

# GENESEE COUNTRY SCRAPBOOK

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A ROCHESTER SPEECH WHICH STIRRED THE NATION

*by* DR. DEXTER PERKINS

THE OLD THIRD WARD

REMINISCENCES OF THE RUFFLED-SHIRT WARD

*by* VIRGINIA JEFFREY SMITH

A MAP OF THE THIRD WARD

*Showing landmarks existing in 1852 and indicating some  
notable events in the history of the Ward.*

ROCHESTER'S ERIE CANAL

*by* RONALD SHAW

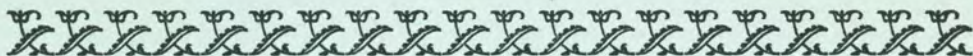
WINSTON CHURCHILL'S GRANDPARENTS  
IN ROCHESTER

*by* DR. BLAKE MCKELVEY

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## CONTRIBUTING TO THIS ISSUE

DR. DEXTER PERKINS, chairman of the History Department at the University of Rochester, is the outstanding authority on the Monroe Doctrine, and for many years has been regarded as one of the leading scholars in the field of American history.

MISS VIRGINIA JEFFREY SMITH, director of the Rochester Historical Society, is a lifelong resident of Rochester's Old Third Ward. It has been one of her ambitions to stimulate interest in the preservation of the magnificent Greek Revival homes in this district. She has contributed to this issue a revision of an earlier paper detailing her reminiscences of the Ward, and, in addition, an interesting map which includes sketches of the Ward's fine landmarks.

RONALD SHAW, an instructor in history at Wayne University in Detroit, is a former graduate student in history at the University of Rochester. He has long made a special study of the Erie Canal, and is now working on a dissertation describing the building of the Canal and its role in the opening of the center of the continent.

DR. BLAKE MCKELVEY is City Historian of Rochester and has published the first two volumes of a definitive history of the city.





## A Rochester Speech Which Stirred the Nation

By DEXTER PERKINS

ON the twenty-fifth of October, 1858, the Republicans of Rochester assembled in Corinthian Hall to hear an address by William H. Seward, United States Senator, former Governor of New York, former State Senator, one of the leaders of the new Republican Party, and, in the opinion of many, the logical Republican candidate for president in 1860. It was just a political speech made "from the stump" with the intention of preventing the re-election in this State of the Democrats then in power. But William H. Seward, with all his shortcomings, was no ordinary politician, and this was no ordinary campaign oration.

After a brief acknowledgment of the warm welcome given him by his audience, Seward launched into a subject which to him, as to most thoughtful Americans, dwarfed all other issues. In 1858 thinking America seethed with opinions on the slavery issue. Approaching it from many angles—humanitarian interest in the Negro, economic interest in the future of labor, political interest in a strong Union—more and more Americans were coming to a realization that a crisis was approaching. Two years earlier, Seward himself, speaking in Auburn, had stated that the nation could not continue to exist embracing two rival ways of life. Early in the previous summer an Illinois law-

yer who was beginning to gain some political prominence had pronounced in the course of a powerful speech that a "house divided" could not stand. But in Rochester on that Fall evening was uttered a phrase that was to crystalize sentiment as even the scriptural application of Lincoln had not done. While the phrase itself has since been repeated over and over and used by historians as a trenchant description of a period of American history, the speech as a whole has not been as generally known as Lincoln's. As we read it, however, we are struck not only by a realization of what these measured terms of indictment and prophecy must have meant at the time, but with a sense of their present relevancy. During the last few years we have heard in the world many speeches expressing the same central idea; we shall hear more in the future. Perhaps in the course of one of them, some orator will utter a sentence which, by that strange alchemy which now and then transforms mere words into something to live by or die for, will be entitled to take its place in history alongside Seward's memorable phrase.

Seward began by describing two socio-economic systems which he asserted could be traced through history. There had always been those who favored a slave system, there would always be advocates of freedom. It was

only accidental, he asserted, that the slaves in America were Negroes. Those who hold their fellows in bondage would just as willingly enslave those with white skins as those with black; the heart of the matter lay in an attitude toward labor. The slave system, he said, was "one of constant danger, distrust, suspicion and watchfulness. It debases those whose toil alone can produce wealth and resources for defense to the lowest degree of which human nature is capable — to guard against mutiny and insurrection; and thus wastes energies which otherwise might be emphasized in national development and aggrandizement." The second, or free, system, "educates all alike, and by opening all the fields of industrial employment, and all the departments of authority, to the unchecked and equal rivalry of all classes of men, at once secures universal contentment, and brings into the highest possible activity all the physical, moral and social energies of the State." As the world grew smaller and means of transportation and communication constantly improved, he went on, these antagonistic systems came into closer and closer contact until finally collision resulted. Then Seward's husky voice took on new intensity. "Shall I tell you," he asked, "what this collision means? They who think that it is accidental, unnecessary, the work of interested or fanatical agitators, and therefore ephemeral, mistake the case altogether. It is an irrepressible conflict between opposing and enduring forces, and it means that the United States must and will, sooner or later, become either entirely a slave-holding nation, or entirely a free-labor nation."

"Irrepressible conflict"! On these fateful words the Rochester papers put no especial emphasis the next day when they dutifully recorded the speech.

However as the press of the nation took up the speech, the Rochester papers copied various comments on it and seemed quite pleased with the reflected limelight which the city was enjoying. On November 22, the editor of the *Democrat and American* said that "all sorts of comments" had been made on the speech and added that it had "made as much stir and outcry as anything that ever emanated from this city — and Rochester had certainly initiated its share of 'agitations'."

The Democratic press throughout the country hurled invectives at Seward, calling him a warmonger and a creator of dissension. The *New York Herald* termed him "an arch agitator", the sponsor of a "bloody programme" and more dangerous than Beecher, Garrison or Parker. The scope of the speech's influence can be seen in a fiery address of Jefferson Davis a year later. "For myself," he shouted, "I say, if a President be elected on the platform of Mr. Seward's Rochester speech, let the Union be dissolved. I love and venerate the Union of the States; but I love liberty and Mississippi more!"

On the other hand, the anti-slavery forces hailed the speech as a masterly expression of the facts in the case. Even the abolitionists, who generally considered Seward too cautious, could find nothing to complain of in this statement. In the succeeding months, however, their support again dwindled as Seward seemed to be trying to explain away the clear-headed and logical stand he had taken at Rochester. Partly for political reasons; partly, undoubtedly, because he, like Lincoln, so dreaded civil war, he made a number of speeches in which he pleaded with both sides to repress the conflict he once had declared to be "irrepressible." For William H.

Seward, although he seems personally to have disliked the institution of slavery, was no abolitionist. His stand was based not on the moral issues magnified by that group, but on political considerations. The views Seward expressed in Rochester and the philosophy which later impelled him to offer faithful service to the man who won the presidential nomination he himself had so coveted, had been acquired during long years of political activity in the state and on the national scene.

William Henry Seward was born in the tiny hamlet of Florida, in Orange County, New York, on May 16, 1801. His father was a physician, a slaveowner and a Democrat. Young Seward is said to have been so unfavorably impressed by slavery, even in the relatively beneficent form that institution took in his own home, that he never overcame his antagonism to it. He was educated at Union College during the presidency of Eliphalet Nott, who remained his friend and counsellor in later years. At college, Seward was humiliated by the contrast between the clothes of his classmates and his own ill-fitting homespuns. When his father refused to pay the tailor's bill which he soon ran up, the embarrassed young student (he was only 18) packed up and left college. He was able to obtain a position as principal of a new academy in Georgia, but the entreaties of his mother soon induced him to return home. Although he had been very hospitably and generously received in the South, it is generally believed that what he saw of slavery in its stronghold served to sharpen his distaste for the system. After graduating from college, Seward studied law in the little towns of Florida and Goshen and in New York City. In the latter place he joined a debating society. A

husky voice, the result of a catarrhal condition, limited Seward's effectiveness as a speaker, and it was always what he said, rather than the way he said it that impressed his listeners. As he developed into public life, his poise and commanding presence helped to make him a more impressive orator.

In 1823 Seward, scorning the more settled regions of the state, moved to Auburn, one of the rising young communities of the west. The little city on Lake Owasco was then somewhat larger than the crude town at the Genesee Falls which was soon to outstrip it in size and importance, thanks to the stimulating influence of the new Erie Canal. It may be, however, that such matters were not carefully weighed by the young lawyer and that other considerations attracted him to Auburn, for in October of 1824 he married Miss Frances Miller, the charming and intelligent daughter of his law partner in that city. Be that as it may, Seward resided in Auburn all the rest of his life except for necessary sojourns to Albany and Washington, and his first political activity was in the field of local politics.

It is interesting to note that an event which probably did much to determine the course of Seward's career took place in Rochester. He was riding one day through the muddy streets of this city in a lumbering, old-fashioned stagecoach when a wheel came off the clumsy vehicle and the passengers were precipitated into the miry ditch at the side of the road. "Among the crowd which quickly assembled," Seward later recounted, "one taller and more effective, while more deferential and sympathizing, than the rest lent the party his assistance. This was the beginning of my acquaintance with Thurlow Weed." In later years the association of these two

men, first in the Antimasonic Party and then in the Republican, was to result in one of the most powerful political alliances in American history, bringing great behind-the-throne power to Weed and almost landing Seward in the White House. For some years they had the support of Horace Greeley and his paper, but he later broke up with the other two and was largely responsible for the defeat of Seward's candidacy for the nomination in 1860. Between Seward and Weed, however, there was not just a mutually advantageous political alliance, but a lifelong friendship.

Both men first came into prominence during the Antimasonic furor which agitated Western New York in the late twenties, and were leaders in the short-lived Antimasonic Party. Seward was apparently interested in the movement from the beginning, but it wasn't until 1829 that he took an active part in it. He was profoundly distrustful of secret societies, and his opposition in later years to the Know-Nothings was based as much on the secrecy with which the group cloaked its activities as upon the thoroughly obnoxious doctrines it preached. The Antimasonic Party had only a short life, but before it disappeared from the scene it had elected Seward to the State Senate and launched him on his political career. He and Weed afterwards reverted to that branch of Whigs which in the fifties formed the nucleus of the Republican Party. Seward was elected governor in 1839 and held that office until 1842. After retiring for awhile from politics to take up again the private practice of law, he was elected to the United States Senate and was a member of that body in 1858. His later career as Secretary of State in Lincoln's War Cabinet is too well known to need mention.

Throughout his life Seward was opposed to slavery. As we have noted, circumstances of his childhood and youth tended to create in him an aversion to the institution which was intensified by later experiences. He was apparently by temperament as well as by political conviction something of an advocate of the "underdog". During his governorship he incurred considerable enmity (which later reacted disastrously against him) by his championship of the immigrant, especially of the Catholic newcomer. In 1841, while he was the chief executive of New York State, he steadfastly resisted the demands of the governor of Virginia for the extradition of three sailors who were wanted on charges of having aided in the escape of a runaway slave. Although Virginia took economic reprisals against New York, and other Southern states followed suit, Seward refused to yield. "I could not," he explained, "to save the commerce of the state, or even the peace of the country, subscribe to the faith prescribed to me. I cannot believe that a being of human substance, form, and image—endowed with the faculties, propensities, and passions common to our race, and having the same ultimate destiny—can, by the force of any human constitution or laws, be converted into a chattel or a thing, in which another being like himself can have property, depriving him of his own free will, and of the power of cultivating his own mind and pursuing his own happiness; a property beginning with his birth, and reaching over and enslaving his posterity. I cannot believe that that can be stolen which is not and cannot be property; and although such principles may be adopted and become the basis of institutions and laws in other countries, I cannot believe that any such

community has the right to extend the operation of such institutions and laws so as to affect persons within the jurisdiction and under the protection of other nations."

As we have noted, however, he was not an abolitionist — any more than Lincoln was. The preservation of the Union was of primary importance to both these men, and the compromises they were willing to make, with that end in mind, often tended to offend the undeviating abolitionists. If the unity of the nation could have been preserved by leaving slavery entrenched in the states where it already existed, Seward would probably have been willing to leave things as they were. It became, however, more and more evident that this was not possible. In order to keep a balance in the Congress, the Southern states had to try to extend their favored institution into the new territories which were gaining statehood. Thus through long years of experience and intelligent observation, Seward had arrived at the opinions he expressed in Rochester.

Seward arrived in the city the day before the speech was scheduled and spent the night with his old associate from Antimasonic days, Samuel G. Andrews. The following evening he faced a large and enthusiastic audience, which first shook the hall with cheers and then quieted down as the speaker moved to

the front of the platform. There was something compelling of respect in Seward's poise and assurance. Carl Schurz in a description of him said, that there was "something mysterious in that slim, wiry figure, the thin, sallow face, the overhanging eyebrows and the muffled voice." "Fellow citizens," he began, "the unmistakable outbreaks of zeal which occur all around me show that you are all earnest men — and such a man am I." Then, in a speech which lacked the moral indignation of the abolitionists and the political sidestepping which too often characterized Seward's own statements, he began that masterful summary of the two systems which he now felt could no longer exist side by side. "He spoke," comments one writer, "as a statesman when he called it the 'irrepressible conflict', and as an economist when he pronounced it a strife between two systems of labor."

Although few Rochesterians seemed to realize it, they were privileged that evening in Corinthian Hall to hear the speech which "struck the keynote" of the impending civil war.

*In connection with this article, it should be noted that the University of Rochester Library on April 25, 1952, dedicated The William Henry Seward Room, which contains the personal papers of the statesman. Numbering more than 100,000 items, this is one of the great 19th Century American historical collections.*

# Reminiscences of the Ruffled-Shirt Ward

By VIRGINIA JEFFREY SMITH

*A resident of the Third Ward from birth, Miss Smith has been active in efforts to preserve its landmarks, which are Rochester's richest cultural heritage. The following article was drawn from a paper read before the Historical Society some years ago. It is hoped Miss Smith will pursue an earlier intention of expanding this account into a book. One of Rochester's best known artists, Miss Smith also contributed the map of the old Ruffled Shirt Ward which accompanies this article.*

THE Third Ward is not just a geographical division, certainly not merely a political one. It is a village—a Cranford, a state of mind, an aura, a fetish—which only the Third Warder adores and which is an object of amusement, almost of derision to the East Sider. One of my friends (still a friend) told me her daughter had never been there so she had promised to take her "slumming" soon. Yet many East Siders are glad that their roots are in the old Ward and regard it with connotations of affectionate remembrance. One day when I was taking notes of Miss Milly Alling's recollections of the Ward she said, "Virginia, have I forgotten to mention any one?" I thought over those in the their late eighties and replied "How about Miss Baker?" "But, my dear, you would not call HER a Third Warder, she was 14 when she moved here." Seventy years of continuous residence were of no avail—her birth outside the sacred precincts debarred her.

The old houses of the neighborhood were built for large families, comfort-

able living, and lavish entertaining. The big, high-ceilinged rooms were at their best when their crystal chandeliers reflected the gas jets on the evening dresses and white ties of guests. The broad mahogany stairs were wide enough for the new arrivals to pass those who were leaving, with chats en route; the large dining rooms with their groaning mahogany tables and sideboards made serving less difficult than to-day and the big homey kitchens and pantries were built to produce large quantities and elaborate menus. The Hart-Pond connections used to gather more than sixty strong for holiday festivals with turkeys, ducks, geese, and hams and at least six kinds of pie with all the trimmings from soup to nuts.

New Year's Day was a great event in early Rochester. Of course everyone kept open house for callers, but the Third Ward came into its own, for the East Side entertained in the morning, while the west side had the advantageous latter half of the day. Third Ward girls received with their east side friends in the morning and then rushed home to act as hostesses. The gallants clubbed together and rented hacks for the day and, magnificent in full dress suits and silk hats, they set out shortly after ten o'clock in the morning with full card cases and light hearts. One elderly man remembers donning green kid gloves as the last word of elegance. A basket for calling cards hung on the door signified that that particular hostess was off receiving with friends, so the hack moved on to the house of the next



friend. All day long they went on, covering the waterfront. Wherever they went, was delicious food and drink and there must have been a great demand for sodamints and seltzer on January second. The parties, of course, grew gayer as the day progressed, so that the Ward hostesses had much the best of the custom.

The biggest balls were generally given in Powers Building — first in the art gallery itself and later in Mirror Hall. Here a balcony extended the whole way around where the dowagers could sit and keep tabs on what was happening on the dancing floor — and keep tabs they did. The debutante felt at home here for had she not attended Miss Quinby's dancing class, as her mother had Mr. Cobleigh's? One of the last balls to be given there was the golden wedding of Mr. and Mrs. Chamberlain, when Mr. Chamberlain, then over eighty, danced the sailor's horn pipe to Mr. Dossenbach's accompaniment.

To speak of social life without mentioning Mr. Teall, himself a Third Warder, would indeed be an oversight. He was recognized as the best caterer in the state outside of New York city, was often called to Buffalo and all gala occasions here depended upon him. His corps of waiters knew "everybody what is anybody." Alfred, dean of waiters, was quite a character. A new waiter passing chicken salad to my mother was accosted by him — "Go long there — don't pass the chicken salad to Mrs. Smith — I've got lobster for her." The staff arrived early in the day and such good things as were produced. A distinguished English visitor who had a series of dinners given him by prominent hostesses, remarked to the first on the beauty of her plates. He was

somewhat nonplussed when he was served from the same plates at each of the subsequent dinners. They belonged to Mr. Teall. Never were such quail and squab and escalloped oysters, such lobster salad, Nesselrode and almond paste cakes. The excitement of seeing one's parents go off in evening clothes was climaxed the next morning by a tiny almond paste potato, purloined and carried home in the pocket of a tail coat for the baby. At the wedding breakfast of one of my friends, Mr. Williamson, Mr. Teall's successor, was bemoaning his overly abundant supply of escalloped oysters. A few minutes later Alfred rushed into the kitchen, exclaiming "Mr. Williamson, you won't have any too many of those oysters — the whole Third Ward is arrivin'!"

But the pleasantest entertainments were probably the less formal ones, the supper parties, the going-away and coming-home parties (for travel was no ordinary occurrence), the theatricals and the charades. The Whittleseys always kept a trunk or two of old costumes and properties, so that charades could be indulged in at the drop of a hat, and such wit as sparkled in the extemporaneous lines. Then there were the oyster roasts in the Stedmans' cellar when Mr. Stedman had a barrel sent up from Baltimore. The furnace was especially fitted to roast them to Epicurean fancy. There were hot suppers after sleigh-riding or bobsledding on Troup Street hill.

Thrifty though the housewives were, there were few left-overs, for any delicacy was shared with one's neighbors. To this day, I do not feel right in putting any ice cream back in the refrigerator. Whatever was left, and there was always more than enough, was hurried on one's best plates, covered with an

inverted fingerbowl, to some one — preferably to the sick or afflicted. Wine jelly with whipped cream or charlotte russe was the usual Sunday dessert and one could see younger members of almost every family dispatched about two o'clock with covered plates of such delicacies with injunctions to hurry lest it deteriorate before reaching the neighbor for whom it was intended.

In preserving and pickling season the air was redolent with delicious odors — in fact the season stretched from rhubarb to mincemeat. You always sent a glass or jar of each batch to some neighbor, and since all followed the same generous custom, everyone's preserve closet came out about even, but with greater variety to draw upon for winter treats.

In such an atmosphere clubs thrive and the Ward has had many, from the sedate to the frivolous. The first home of the Genesee Valley Club was on Washington Street. The Pundit club originated at Dr. Morgan's. There was a Shakespeare club, with the members reading various parts. Then there were the "Sweet and Lows" who, as you might guess, sang hymns in the choir of St. Luke's during Lent and secular ditties elsewhere. They were followed by a rival organization called, at least behind their backs, "the High and Shrills."

The Roundabout, oldest woman's club in Rochester, began there under the aegis of Mrs. Hough. The Alembic club, a small coterie of congenial men, met behind the blue door in the basement of the Perkins house, or in our unique old book store and, over beer and pretzels, proved that conversation is not a lost art. That shop of George Humphrey, known to bibliophiles from coast to coast, lent an erudite atmos-

phere to the neighborhood. There was also a dramatic club, called the Trylobites. In the Ward, too, the Century Club was organized at Mrs. Stoddard's, and the Humdrums at Mr. Charles Robinson's.

But the club of clubs was the Browning society which always met in the Fishers' drawing room. No one of today could believe the sanctity with which this organization wrapped itself nor the awe which it inspired. Beside the closely chosen membership there were a few guests but only as a royal favor and such an invitation was in the nature of a command appearance. Even people of importance came with bated breath, praying that they might comport themselves with dignity. The pundits of the town read learned papers when there were no visiting lions to roar. Only once did a woman take an active part in a meeting — one poetess declaimed an original poem. One woman guest asked the speaker a question, one afternoon, and on leaving said to her hostess that she hoped it was right to have done so. "It was a dangerous precedent, my dear," was the reply. You entered over the first marble floor in Rochester; the ladies left their wraps in a red room on the left, the gentlemen in a blue room on the right, refreshments came first and then all repaired to the drawing room for the "hyacinths to feed the soul."

In the sixties there was a club called the Twinkle Stars who called each other Hesperus, Thalia, Riga and so on and whose secretary also flew high in her language saying "As she gives the starry record into worthier hands it is with a beautiful desire that the luster may but grow brighter and its pages be undimmed forever."

But of all the clubs the most thor-

oughly Thirdwardian were the Kitcats and the Every Little Frequentlies. The former were a reading club who relaxed with refreshments and conversation of (shall we say) neighborly interest. Some of the members grew so old that the favorite refreshments became malted milk and crackers. The Every Little Frequentlies were and are purely recreational. And what good times they have. They meet as the spirit moves one of them to send out invitations and, after a Lucullan banquet, the GUESTS put on the entertainment to surprise the hostess.

But life in the old ward was not all entertaining and being entertained. Here originated most of the early charities. The Female Charitable Society founded in 1820 in the Everard Peck house, mothered most of the present social agencies and, except for a Board (mostly Warders), consisted of Mrs. Arnold who, in her own person, represented practically all the altruistic work which was not denominational. Her own home, on Washington St. (Little Washington, it was always called for there was a bend in the road) was office, oratory, and storehouse, and for a long time the lame, the halt, the blind, and the impoverished found it indeed a haven.

The Twigs, famed sewing groups of the City (now General) Hospital, made their appearance in the eighties, the co-founder being a Warder. The great event of the year was the hospital donation held in Washington Rink, Fitzhugh Rink, or, in my day, at Convention Hall. One year it was at Graves' new store and another at the Elks Club. For months every Twigger labored on all sorts of fancy work; for weeks theatricals or pageants were rehearsed under the direction of Miss Yiager; for days

every kitchen in town was in a turmoil of cakes, candies, pies, rolls, and cranberry sauce.

White aprons were laundered and the men of the family evicted for two days. Everyone set out early Thursday morning with bundles, boxes, and baskets to man the booths which each twig had erected and trimmed the day before. Every Victorian piece of handiwork imaginable was exposed for sale and some unimaginable such as a hideous egg cozy knitted of yellow and orange wool in the form of six tulips to lie on a plate. It was "so difficult that it should have been impossible." It became a perennial joke in the Parent Stem twig, turning up each year and being repurchased to be presented, with elaborate wrappings, to one of the members.

In the center of the hall sat Mrs. Warham Whitney in white kid gloves taking in the filthy lucre at a table marked "Donation" while at another table sat Miss Lydia Rumsey taking subscriptions for the *Hospital Review*, a monthly publication. With perfect synchronization you bought and sold, so that a steady stream of cash flowed into the hospital till. Occasionally it seemed wisest to buy back your own contribution, but that too helped the hospital and no one knew so well how much work it represented, or approved so thoroughly of its taste. All roads led to the hall during the noon recess of business men. Long tables sagged beneath the weight of jellies, pickles, cranberry sauce and salads, while behind the scenes, Mr. Pond and Mr. Charles Gorton, with aprons tied around their necks, carved the succulent turkeys. You whispered to your waitress that you preferred "Mrs. Brewster's pumpkin pie please," and hurried away from your booth to eat with your family.

Afternoon and evening saw a continuation of a brisk trade with the variation of treating your friends to tea or ice cream, and seeing that the children on their arrival from school had full purses to enjoy the grab bag, fish pond and Punch and Judy. In the evening, too, came the great dramatic event, more important than any Broadway first night. Whether it was Columbus and Isabella, the Pied Piper or the Kermesse, it was the best show since last year and every minor part was applauded to the echo. Hot mustard footbaths had to be used to fit one for a repetition of the wild orgy all the next day. The medical profession, as well as the Hospital, was the gainer, for many took to their beds as a result and it was some time before life regained its normalcy.

To speak of the Ward without the Erie canal would be to leave out Hamlet. DeWitt Clinton may have had other reasons in mind when he built it, but we Warders knew that its prime *raison d'être* was to act as a moat for the Third Ward. Each intersecting street had its drawbridge and we were serene in our isolation from the rest of the town. It was fascinating to stand on the hump bridge at Washington and watch the life that went on beneath one's feet.

The long flat canal boats, the housewife sitting rocking and knitting in the doorway of the little deck house as she surveyed the wash fluttering from the deck while a small mongrel dashed back and forth barking at the faithful mules plodding along the tow path. The "spares" showed their long noses and ears out of the stern windows taking a well earned rest while they munched their oats. Sometimes the boats were tethered together in lots of six or seven with two teams of mules.

The boys of the Ward, well supplied

with tomatoes or cabbages, sometimes bombarded the boats as they passed, and were rewarded by a flow of language which they regarded as highly educational. Warehouses lined the north side of the canal. In the olden days boats were not allowed to blow horns within the limits of town on Sunday. When I was a child there were lift bridges at Plymouth and Fitzhugh streets and turning bridges at Exchange and Caledonia. The lift bridges added zest to any trip down town. There was always the alluring thought that one might get caught in spite of the caretaker's warning and wafted up to the level of the little sentry box of a house on top. The bell would clang and everyone would run to get to terra firma before the creaking machinery lifted the whole thing. (I can remember the building of the Fitzhugh Street bridge from a topical song "Oh Fitzhugh bridge is broken down, one more river to cross, To go to church you have to go round, one more river to cross.")

The influence of the canal lingers in the mores of the Third Warders to this day. The bridges were narrower than the streets, so everyone crossed the street catty-corner on the bridge. Like migrating birds who pass over shoals where there used to be islands, Warders still pay little attention to traffic lights and still jay walk, particularly in the neighborhood of Broad Street. In winter the canal presented quite a different appearance. Drained about the first of November, it became the repository of tin cans and dead cats and was as unsavory a mess as one could imagine. We never thought to apologize for it — it was a part of the Ward and therefore all right. From Exchange Street to South Avenue it was flooded and provided the perfect skating rink. Here as

in Radio City in the heart of the city you could watch the outside edge, the Dutch roll and waltzing couples, while we young fry flopped about and tried to stand erect on wobbly ankles. Barney and Berry skates which locked into plates set in the heel of your shoes were the last word.

Of all the neighborly friends who have stood together with steady affection the most notable are St. Luke's and the First Presbyterian — a very Damon and Pythias of friendships from which the Federation of Churches could learn much. The First was founded in 1815 and St. Luke's two years later, and for many years they stood on opposite sides of Fitzhugh street eyeing each other with friendly rivalry. When the First Church burned, the congregation worshipped in St. Luke's and throughout their lives they have stood by each other with undeviating devotion. Members of the First used to lunch at St. Luke's and St. Lukers used to crowd to the First's chicken pie suppers which Mrs. Chapin's cuisine made famous. Never were such chicken pies — even Heinz's broadcaster could not have made them sound more luscious than they were. (It will be remembered that the Proprietors had offered a lot for the erection of a church edifice for the new settlement. The Roman Catholics and the Episcopalians heard of it simultaneously and both set off up the valley to make application. But the Episcopalian had the better horse and arrived first which accounts for the fact that St. Luke's is the oldest church edifice in Rochester and that legally its title is "St. Luke's Church of Genesee Falls.") St. Luke's was noted for its dramatics as the First for its food. "Mrs. Jarley" and "The Lamentable Tragedy of Julius Caesar" stand out among a galaxy of lesser successes.

Comparatively few Third Warders had their own carriages, but those who had, always filled them with neighbors. The rest of us had recourse to the Third Ward liveries for occasions of especial importance — George Simpson and old Willett. One never went alone but in capacity groups. As Charles Robinson said, in his inimitable *Third Ward Traits*, "The Ward moves in battalion." Sometimes transportation was by invitation (to be carefully returned at the next festivity); sometimes a Dutch treat. Thus the party began at your own doorstep and lasted all the way home. Simpson's carriages had more style, particularly the phaeton which his assistant called the "canopy." Old Willett's horses and carriages were of his own vintage. My Aunt, deciding to drive herself, asked if the horse was perfectly safe. "Wall," said Willett, "if she should see a dead white cow lying by the side of the road, she might shy a little." One of the great treats of my childhood was the annual drive in to the country to pick wild flowers, usually on the last day of April so that I might fill the little May baskets I had carefully prepared and hang them on the doors of our friends next morning.

The tempo of the Ward was measured but never lethargic. Plymouth clock, of recent years kept in repair by a Presbyterian, marked the passage of time for everyone as the radio does today. Clocks and watches were all set by it and if you were late it was your own fault. If your watch showed 8:12 you knew Mr. Hamilton was just opening his door, Dr. Stoddard was sitting down to breakfast, and Mr. Roby was nearing the Four Corners. At noon you knew exactly which husband would return first and in what order you would see them rounding the corner. No

luncheon clubs. They dined (not lunched) with their families.

You might think that the tempo would have increased with the advent of the bicycle, but if so you do not know the Ward. Everyone rode but at such slight acceleration from a walk that it made little difference. Scorchers were not Warders — with the possible exception of Miss Fanny Montgomery. There were academies in which to learn and then after a course of lessons, one emerged with a perspiring male running alongside hanging on to the back of the saddle. (One of the Ward fathers, while learning to ride went with a member of his office force and while pedaling on the cinder path by the rapids, fell into the river. Returning for dry clothes the companion felt that tact was necessary and said, "Mrs. Blank, Mr. Blank and the bicycle fell into the river, but the bicycle is all right.") Love of the sport was not easily discouraged. Mrs. FitzSimons, practicing on Spring Street in preparation for a ride all the way to Elmira to visit the Sloat Fassets, rode right through the basement window of Mrs. William E. Hoyt, to the consternation of the cook. Nothing daunted, she then practiced round and round her dining room table.

The traditions of the Ward were shattered by the coming of the automobile. Horror at its speed struggled with pride that we could boast of one. That the basic patents were owned by Mr. Selden, himself a Warder, had in no way prepared us for such excitement. The first in the Ward (second in town) was bought by Mr. J. Foster Warner and its internal workings gave us sufficient warning so that every window was full of admiring faces by the time he got the strange contraption to the street.

Trees were everywhere in the Ward.

Indeed, when you climbed Powers Building Tower (exciting eminence) you recognized it as a clump of green pierced by the steeples of the First and Plymouth churches. The sidewalks were, for the most part of brick, sometimes with a double row of flagstones down their center, sometimes laid in herring bone pattern and extending to the curb, with round holes, edged with narrow bricks, around the trunks of the trees whose branches met so far above our heads. Sun dappled through, making orange lights and purple shadows on the bricks. In winter the snow banks were so high that you could not see from one side of the street to the other. Most of the houses were built well back from the street and had fences, either iron or picket, whose gates made ideal swings. Carriage blocks and hitching posts lined the curbs.

The core of the Ward has always been Livingstone Park — called quite sufficiently "the Park" — with its double terraces and guarded privacy. It remains private property and is maintained by the abutting property holders. There still stand the cement entrances like a growth of mushrooms at both ends. The roadway may seem narrow today when you try to pass the parked cars but it is broad indeed compared with the little passage just the width of a carriage which used to suffice. In the center was a small circle guarded by an iron deer, around which the coachmen could turn their equipages.

The original gates are still to be found on the sidewalk but the ones for the road are no longer closed and locked every evening and all day Sunday, as they were even in my childhood. If the dwellers should do such a wanton thing as use their horses on Sunday, they had to scuttle down the back way to their

stables which faced on Caledonia Avenue (now Clarissa Street). There are tales told of community suppers and band concerts and prayer meetings. At the latter Miss Louise Chappell was not too welcome as they said she "prayed too long." It was here at the wedding of Mrs. Dodd that Chinese lanterns were first used in Rochester.

Opposite the school and facing Spring Street was the house built by Mr. Chappell, later the home of Miss Wild, and next it the Gaffneys, later the Robert Mathews house, where my mother and her contemporaries used to gather on the Fourth of July, clad in wool to reduce the fire hazard, and climb the cherry tree where they spent the day, lighting firecrackers and eating cherries.

The Colonel Rochester house was intact during my childhood though it had fallen from its high estate and was distinctly forlorn and shabby. It was reached from Spring Street by a long flight of wooden steps, the ground level being much higher than the street. The John Rochesters (he was the Colonel's grandson) lived next the corner on Washington Street. Mrs. Rochester was a southerner, and no one could sweep into a room with greater distinction, trains and lace scarves floating behind her. She always spoke of herself in the third person, as Mrs. Rochester or Your Cousin Lizzie, and the guest room was known as the "bishop's room," as the visiting episcopals usually stayed with them. When first engaged she invited Miss Rochester to visit her in Mississippi. Her little maid came to her one day, saying "Miss Lizzie, I'se feared dat she's not 'zactly quality. When she drops her petticoats, she picks 'em up herself."

The Potter house on the corner is the site of the original Indian spring which

gives the street its name. Whether it flows now I do not know, but the rockery in the garden marks its grave.

Fitzhugh Street bends a little at Troup so that the Campbell-Whittlesey house, operated as a museum by the Landmark Society, looks directly down the middle of the street. It is the finest example of Greek revival in western New York saved as a museum. Chancellor Whittlesey bought it in 1848, and it has belonged to the family until recently. What could not *that* house tell of the Ward, for the hospitality and wit of the family made it a gathering place for their friends. When the day came to move in, the Chancellor made a large gesture of assistance in the undertaking by saying at the breakfast table, "My dear, you need not send the carriage for me tonight."

The Ward made itself felt outside Rochester. Probably the most famous personality (from Fitzhugh Street) was Lewis Morgan, America's most famous ethnologist, whose studies of the beaver and then of Indian Tribal organization need no comment. Many old Warders claim Jenny Jerome, mother of Winston Churchill, although historians view this claim with doubt. Mrs. Kipling was also a Third Warder — Carrie Balastier, and her brother collaborated with Kipling in some of his books. In art Maude Humphrey, a well known illustrator (mother of Humphrey Bogart), Louise Stowell, Ada Kent, Clarice Jeffrey, and Guernsey Mitchell, the sculptor, whose bronze Mercury above the Kimball Tobacco factory buildings so long gave wing to our industrial life.

In music Mrs. Stedman, who gave so great an impetus to the formation of the Tuesday Musicales, Miss Holyland and her more famous pupil, John Warner. Of writers there were Charles Mulford

Robinson, the Ward's own bard, better known as one of America's first city planners, and Robert Bridges of Scribners, and Claude Bragdon and Samuel Adams. For sheer erudition in its most engaging form Doctor Osgood and Doctor Converse stood apart. They had so much of wisdom that they both had the simplicity of the truly great. (As his younger son said of Doctor Converse, "I wouldn't mind knowing as much as Dad but I never want to know as much as my brother.") But as a whole, the Ward made its contributions, not so much to the life of art as to the art of living.

Miss Milly Alling, who died recently at the age of 96 was an outstanding figure, particularly on Fitzhugh Street where she had spent 85 years. It was a joy to hear her — petite, alert, with a delightful sense of humor — reminisce about olden days.

No one else could write of the Ward without a mention of Miss Agnes Jeffrey whose tall, erect figure was a familiar sight. She lived to the age of 96 with every faculty alert, painting the day she died and the week previously reading aloud from the works of Ian McClaren to a group of young people who loved to gather about her. She was an authority on the botany and astronomy of her day and took up the study of Italian when over 70 and read it fluently. She read the entire Bible through every year and her knowledge of it was encyclopedic. In the house she always wore lace caps with a touch of colored ribbon covering all her hair except for four white curls which framed her benign face. These caps she had first donned at the age of twenty-six.

Mrs. John Brewster, leader in all good community effort and one of the matriarchs of the Ward, was equally

known for her cuisine. Once, a young housekeeper asked her if she would be good enough to tell her how she made her chicken pies. "My dear, when I want a chicken pie, I get Hannah Pine and go out for the day."

Other cateresses were Bridget Jackway and Mary Connors. They knew who wanted coffee and who preferred tea, and served the proper beverage to every guest at a luncheon party, without asking. There were other figures in the Ward too well known to be omitted: the postman who delivered the mail for a quarter of a century and knew so many handwritings that he could tell you whom your letters were from — a trait which was very disconcerting in long distance courtships. There was Mr. Hopwood, the grocer, who was a veritable Mr. Hobbs. There was Mr. Morgan, the plumber who not only knew every family in the Ward but the position of every drain and lead pipe. One of the characters of the Ward was Lars Larson who came from Norway in a fifty-foot boat and was one of the leaders among Norwegians in America.

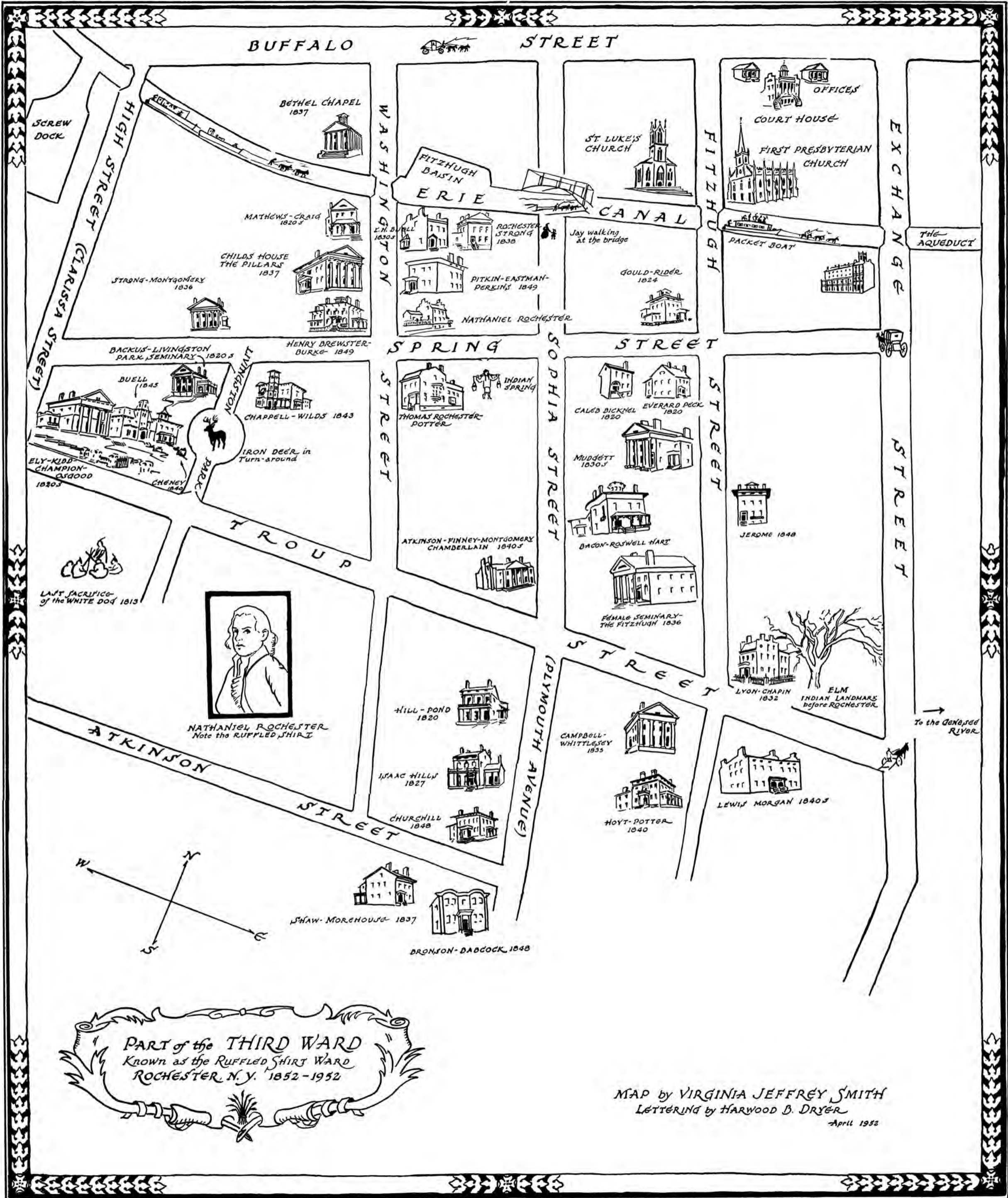
Old retainers always were called by the names of the families they served. There was Snowy Wild, a little wisp of a woman whom I can still see running through the streets in search of her  
(CONTINUED ON PAGE 27)

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*The following map shows landmarks of the Third Ward a century ago. A number of these have been demolished, other altered with little regard for their original beauty. The structures remained today, however, constitute one of the nation's finest collections of Greek Revival architecture and, in a real sense, are the city's finest heritage from the past.*

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BUFFALO STREET

BETHEL CHAPEL 1837



ST. LUKE'S CHURCH



COURT HOUSE  
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



FITZHUGH BASIN  
ERIE CANAL



ROCHESTER STRONG 1838



Jay walking at the bridge

GOULD-RIDER 1824



PACKET BOAT



STRONG-MONTGOMERY 1836



CHILD'S HOUSE THE PILLARS 1837



NATHANIEL ROCHESTER

SPRING STREET

STREET

BACKUS-LIVINGSTON PARK, SEMINARY 1820'S



HENRY DREWSTER-BURKE 1849



THOMAS ROCHESTER-POTTER

ATKINSON-FINNEY-MONTGOMERY CHAMBERLAIN 1840'S



CALEB DICKMEL 1820  
EVERARD BECK 1820



MUDDETT 1830'S



BACON-ROSWELL HART



FEMALE SEMINARY-THE FITZHUGH 1836



JEROME 1848



LYON-CHAPIN 1832



ELM INDIAN LANDMARKS before ROCHESTER



NATHANIEL ROCHESTER  
Note the RUFFLED SHIRT

HILL-POND 1820



ISAAC HILLS 1827



CHURCHILL 1848



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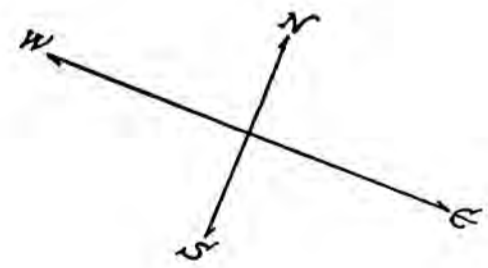
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To the Genesee RIVER

PART of the THIRD WARD  
Known as the RUFFLED SHIRT WARD  
ROCHESTER, N. Y. 1852-1952

MAP by VIRGINIA JEFFREY SMITH  
LETTERING by HARWOOD B. DRYER  
April 1952

# Rochester's Erie Canal: The Pride of a Generation

By RONALD SHAW

NO city believed itself to have more at stake in the Erie Canal than did Rochester. "Clinton's folly" gave the settlement at the falls of the Genesee a sense of major participation in an age of great national expansion. Fact and legend combine to tell of the conquest of wilderness and the diffusion of civilization, and the story is shot through with the heady excitement of first experiences in effortless mobility. For the generation which built the "big ditch," the story was never done. The Erie Canal and the pride it engendered were always growing things.

During the eight years between 1817 and 1825, the State of New York created an inland waterway from Albany to Buffalo, the longest canal yet constructed on the face of the earth. Eighty-three locks were completed, and at Lockport a thousand men blasted through three miles of solid rock to carry the Canal over the Mountain Ridge. A narrow ribbon of water, forty feet wide and four deep, reached Rochester from the East in the summer of 1822. Almost immediately the Canal proved inadequate to the need. Building began once more in 1836 aimed at the increased dimensions of seventy feet by seven, and was in progress until the coming of the Civil War.

The old Erie Canal seemed particularly Rochester's canal. Here was the Genesee River, bringing the wealth of field and forest to the Lake. Close by was the "Port of Genesee," where, at one time, Jesse Hawley, whose "*Heracles*" essays in the *Genesee Messenger*

were recognized as the first projection of the northern route of the Canal to Lake Erie, was collector of customs. To cross the valley of the Irondequoit, a great "aerial watercourse" carried the Canal seventy feet high on a man-made embankment, from which passengers gazed down on farm houses and trees below. The eleven-arched, hewn-stone aqueduct, carrying the Canal 802 feet over the Genesee River was announced to the reader of Spafford's *Pocket Guide* in 1824 as "rather the grandest single feature on the Canal." Moreover, the structure was of crucial importance, for it funneled "Erie Water" to supply the canal east of the river — essential if the waters of the Genesee were not to be diverted from Rochester millers. Here, too, was built the Genesee Valley Canal, the answer to protracted demands for an up-river tie to the valleys of the Canaseraga and the Allegheny rivers; by 1847 this canal had reached as far as Dansville and had made Rochester still another crossroads of water travel. The phenomenal growth of Rochester itself made the sprouting city a spectacle of the Grand Western Canal. It is not surprising that the editor of the four-page *Telegraph* made record of "the liveliest sensations of joy and hope" at the Rochester celebration of the "wedding of the waters" in 1825. The sons of Rochester, known as "The Young Lion of the West," were pleased as punch when they toasted the future of their thriving village on the Erie Canal; moreover, they toasted the future of the nation as well.

## A MONUMENT OF FREEDOM

Paradoxically, there was nascent nationalism in the celebrations of this village growing in western wilderness. When Lafayette, the "Nation's Guest," returned from the Ohio country during his American tour in 1825, he was welcomed on the Rochester aqueduct. Judge Rochester proudly presented the lavishly garlanded edifice as "a lasting monument of how much can be accomplished by a patriotic people . . . in the equal and full fruition of self government." New Yorkers up and down the State crowed over their accomplishment and put to ridicule the economic sterility of European institutions. In young and promising Brockport, Hial Brockway, perhaps thinking of the revolutionary strife and turmoil in Europe during these years, toasted his Genesee Country guests: "The *United States* — cutting Canals while Europe is cutting heads." There was, too, real concern for the preservation of those liberties won on this side of the Atlantic.

The Erie Canal stood to obviate at least two threats to those liberties: The detachment of the West for want of an outlet to the Atlantic (as Washington's *Farewell Address* had foreboded in 1796); the economic rivalry or the military aggression of the British in Canada.

Two years before the Canal reached Rochester, it was toasted as "an intercourse between the interior and the extreme parts of the United States" which would "impart energy, and give durability to the national compact." This durability was by no means unchallenged. Britain was yet referred to as "our natural enemy," and the very fortunes of Rochester itself had come out of the decision to accept the route of the Geddes survey, bordered on both sides

by American soil, rather than an Ontario route which would place the produce of the American West within the grasp of Montreal. Even after "this American Hellespont," as Jesse Hawley called it, was a reality, considerable American trade followed the rival course. "We are perfectly willing the New Yorkers should eat of our superior flour," declared the *Monroe Republican* in 1826, "but if the Canadians will pay us a better price for it, the pressure of the times prompts us to sell it to them even though it should contribute a trifle to his Brittanic majesty's revenue." With the completion of the Welland Canal in 1829, a water-route from Lake Erie to the St. Lawrence was opened, and as increasing congestion choked the Erie Canal, the stigma of the "British Party" was pinned to those who did not favor a speedy enlargement of the New York waterway.

Provincial as America was, the larger view did not stand alone; national concerns were subordinate to those nearest hearth and home. Within the nation, Rochesterians joined their New York brethren to herald the rise of "The Empire State." They were expectant of lush profits which would be deposited along 500 miles of New York canals. In the vision of a pamphlet prophecy of 1816, they predicted that "the STATE OF NEW YORK would become the focus of the Sciences, and the polar star of every valuable improvement throughout the Union."

When the chips were down, localism ran even more deeply. Thurlow Weed, representing Rochester in the 1830 sessions of the State Assembly, attempted to channel Lake Ontario trade through Western New York by adjusting the tolls on the Oswego Canal until they equalled those on the Erie between

Buffalo and Syracuse. To fetch to Rochester the heavy stage travel on the Geneva, Canandaigua and Batavia road, Rochester businessmen were urged to patronize the Canal route of the stages rather than the route to the South. "Our business must hereafter be almost wholly upon and along the Canal," protested a letter to the *Republican*, "and there is no reason why we should put ourselves to so much inconvenience to benefit our neighbors." And during the hard times of that year, one disgruntled citizen found his answer to the desertion of Rochester streets in the competition of sister canal ports, Brockport, Holly, and Albion. Private profit bulked fully as large on the Erie Canal as did the public good.

#### BY PACKET TO ROCHESTER

In 1822 Rochester became water-conscious. From East Rochester through the center of the city and west to King's Basin, Greece, the Canal was Rochester's main street. Packet, freighter, lock, and basin became new nodes of thought and conversation. And canal travel evoked as varied a response as did the horseless carriage three-quarters of a century later. Freighters bore the brunt of the load, but perhaps the brightly-colored, swiftly-moving packet figured most consciously in the reaction of this generation to Erie water.

Only with difficulty could we generalize here. "I reached home last evening after all the horrors of Canal Boat travelling," wrote Francis Granger to Thurlow Weed in Albany during the summer of 1832. John C. Spencer of Canandaigua sent word ahead of the journey of Mrs. Giddins to Lockport in 1829: "As there will be a canal boat running, she will be able to go with great comfort." There seems here to

be recognition of two fairly common, if antithetical, conceptions of life on the Erie Canal. However this may be, the canal boat, like the automobile, improved in comfort and elegance as the years went by, and the canal was increased in size. And as the numbers of "canallers" multiplied, you paid your money and you took your choice.

Canal boat spaciousness was limited at the outset to the 90 by 15-foot size of the locks — a dimension which packet builders approached with a bare six inches' clearance on each side and enough space for the inward swing of the lock gates as the boat was released to the broader canal beyond. Within these limits, common purpose was the only uniformity. Boats ran as small as forty feet, varied from forty to one-hundred tons, and derived their power from one, two, or three horses trotting on the narrow towpath. Flat-bottomed, they drew usually no more than two and one-half feet of water. The earliest packets to operate out of Rochester were simple in design, pointed or snub-nosed at bow and stern, with high railings enclosing a rectangular box-shaped cabin. A bleak row of windows extended along each side very nearly to the roof. The only deck space possible in such an arrangement was that on the cabin top which was reached by a small stairway at the rear. By the late twenties, lines had become smoother and more graceful; a sharp upturned prow gave some designs an impudent expression, while in others the opposite curves of the deck and the cabin roof created a pleasingly elliptical effect.

Rochester boat-yards, gaining an ever-increasing share of the building for the New York canals, began to produce at the turn of the decade a succession of packets boasting greater speed and com-

fort than any others afloat. From the stocks of Seth C. Jones came the *Superior*, light and graceful with a lavishly decorated cabin, seven feet high, containing washrooms and a bar, a boat attested by the editor of the *Daily Advertiser* as the most beautiful on the Canal. The *Triumph*, built by W. W. Howell, claimed particular merit in that it was "built without the stimulus of ardent spirits or liquid poison;" not a drop had been allowed the twenty or thirty workmen from whose hands she came. By 1843 the enlargement of the locks permitted a new dimension boat, and the Red-bird line was first to announce the *Rochester* and the *Genesee*, cedar built, 100 feet in length, saloons and washrooms for both ladies and gentlemen, and berths accommodating 100 persons.

Travelling on these boats and on the thousands of lesser pedigree was reported to be lazy and easy, often tedious, and sometimes entertaining. Gliding without noise, save for "the merry sound of the boatman's horn," the packet added a gentle rocking movement, which with the warmth of the summer sun, brought inevitable drowsiness. Sleep, however, was apparently impossible during the day; conditions being warm and close within the cabin, the traveller was driven to the upper deck where he must be alert to the boatman's warning — "Bridge! Passengers! — Mind the low bridge." The low bridges, often ram-shackle affairs connecting the farmer's fields, extended sometimes so low that passengers were required to prostrate themselves or be swept from the boat. Younger passengers, such as the mischievous Fanny Wright, who travelled West to Rochester during her first visit to the country in 1819, took delight in peeking at

the discomfiture of more sedate travellers. But the English visitor, Captain Basil Hall, soon tired of whatever fun there was in it: "It was rather amusing to hop down and then to hop up again; but by and by, this skipping about became very tiresome, and marred the tranquility of the day very much."

The smaller boats carried forty or fifty passengers, using an ingenious arrangement of the roomy interior. Packets offered two cabins; that of the ladies was furnished with beds, employed a female attendant, and was separated from the gentlemen's cabin by a heavy curtain. A row of lockers, lining each side of the men's cabin, was folded out at night into a range of beds, and above them two tiers of sacking-bottomed frames were hinged flat against the wall.

The canal boat became an interesting and often convivial social unit. Frequent additions and departures from crowded wharves brought continual variety to the passenger list, and this was an age of reading aloud for the edification of the company. An acquaintance struck up during a meeting on deck could be continued at one of the long tables below, where, ladies gracing one side of the table and men the other, the Captain served up as the *Benjamin Wright* advertised, "the best fare that the country and season affords."

Best of all, travel was cheap. Passage in the twenties could be had for only four cents a mile including board, three cents without; such fares, noted the *Monroe Republican*, were "so low that no man who consults economy, *can afford to go on foot!*" The slower freighters carried a few passengers along with their loads of flour, staves or pork, for even less, and emigrants

travelled in great batches at a penny a mile.

It is little wonder that this variegated stream brought constant excitement to Rochester. Each spring the public presses took note of the quickening pace of life, once the water had filled the Canal — bustle enough, cheered the *Republican* early one April, "to banish the bluedevils engendered by a dull winter." Three thousand boats crowded the Canal in 1836, most of them stopping at Rochester where their passengers found a curious and friendly people crowded about the quays to watch, to learn their names, their destination, and their business.

#### PURE AND WHOLESOME WATER

The puritan conscience of Rochester soon discovered that the coin had two sides. The growing city welcomed a colorful canal, but it was concerned also with the good life. "The village of Rochester contains all the necessary materials for the formation of a very good society," admonished one keeper of the public conscience in the summer of 1824, ". . . . But it is manifestly their interest that our flourishing village should improve in respectability, as it augments in size." Everard Peck of the *Telegraph* hoped that the law would authorize a "Stepping mill," for, he warned, "if ever a poor village wanted something to check the progress of vice and crime, it is Rochester."

The first shock came with the announcement in 1821 that 150 convicts from the Auburn State Prison were to be employed in hewing stone for the Aqueduct. "Who can contemplate without horror," cried the *Republican*, "one hundred and fifty convicts, in the constant view of the children and the youth of this populous settlement, pouring the

sound of curses and profanity into the ears of all who may be attracted by the novelty of the scene to visit their encampment?" The *Telegraph*, on the other side of the political fence, suggested that less concern was held for public morals than for making political capital by attacking the Clintonian building of the canal. Nevertheless the *Telegraph* continued to give notice of the numerous escapes from the force.

At the outset, the canallers sought to impress the public with the sobriety and respectability of their services. The Erie Navigation Company announced its line of eight boats with explicit testimony to the helpfulness of its captains, guaranteed the traveller of "sober and orderly" crews as well as "civil and attentive" waiters, and gave assurance that "no noise or confusion is suffered to disturb or annoy passengers." With the blossoming of competition each new line gave notice of the sobriety and reliability of its service. But in spite of their good intentions, they did not disarm the opposition.

The Sabbatarian movement cast its censure on the Sunday travelling of mail, stage, and canal boat alike, and the legislature was petitioned to close the locks on that day. The legislature, believing that such prohibition instead of awakening "moral feeling" would only excite resentment, refused to act. In the meantime, the Pioneer or Six-Day Line sought the patronage of those who felt the Sabbath violated. The community was of divided mind. "I cannot see how much better those boatmen will be for stopping Sundays — and certainly their employers will be considerably injured," wrote Matthew Brown to the editor of the *Telegraph*, ". . . . Should such a law be passed I think that boatmen instead of going to church would spend their

time in drinking whiskey and in short in any other way than in religious meditation." Nor did the boatmen respond to efforts in their behalf by those ready to write a more total indictment against them.

The pugilistic propensities of the Irish who so often lived close by the canal they had dug, and the inevitable "scrapes" which occurred as a moving population clashed with one more settled, created co-identification of sin, bully, and canal. A convention of reform met in Syracuse to organize the Boatman's Friend Society. Nathaniel Rochester was among its vice-presidents; Joseph Penny, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, was its clerk. Gambling, drinking, profane swearing and licentiousness, declared the convention, were making the far-famed Erie Canal a "school of corruption," where vice could find asylum and young lads be brought up in degradation. The Convention charged the forwarders and merchants on the Canal, ". . . let these waters be pure."

Rochester boatmen replied (if a communication to the *Daily Advertiser* is representative,) that such charges were "rubbish" heaped upon them, and declared themselves quite competent to regulate their own business. Moreover, they protested, among those of their profession "the march of intellect has thus far been more rapid than in any other class of the community." All protestations to the contrary, and notwithstanding a similar response on the part of the boatmen to an attack upon the integrity of the foremen of the scows in 1831, the charges stuck. The *Rochester Observer*, strongly moralistic in tone, suggested that for the "prostitution, gambling, and all species of vice practiced on our canals," the "Big

Ditch," should be called the "Big Ditch of Iniquity." There is, however, much evidence to reveal the partiality of this judgment. Foreign travellers, making the Erie Canal a major leg of the Grand Tour to Niagara, observed frequent coquettishness and an amazing destruction of social barriers, but seldom recorded anything morally amiss. Besides, reference to specific examples of moral turpitude on the canal in the Rochester press is rare. There is rather the opposite. "Canal drivers are proverbially a hard set, but we think they are not guilty of half the iniquity they are charged with," judged the editor of the *Daily Democrat* in 1845.

#### PRIDE OF A GENERATION

Whatever the finger of censure may have found amiss, a solid sense of accomplishment far outweighed fear, apology or shame. Such pride seems most vocal when the future of the Grand Canal appeared in danger through the turn of the political wheel.

Perhaps Samuel B. Ruggles exaggerated when he wrote in a letter to the citizens of Rochester in 1849, "The history of the canals for the last thirty years would constitute in a good degree, the political history of the State." But Clintonian and Bucktail, Anti-Mason, Whig, and Democrat alike, recognized the closeness of the New York canal system to the heart of the electorate, and the history of the Erie Canal must be read in a welter of partisan conflict. Political opportunism tied the Canal to the fortunes of men on the make. Differing conceptions of the proper extension of state credit resulted in reluctance to trade future debt for present gain. In addition, there were men without vision. "Clinton's Ditch" became so important a political football that a mis-

guided effort to end Clinton's career in 1824 led a partisan assembly to drop him from his post as President of the Canal Board. When it became necessary for the State to incur considerable indebtedness if the Erie, the Genesee Valley, and other canals were to keep pace with the phenomenal increase in traffic, the "stop and tax" law of 1842 temporarily halted the enlargement. As a result, it did not reach its new dimensions of 70 by 7 feet throughout until 1862. Every obstruction, however, was a tocsin call which prompted a continual re-evaluation of the role of the canal and, besides, was a ready-made drum with which to "turn the rascals out."

Once in power, the victorious party fattened on the canal offices, while the "outs" kept a steady stream of criticism directed against their management. "ERIE CANAL NAVIGATION SUSPENDED!!" screamed the Whig *Daily Democrat*; "How come all this!—Why, those whose business it is to attend to it are off on electioneering business." Again, "How horribly navigation progresses now that *the Canals are under Locofoco Management!*"

Even when the railroad began its more rapid annihilation of distance, Rochesterians remained loyal. The first roads in Western New York were in fact built as feeders to the canal, but the junction of the Tonawanda Railroad with the Attica and Buffalo line completed the process of linking Albany and Lake Erie by rail. Rochester papers, with the rest of the nation, of course, took a lively interest, welcoming the locomotive as they had the canal. "The strong desire of the travelling public to be whisked through the country at the quickest possible rate," as the *Daily Democrat* put it in 1842, insured the ultimate transfer of the mantle from

the packet to its more speedy rival; but Cock Robin was by no means dead. The spirited advocacy of the enlargement during the 1840's, the defense of canal interests by Henry O'Reilly and the Clinton League, and the steady increase in freight traffic from the West kept the Erie Canal a flourishing artery long past the mid-century mark even though its pre-eminence was seriously challenged. Captain Dan Bromley's new packet, *Orleans*, reduced its fare to one dollar to Syracuse or three to Utica, and boasted full passenger lists up canal and down. The peak years for freight were to come in 1854 and 1855. Moreover, there was the support of those that can never welcome change. "Upon the whole, sir," wrote one canal stockholder to his editor in 1831 on the subject of the new-fangled railroad, "it is a pestilential, topsy-turvy, harum-scarum whirligig. I go for beasts of burden; it is more primitive and scriptural, and suits a moral and religious people better." Proposals to sell the Erie Canal to private operators to abolish "legislative log-rolling" heard as early as 1832, had little chance. While the canals of New York evidenced so much health and prosperity, said the *Daily Democrat*, "The remedy would be far worse than the disease."

The pride of the generation that built the Erie Canal was that of the attainment of a vision. Once realized and now challenged with a new influence which travelled on bands of steel, where may we find the reason for this deep-felt pride of Rochesterians? It has been suggested by Lewis Mumford that here was the building of a society similar to that achieved by the Dutch two centuries earlier. Water and wood, horse and harness, boat and canal combined to render the pleasing picture of



the Dutch garden spread over a state. The first canal generation in New York saw the wooded wilderness of the Genesee Country transformed before their eyes into the clean spires of Rochester and the garden land of Geneseo and Mt. Morris. The canal carried wheat to market and brought population and goods in return as it identified Rochester with a region. Visitors took note of neatly fenced banks, cleanly painted bridges, brightly decorated boats; the smoothly gliding vessels suggested the quietness of a small society. Perhaps this is why there was such affection for Dan Bromley's tidy craft, why our

Geneseean wanted none of the whirligig railroad, and why the canal was conceived as a monument to a free and sturdy life.

Whatever the meaning, we have been concerned with the pride of accomplishment and with the creation of a society. Jenny Marsh Parker suggests the courage and ingenuity with which this vision was met. She records an item in the journal of one of Rochester's pioneers relating to his first journey by canal: "Commending my soul to God, and asking his defense from danger, I stepped on board the canalboat, and was soon flying towards Utica."

## Winston Churchill's Grandparents in Rochester

By BLAKE MCKELVEY

ALTHOUGH George Washington never slept in Rochester the grandparents of Winston Churchill did live here, a circumstance which has given rise to a long historical controversy that still reverberates in our midst. Unfortunately the exact time and place of Jennie Jerome's birth seemed only a private concern at the time, and no contemporary record of it was made — at least none has been discovered. Yet, after Jennie had grown into a charming young lady and become the bride of Lord Randolph Churchill, interest was aroused in her antecedents and many faint recollections of the family began to grow and to win acceptance as reliable details of local history. Thus a series of inconsistent traditions gained credence in both Rochester and Brooklyn. It was not, however, until Lord and Lady Churchill's son Winston rose

to national prominence and finally to international fame that the rival traditions came into open conflict. No doubt the great British statesman has enjoyed many a hearty chuckle as Brooklyn and Rochester have contended for the honor of supplying his long-deceased mother with a fitting birthplace, but it is time to bring this old controversy to an end by a careful review of the evidence which now seems sufficient to persuade Rochester to relinquish its claim to that distinction.

Even a brief summary of the relevant facts must start with the birth late in 1817 of Churchill's maternal grandfather, Leonard Jerome, fifth of the eleven children of Isaac and Aurora Jerome who then lived on a farm on Pompey Hill south of Syracuse. Young Leonard was sent as a lad in his teens to live with his uncle, Hiram K. Jerome,

a lawyer in Palmyra. There he prepared for college, leaving for Princeton in 1836, but a desire to economize prompted him to transfer two years later to Union College where he graduated in 1839. Returning to Palmyra, he studied law in the office of his uncle, recently named Judge of Wayne County. And when Judge Jerome decided in 1842 to remove to Rochester, Leonard and his younger brother Lawrence likewise moved to the Flour City.

The Jeromes located in the fashionable Third Ward where the Judge rented a house at No. 72 (later renumbered 83) South Fitzhugh Street while his two nephews boarded across the street at No. 63 (now 74). Neither Leonard nor his brother developed a strong attachment to law, and in 1845, after Lawrence married Catherine Hall, a wealthy heiress of Palmyra, the two brothers bought an interest in the Rochester *Daily American*. Their parents joined them at this time, and a younger brother lived in Rochester for a time too, making with the Judge's family quite a Jerome contingent on Fitzhugh Street. Leonard and Lawrence took an active part in the community's social life, and in January 1847 they were among the guests at an elaborate costume party at the home of Mrs. William H. Greenough, an affair which they commemorated by publishing a sprightly leaflet, *The Fancy Party*, in which the participants and their costumes were given generous puffs in prose and verse.

Shortly after their marriage, in August, 1844, Lawrence and his wife rented the Pond house at No. 65 South Sophia (No. 219 Plymouth) Street, taking Leonard in as a boarder, but they moved back to 63 South Fitzhugh the next year, renting the entire house. Leonard settled there with his wife, too, when in

April 1849 he married Clarissa Hall, younger sister of Lawrence's Catherine. It must have been a lively household, but the spacious house which later served the equally vivacious family of Dr. Edward Mott Moore, Sr., afforded ample room for the two Jerome-Hall couples and for Isaac Jerome, Jr., as well. The first two sons of Lawrence and Catherine Jerome, Roswell W. and Lovell Hall, were born in this house, but the possibility that any of the daughters of Leonard and Clarissa were born here is extremely slight, as we shall see.

Both Leonard and Lawrence were already dreaming of larger fields. The struggling *American* with its nativistic tinge did not prove popular in a city which had attracted nearly half its residents from foreign lands and which was already served by two vigorous dailies, the *Whig Democrat* and the *Democratic Advertiser*. The Jerome brothers participated in Silver Gray rallies of the Whig party in 1849, but when the two wings of the party agreed to submerge their differences the Jeromes gladly sold their interests in the *American* to its editor, Alexander Mann, and made their availability for political appointments known to the administration in Washington.

Leonard was the first to receive political favor, as the *American* noted on March 25, 1850, when it announced his appointment as consul to Ravenna, Italy. The opportunity must have been tempting, but Leonard had other irons on the fire, for on May 18 a second notice appeared announcing his election as secretary-treasurer of the Merchants State Telegraphic Co., a Bain line. This development no doubt aroused mixed feelings in Rochester, already the center of numerous telegraphic ventures. Some of the city's most substantial men had

early invested in the Morse line in New York state, and when local control of that enterprise had been lost, several of them, headed by Judge Samuel L. Selden, had undertaken the construction of a House line across the state. Now the impulsive Henry O'Reilly, formerly of Rochester, who had been frozen out of both groups, was launching a third competing line, and it must have surprised many to see the recent publisher of a nativist newspaper joining forces with that indomitable Irishman and Democrat to boot.

Leonard Jerome's services to the Bain line are obscure, and indeed it has long been supposed that he left to take over his consulate at this time. It is now established, however, that he never went to Ravenna, but moved to Brooklyn in the late spring or summer of 1850 where he was conveniently at hand to help O'Reilly press the construction of the Merchants State Telegraph with such vigor that the Morse faction was persuaded to buy it up on June 7, 1852, for \$65,379. Leonard did not await the final settlement of this business, however, for his second consular appointment arrived in February, 1852, and State Department archives reveal that he accepted gladly this time. He reached Trieste ready to assume charge of his consulate there on May 1, 1852. Official records disclose that he remained at Trieste only sixteen months when a shift in politics at home brought news of his replacement shortly after Fillmore vacated the White House.

Rochester papers of November 17 and 18, 1853, noted the safe return of Leonard Jerome on the "Baltic" which docked in New York, "where he is at present with his family," as the *American* put it. An interesting bit of information was added by the Rochester

*Union* on the family, "all of whom we are happy to hear are in excellent health," and brings us back to the birth dates of the Jerome girls, particularly that of Jennie, the second daughter.

The only detailed record that has come to light is the entry in the family bible of Isaac and Aurora Jerome, Jennie's grandparents. According to this record, Clara Hall, the first daughter, was born in Brooklyn on April 15, 1851. This date was long discredited because of the belief that the Jeromes were then in Ravenna, but its accuracy is now strengthened by our knowledge of Leonard's residence in Brooklyn at the time. The bible record places Jennie's birth likewise in Brooklyn, on January 9, 1854, which was nearly two months after the return from Trieste and might account for the *Union's* delicate allusion to the family's health. The birth of the third child, who died in infancy, is given as November 30, 1855, and the fourth, Louise, as at Paris on August 15, 1859.

Unfortunately this bible record was not made at the time, but years later when another granddaughter of Isaac and Aurora Jerome, Miss Margaret Middleton, determined to fill in all the unrecorded births of Isaac's descendents. She was, however, an accomplished genealogist and a D.A.R. historian, and it is altogether probable that she consulted several of her aunts and cousins, including possibly the Leonard Jeromes, before completing her entries. Her information is quite accurate for the Lawrence Jeromes, though this may prove little since the bible has been preserved in that line and belongs today to Mrs. William Travers Jerome, Jr., whose late husband was a grandson of Lawrence and, like Winston Churchill, a great-grandson of Isaac and Aurora Jerome.

The bible record would probably have prevailed without question had it not been for the meteoric rise of Winston Churchill. Thus the first published account of Jennie Jerome, which appeared in Virginia T. Peacock's *Famous American Belles of the 19th Century* (1900), states that Jennie was born in Brooklyn, January 9, 1854, in accord with, if not based on, the bible record. Jennie's own account, in *Reminiscences of Lady Randolph Churchill* (1908), gives Brooklyn the credit, but states that her birth antedated the Trieste consulate. However, as Jennie's memory is hardly to be relied on for such details and as her reconstruction of events is actually in error concerning the length of the Trieste appointment and other early details, the book would seem to be shaky evidence at best. A *New York Times* obituary of Lady Randolph Churchill, June 20, 1921, named Brooklyn as the birthplace, but gave no date.

Dispute over the place as well as the date of Lady Churchill's birth had begun to arise long before her death. Rochester's first published claim to the honor appeared in 1891, when the death of Leonard Jerome prompted a number of reminiscent tributes from his former Rochester friends. Reuben D. Jones, who had served for two years on the staff of Jerome's paper, recalled several details of that contact of some forty years before and asserted that all three of Leonard's daughters were born in Rochester. None of the others who reminisced at this time mentioned the daughters, and the claim for three births is obviously impossible. Yet the statement apparently formed the basis for a tradition which gradually gained strength as elderly ladies began to tell each other and their daughters of their associations with the Jerome girls at

school in Rochester! The tradition had not quite gained assurance by the time Winston Churchill first came to Rochester as a Boer War correspondent in 1900, however, for he was welcomed simply as a Rochester grandson. But, as his fame continued to mount, local recollections grew until they gained sufficient currency to win the credence of a recent biographer of Winston Churchill, Rene Kraus. Even the University of Rochester, spurred by the appearance of the Kraus book in 1940, and desiring to pay its respects to the great leader of embattled Britain, awarded Mr. Churchill an honorary degree in 1941, declaring that a noteworthy consideration was the fact that his mother had been born in Rochester. The Prime Minister, eager to encourage friendly gestures in his country's hour of need, responded with the rather non-committal remark, "as you tell me, my mother was born in Rochester." He was of course much too busy to check such details at the time—he even got the name of his grandfather's paper wrong, calling it the "Rochester Plain Dealer" rather than the *American*. He has more recently sent a message of congratulation to Brooklyn confirming its claim to his mother's birthplace, but failing again to check the details, for the date now claimed in Brooklyn is January, 1850, a completely impossible date. We can't hold the Prime Minister responsible for these slips, but we should save him embarrassment by getting our facts right ourselves.

Leonard and Clarissa were married at Palmyra on April 5, 1849, and lived in Rochester at least until May 18, 1850, when "our fellow citizen's" election as secretary-treasurer of the Bain telegraph was announced by the *Rochester American*. The family definitely left the city

before the census enumerators made their rounds that summer, for while Lawrence and six other of his Jerome relatives were listed in the records, none of Leonard's family was included. The names of Leonard and Clarissa Jerome should appear in the Brooklyn or New York census lists compiled in August, 1850, for his business address is recorded in a New York *Directory* that year. His first home address to appear in these books was 292 Henry Street, Brooklyn, in 1851. His brother Addison, who had preceded him to New York in 1848, moved into that house too, perhaps at the same time, and continued to reside there until 1854. Thus Leonard and his family could have joined them again there briefly on their return from Trieste in November 1853, and Jennie may have been born in that house in January before her parents moved to No. 8 Amity Street, Brooklyn. It seems more likely, however, that she was born on Amity Street where the family lived for a year or more before moving over to West 19th Street in New York. There the Lawrence Jeromes again joined them in 1855.

It is interesting to note that after the Leonard Jeromes left Rochester in 1850, the Lawrence Jeromes gave up the big house at No. 63 (later 74) South Fitzhugh and moved a few houses further south to No. 77 (later 88) on the same street. Lawrence purchased this house in 1851 and resided there until his departure for New York four years later. He played an active role in local affairs during the early fifties, serving as alderman from the Third Ward in 1850/51, and as deputy collector at the Rochester port in 1851/53. The national triumph of the Democrats in the latter year deprived him of his collectorship, and he did not stand again for the City Coun-

cil. Instead he accepted an appointment as traveling agent for the Michigan Southern Railroad, which drew him increasingly out of the city even before his final departure. Yet his blithe spirits and love of practical jokes had endeared him to many Rochesterians who continued to follow his affairs as assiduously as those of his more illustrious niece.

Uncle Hiram Jerome, the ex-judge, stayed on in Rochester another two years before he likewise dropped out of the city directories. He had lived at times on South Fitzhugh, South Sophia (now Plymouth Ave. S.), South Washington, and Spring Streets, and Livingston Park, generally selecting one of the choice Greek revival houses which graced this district. It is quite possible that it was one of his daughters, Eliza or Mary, who, despite the discrepancy in age, later became confused with Jennie and thus contributed to the growth of the local Jennie Jerome tradition.

That tradition is a persistent one. It persists in spite of the fact that the Rochester Historical Society published an excellent if short article on Leonard W. Jerome by Miss Dorothy S. Truesdale in 1941. That account, which appeared a full decade ago, clearly indicated the insubstantial character of Rochester's claim to Jennie's birthplace. Copies of the article have been in such demand in England as well as America that the edition is almost out of print. This article probably changed the opinion of Rene Kraus, whose more recent biography of *Young Lady Randolph* gives her birthplace as Brooklyn, in contrast to his earlier book on Churchill, which placed it in Rochester. (He still has the wrong date.) Yet the tradition persists, and another inquiry has arrived, just as I am writing the second

draft of this paper, asking the location of the Rochester birthplace of Churchill's mother! Perhaps old fables never die. (A good example is Brooklyn's recent action in placing its memorial to Jennie's birthplace on the less likely house and inscribing on it the date January, 1850, when the parents were most certainly still residing in Rochester!) But let us do our best to bury this fable by examining the last shred of evidence.

We have discounted Lady Randolph Churchill's account of her birth date, partly because of the bible record, but chiefly because her own more reliable recollections of her youthful years seem credible only if we assume her to have been fifteen rather than nineteen when residing in Paris in 1869. Moreover Lord Randolph Churchill's biography, based on contemporary letters, gives her age as nineteen in 1873 when he first met and wooed her. The impulsive engagement which followed could hardly have occurred exactly as it did had she been a young lady of twenty-three at the time. Every shred of evidence (except page one of her reminiscences) supports the 1854 birthdate, and although it is regrettable to us in Rochester that she did not recall school days in our fair town, that fact too must be set against the local tradition.

And so, finally, although her illustrious son has recently smiled benignly at more than one plan to commemorate her birthplace, we have wisely decided in Rochester to honor the site on which his grandfather lived for a time in the 1840's. It was with these considerations in mind that Mr. Frank E. Gannett supplied the initiative and the backing to enable the Rochester Historical Society and the Rochester Museum Association to cooperate in placing the following inscription on a bronze tablet which

was then mounted on the partially-remodelled house at No. 74 (formerly 63) South Fitzhugh Street:

LEONARD JEROME  
Publisher, & Grandfather of  
Britain's Winston Churchill  
Resided Here 1844-1850  
He married Clarissa Hall  
of Palmyra, April 5, 1849

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*Reminiscences of the  
Ruffled-Shirt Ward*

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14)

charges; there was Ann Robinson and Mary Hoyt and Nellie Warner. Nellie, who was a superlative cook, entered a contest for producing new ways of using grape nuts and the family had to eat them from soup to nuts so to speak. But she won the prize. There was funny little Tommy Dayfoot, and John Brown, the whitewasher, and a host of others.

And the dogs of the neighborhood! Sugar Robinson, Rogo Rogers, Jackie Smith, Benny Ford (who wore a black ribbon when his vet died) and Sampson Converse, who was so loathe to leave the Ward that he jumped from a train on entering the Adirondacks and walked all the way to Fitzhugh Street. It was Sampson's youthful master who called on Mrs. Folsom and presented her with a chocolate drop which he extracted from his pocket much the worse for wear. Thanking him, she said she would eat it later but he insisted that he wanted to see her enjoy it. Summoning all her will power, not wanting to hurt the little boy's feelings, she put it in her mouth saying it was delicious. "I'm glad of that," he said, "Sampson didn't seem to like it."

Certain pictures linger in the memory. Mrs. John Rochester, sweeping down the street in a long skirt with flounces,

held, by a dextrous turn of the wrist just high enough to escape the pavement without showing an ankle, her other hand holding, at a jaunty angle, a parasol also covered with flounces. Or Mrs. Alfred Ely, also in a sweeping skirt but of the kind that can stand alone, with nary a ruffle, grabbing the front of her dress with both hands and bobbing a little curtsey when she met you.

Or, a much later picture, Mr. Pond knocked down by an automobile driven by a woman, picking herself up, flicking the dust from his coat and apologizing to her for having been in her way. You remember the somnolent Sunday afternoons in summer when, having been to Church and to the Post Office in the Reynolds Arcade, and having eaten heavily of soup, chicken and the trimmings and wine jelly with whipped cream, and having dispatched titbits to the neighbors, the elders had a siesta and then every one sat on their front steps exchanging cheery repartee with passing Warders. Those were the days when stoops had recently become piazzas, though no one called them porches yet and terraces were unknown. Summer evenings these porches certainly came into their own for every one called on every one else and every piazza kept open house.

One queries "What makes a Third Warder?" The English have a saying that the best way to become a noble is to sit on one piece of land for 300 years. Perhaps something of the nature applies to the Ward. We were not homogeneous in any sense except in our feelings that the Ward was the best place to live this side of Eden. We were certainly not rich, although some of us

were, and we all took a sort of proprietary pride in the house on the hill (the Kimballs') with its private art gallery with walls covered with taupe silk velvet, fitting background for its masterpieces and its vitrines of pepper boxes; its orchid house which vied with the Burrages' in Manchester, the spanking horses, the drags and the Japanese butlers.

We were not all well educated, although there were the learned in our midst. (One of our neighbors once told my Mother that she was having her parlor done over in Louis Quince with a tete a tete in the middle). We were not all society people, though the leaders were among us. We were probably just a cross section of the America of the period — no better (though we thought we were), no worse (though others may have been of that opinion). Yet no where in Rochester did the best of the past linger so long as in this neighborhood. The grande dame is not extinct among us. The neighborly spirit is still alive. One feels it among the new comers to the Ward — the young professional people who live in small apartments in the big houses.

Perhaps they hear the old walls gossiping of the good old days in the Ruffled Shirt Ward; perhaps they are aware of the swish of satin and taffeta as they pass through the halls or the culinary aromas which the old kitchens used to possess. Perhaps the great trees whisper to them something of what THEY have witnessed. In spite of its fall from greatness, the old Ward treasures some intangibility (perhaps a special spirit of neighborliness) which makes it what it was — and is.



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## Plans for Future SCRAPBOOKS

The editorial board of the SCRAPBOOK expresses its gratitude to individuals who have made contributions to this issue. The board is particularly anxious to have contributions from others who may have interesting stories to tell of the past of Rochester and area. They are asked to contact Dr. Blake McKelvey at the Rochester Public Library. In keeping with the objectives of the Historical Society in starting the SCRAPBOOK, it is emphasized that the editors seek human history and the folklore of the city and surrounding communities.

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

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