

Genealogical Guide to Monroe County, New York

Directories

Whereas the census records show every person in a family, the city and rural directories show only the head of a family. The directories are helpful in that they show exact home address, occupation and sometimes work address. Thus it is possible to show the movement of a family in the area. Occasionally the directory will indicate a family member moving to another city (see example). Spouse's names are not listed in the Rochester directories until **1915**. Children in the family are listed as soon as they begin working outside of the home. Those children are listed as boarders in their parent's household. Some deaths are recorded in directories for the latter part of the 1800s and early 1900s (see example). Besides the lists of residents, the directories contain business listings and advertising, listing of religious and fraternal organizations, street listings, and statistically information.

The directories for Rochester were published in 1827, 1834, 1838, 1841, then every other year from 1844 to 1860 and finally every year beginning in 1861. The Local History section of the Rochester Public Library has all of the Rochester city directories. They have scanned issues from 1827 to 1946 and put the originals in storage to protect them. They had to cut off at 1946 because newer issues are still under copyright. Their collection of directories can be accessed on [this web page](#). The library has web page set-up so you can view or download the whole directory or just a smaller section.

The directories for the period 1838 to 1851 have a separate listing at the back of the book for African-American families. The practice of separating the African-Americans was discontinued after 1852 at the request of Mr. Frederick Douglass. So after that date families are in with the general alphabetical listing.

A series of directories that are often overlooked are the *Rochester Blue Book*. Those were published approximately every other year from 1901 to 1940. They are a kind of social listing showing prominent area people, their residence and their club memberships. Some volumes also contain maiden names of married women and adult children. There are some people listed that live in suburban towns of Monroe County. Note that there was a variation of the title of the "Blue Books" over the years. These are the issues that are available online:

- [Rochester Society Blue Book 1901-02](#)
- [Dau's Blue Book 1904](#)
- [Dau's Blue Book 1908](#)
- [Dau's Blue Book 1910](#)
- [Dau's Blue Book 1912](#)

ROCHESTER [B] DIRECTORY.

Balling John, varnisher, bds. Ulm n. Bay
Balling Mary A. widow of William, h. Ulm
near Bay
Ballinger Jacob, laborer, h. 185 Pinnacle av.
Ballinger John C. deceased August 20, 1877
Ballinger Margaret, widow of John C. h.
11 Eagle
Ballou George H. removed to Detroit, Mich.
Ballou Henry S. tea store, 161 East Main, h.
62 South Union

Part of a page from the 1878 Rochester directory

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- [Dau's Blue Book 1914](#)
- [Dau's Blue Book 1916](#)
- [Dau's Blue Book 1918](#)
- [Dau's Blue Book 1921-1922](#)
- [Rochester Blue Book 1923](#)
- [Rochester Blue Book 1926](#)
- [Rochester Blue Book 1928](#)
- [Rochester Blue Book 1931](#)
- [Rochester Blue Book 1935](#)
- [Rochester Blue Book 1938](#)
- [Rochester Blue Book 1940](#)

French, Dr. and Mrs. Robert T. (Swanton)
231 Culver road
Clubs, Dr. 26-60—Mrs. 7-65

Frey, Mr. and Mrs. John B. (Behn)
7 Menlo place
Clubs, Mr. 2-35—Mrs. 58

Frost, Mrs. Isabella B. (Eastman)
146 Plymouth avenue
Miss Sarah Frost, 44
Miss Clara Vernon Smith
Mr. Clarence Walker Smith, 26

Part of a page from the 1912 Blue Book

Directories for the Rochester suburban areas have been published annually beginning in 1930. The Local History section of the Rochester Public Library has an entire collection. They only scanned and put online issues from 1930 to 1940 (see [this web page](#)) and not any newer issues because they are still under copyright. The first few years only contain records for the Towns of Brighton, Gates, Greece and Irondequoit. Then Pittsford was added in 1935, East Rochester in 1936, Fairport in 1937 and Webster in 1938.

There are other random directories that cover the suburban Towns and rural Monroe County. Those available are:

- [Gazetteer and Business Directory of Monroe County, N.Y. for 1869-70](#). This does not include every name but farms are considered a business and the owners are listed. (Link currently not working.)
- [Anthony's Standard Business Directory of Rochester \(1895 – 1896\)](#).
- [American Agriculturist Farm Directory \(1917\)](#).
- [The Farm Journal Illustrated Rural Directory of Monroe County, New York \(1918\)](#). (Link currently not working.)
- [Bell Telephone Directory \(1910 - Rochester and also includes Charlotte & Henrietta\)](#). Note that there were two telephone companies in Rochester at the time and this only includes Bell customers.
- [Bell Telephone Directory \(1912 - Rochester and also includes Charlotte, Gates, Henrietta & Victor\)](#).
- [The 1864 Rochester city directory](#) also contains a directory of the Village of Brockport starting on page 225.
- [Vick's Standard Directory and Reference Book Brockport, NY \(1907\)](#) (also includes Spencerport, Hilton, Adams Basin and Clarkson).
- [Directory of East Rochester \(1934\)](#).
- [City Directory of Fairport, NY \(1913\)](#).
- [The Pittsford Directory for Year Ending 1934](#).
- [The Pittsford Directory for Year Ending 1937](#).
- [Rochester Italian Directory \(1931\)](#).
- [City Directory of Negro Business and Progress \(1939 – 1940\)](#).

Then there two more directories that are only available as books in the Rochester Public Library:

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- *Directory of the Erie Railroad from Elmira to Rochester, 1892*. This directory includes Rush, Scottsville, West Henrietta and Red Creek (a hamlet in Brighton) (RPL Rr974.7 D598d).
- *The Rural Directory, 1916* (includes Adams Basin, Barnard, Brockport, Chili, East Rochester, Fairport, Henrietta, Webster and West Webster) (RPL Rr974.788 S368r).

