcomers from their hometowns.

"The arrival of each steamer is hardly announced before a long file of Rochester representatives are wending their way to the 'Bush House' searching for some newcomer from that far off country, to which they are bound by ties more dear and lasting than golden treasure."¹

For those who came from comfortable Eastern homes, living conditions in California were indeed crude. Even the simplest provisions, which were the only ones obtainable, could be had at only the most exorbitant prices. For example, black flour sold for \$50 a barrel, white flour for \$60, and sugar for fifty cents a pound.

One correspondent, H.L.L., of the *Rochester Daily Advertiser*, who spent some time in the small mining town of Jackson, California, portrayed it well. He said it consisted of a population of 200 people of all sorts of tongues and colors. There were about six provision

1. *Raymond Scrapbook*, "Glimpses of The Elephant" by C. S. Biden.

stores and as many clothing establishments. The town also included five or six machine shops, two or three respectable hotels, three meat markets and about fifteen gambling houses and brothels.

By January 1853, the mines in this vicinity were already partially washed out. The district had been regarded as one of the richest in California at one time. Calversas County where Jackson was located was thought to be the only one in the state where the Chinese were allowed to mine. H. L. L. complained that nearly all of this "pigtail population" of about 75,000 seemed to be located in Calversas County but thought the situation would soon be changed.

The same correspondent gave his candid opinion of the newcomer's chances. He said that by May 1852, the mines in California had been pretty thoroughly washed, most of them being dug two or three times. Even then a man could make five to eight dollars a day by working hard. Those who go expecting to get a pile within a few days or a few weeks, he said, will be dreadfully deceived. He further warned that the times for taking out "big hunks" had passed, but "with perseverance, frugality, and patience one can secure a pile—no mistake."¹

By 1858, the gold fever flared again with the discovery of new gold mines near Frazer River in the northern part

of California and more Rochesterians started westward.

As the years went by, though, news of the gold diggers gradually diminished.

Of those who went to California, a few made their fortunes and established permanent homes in the West. It is ironic that those serving the gold diggers were the ones who became wealthy. The gold diggers themselves lost their gold as fast as they acquired it. A few more reached their goals and returned to their homes in the East. One such lucky person was Fred Lux, Jr. of Rochester who returned after ten years' absence as a large real and personal estate holder.

Countless numbers, however, suffered much illness, heartbreak, and disillusion. One was Olive Oatman who eventually returned to the Rochester area where she gave several talks to local groups concerning her experiences as an Apache captive. Others met their death far from home and friends. Such was the fate of Nathaniel Rochester III whose death soon after his arrival prompted his brother John to make a hasty return to the East.

By 1897, a new generation of eager young adventurers had arisen. Undaunted by the wierd tale of the Forty-Niners, thousands, including many Rochesterians, started for Alaska to seek their fortunes. The cycle of gold fever was starting again.

1. R. D. A. 5/15/1852 (2-2) H.L.L.

Rochester to Buffalo by Canal, 1830*

Edited with an Introduction by

PHILIP P. MASON

ELISHA Loomis was born in 1796 in Middlesex Township, Ontario County, New York, the seventh child in a family of ten. He spent the first sixteen years of his life on a farm near Rushville, New York, and at sixteen he became an apprentice to a printer in Canandaigua, serving in this capacity for four years. A very religious boy, with a keen desire to help others, Loomis offered his services as a missionary printer and attended the summer term at the Foreign Mission School at Cornwall, Connecticut.

In 1820, after his marriage to Maria Sartwell, Loomis left for the Hawaiian Islands where he remained for seven years. A secondhand printing press was brought along for the missionary printer but it was some time before Loomis could do any printing. Because the Hawaiians had no written language, Loomis and his colleagues first had to devise an alphabet. They finally produced one consisting of twelve English letters. Within a short time Loomis was turning out hundreds of pages of material in the native language. First he worked on elementary Bible lessons to be used in the mission schools on the Islands. Later he devoted his energies to hymnals, spelling books, and passages from the Bible. There was so great a demand among the natives for the printed articles and books that the con-

stant overwork soon caused his health to fail. In 1827 he left the Island mission and returned to his home in Rushville. His experiences as one of the first missionaries to the Hawaiian Islands are colorfully portrayed in *Grapes of Canaan*.¹

At Rushville he got a job on the Rochester *Observer*, a religious weekly; but after two years he decided to give up this work and go with his wife and children to the mission at Mackinac Island as a teacher. . . .

The diary and other Loomis material were given to the Michigan Historical Collections in 1951 by Miss Albertine Loomis. The diary is in very good condition and the writing is clear and legible. The manuscript is printed here essentially as it was written except for the insertion of some words in brackets and some changes in punctuation to make the meaning clearer.

Diary of Trip Rochester to Mackinac Island

ELISHA LOOMIS

Rochester, [New York,] October 14, 1830. I have at length settled my affairs and am ready to start on my journey to Mackinaw. I was engaged in business here two years and six months, and I cannot say my business was prosperous, yet it has afforded a support for myself and family, and leaves me on hand about 80 dollars in money and some household furniture. I have been enabled to give something constantly to the various objects of benevolence which come before me. My *regular* con-

* Republished from *Michigan History* with the permission of the Michigan Historical Commission.

1. Albertine Loomis, *Grapes of Canaan* (New York, 1951). Miss Loomis is a great-granddaughter of Elisha and Maria Loomis.

tributions were to the A[merican] Board² 14 dollars per annum—Education say 12 dols—poor of the church &c. \$4.25, for the support of our minister \$22, and in general 25 cts at every contribution for any benevolent object. On the whole, I have reason to be greatly thankful for blessings received, and that I may now engage again in giving instructions to heathens.

Evening. On board a Canal packet boat bound to Buffalo, Mrs. L. and myself with Amanda, and Evarts (our two children who accompany us) embarked at 1/2 past 8 A.M. This method of Traveling, though not new to us, is probably so to most of you—yet so well known as not to need a description. The only apparent danger to be apprehended is when passing the briggess [bridges] which are numerous and so low that often the boat will but just pass under. As passengers are fond of walking on deck, it is necessary to keep a good look out, for the briggess. The general practice is, of course, to go below on such an occasion, but when the bridge is sufficiently high all that is necessary is to be flat on the deck till the brigge is past. I remember previous to the last presidential election when it was customary to take the votes of passengers on that subject, a gentleman called out just as our boat was passing under a bridge, "All those that are for Jackson will down upon their knees," which ceremony was of course performed by the whole company on deck from necessity. The triumph however was but short as one of the passengers, who was on the forward part of the boat, as soon as he had passed the bridge

cried 'Let those that are for Adams rise up.'

Some persons are in the habit of leaping from the boat, upon the brigge, when passing—then running to the opposite side and jumping down—a practice, which ought to be reprobated—as besides the danger of being drawn under the brigge in case of a false step—the person may jump upon some one on deck, or fall into the body of the boat. This last accident I witnessed today. A boy, with apples to sell leaped from a bridge just as the boat was passing under, but for want of due care fell into the cook's room, whence he was taken out without serious injury, though it was a wonder he was not killed.

Our company consists of about 30 passengers and as usual, there are but few among them who seem to regard the interest of their souls and those few, have not courage to say much in behalf of Christ. O when whill[sic] the disciples of Christ be as wise in their generation, and as faithful as are the devotees of Mammon! It is a reproach to the cause of our redeemer—but how hard to take up the cross. I have left in the cabin the *Memoirs of Mr. Judson*³, and a few tracts which have arrested the attention of some—while others resort to *card playing*, as their chief occupation while on board. We have on board one who I have reason to believe is a Methodist preacher. He does not however display much zeal. In conversation this evening respecting the glorious work of the Holy Spirit now going on in Rochester, he seemed to think me heretical in sentiment because I maintained every sinner had power to repent, and was inexcusable for not so doing. I know not what peculiar sentiments Mr. A. entertained as he declined entering into the subject. How many preachers in our own denom-

2. The American Board represented the Presbyterian, Congregationalist and Dutch Reformed denominations.

3. The *Memoirs* told of the missionary activities of Rev. Adoniram Judson (1788-1850) in Burma from 1813 to 1845.

ination while proving that God is the author of every soul's conversion, do it in such a manner as to lead sinners to excuse themselves from repenting, al- ledging that they must wait God's time—that they cannot of themselves re-

pent! What a reflection on the char- acter of God. Does he require that which the sinner is unable to perform. How absurd—yet I fear the impenitent get such impressions from the preach- ing of many eminent teachers. . . .

KA

EUANGELIO

A MARAKO:

OIA KA MOO OLELO HEMOLELE NO KO KAKOI

HAKU E OLAT,

NO

IESU KRISTO,

I LAWEIA I OLELO HAWAII.

Hookahi keia o ke pai ona

ROCHESTER, N. Y.

PAHA I KA MEA PAI PALAPALA A LUMIKI

.....
1829

*Title Page of Hawaiian Translation of the
Gospel of St. Mark*

*Printed at Rochester during a visit of
Elisha Loomis in 1829*

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Extends Anniversary Congratulations*

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Editors' Note

The editorial board expresses its gratitude to those who have contributed to this issue and invites additional contributions for later numbers. They are asked to contact Dr. Blake McKelvey at the Rochester Public Library. In keeping with the objectives of the Rochester Historical Society, it is emphasized that the editors seek articles and stories with a human touch related to the past development of Rochester and the Genesee country.

While the Society originally planned to issue the "Scrapbook" twice a year, various circumstances make it difficult to maintain that schedule. The present issue is numbered Volume IV and will be the only issue for the 1953/54 season. It is fatter than usual and we hope readers will appreciate the variety of articles it presents.

Free copies of the "Scrapbook" are mailed 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 to enroll as subscribers, they may return the card with their address and \$1.00 for the annual subscription. Members and friends are invited to send in the names of persons who may appreciate a complimentary copy.

ANDREW WOLFE
VIRGINIA JEFFREY SMITH
BLAKE MCKELVEY

Editorial Board

