

ROCHESTER HISTORY

Edited by Ruth Rosenberg-Naparsteck
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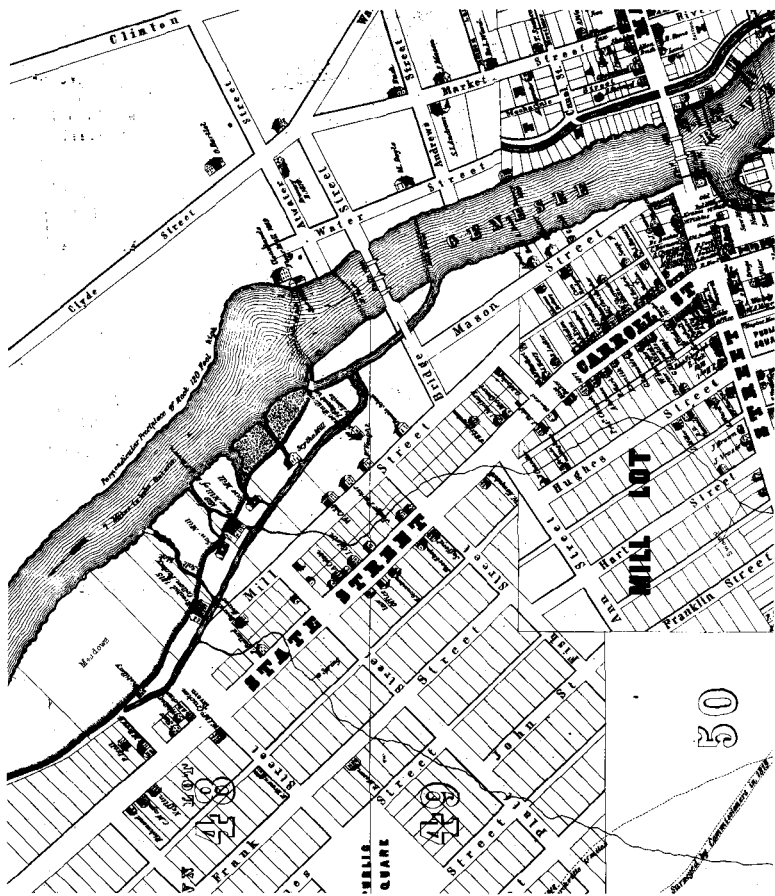
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No. 3

Frankfort: Birthplace of Rochester's Industry

by Ruth Rosenberg-Naparsteck



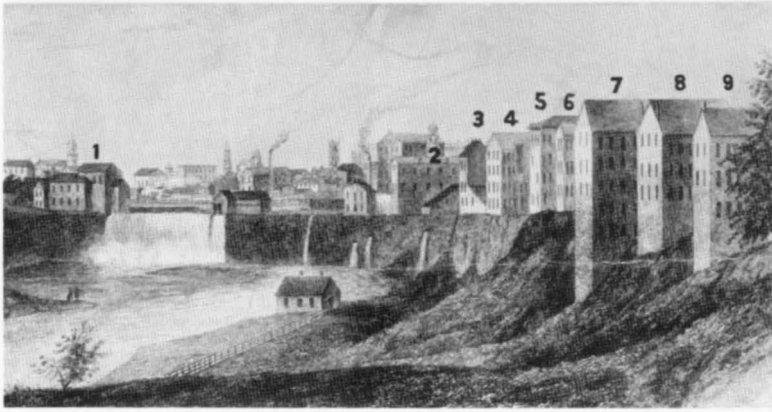


Above: Map of Frankfort in 1820, three years after it became a part of the village of Rochesterville. Drawn by Horatio Fenn in 1856. Detail from Map of the Village of Rochester in 1820.

Cover: View of the Upper Falls about 1870 from Falls Field on the east side of the Genesee River looking west toward Frankfort. The mill on the far right is Parsons Saw Mill which sets on Brown's island where Sam Patch jumped from a platform in 1829.

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*Mills at the Upper Falls from left to right are: 1. Genesee Falls Mills on the east side of the falls; on the west side, 2. Cotton Factory; 3. Achille's Custom Mills; 4. Revere Mills; 5. Granite Mills; 6. Phoenix Mills; 7. New York Mills; 8. Richardson's Mills; 9. Silas O. Smith's Mills. Eight of the nine mills were grist mills, seven of which faced Brown's Race. Eight more mills faced Mill Street: Clinton Mills, Washington Mills, People's Mills, Boston Mills, Irving Mills, Frankfort Mills and Whitney Mills. Engraving from J. H. French's 1860 **Gazeteer of the State of New York**.*

A Settlement At The Falls

In the summer of 1825, Jesse Hatch went to Brown's Custom Mill at the foot of Platt Street in the old village of Frankfort. While waiting for his grist to be ground, he took a walk to view the river and the falls. He recalled:

The island at the brink of the falls was covered with a stunted growth of trees, the branches mostly denuded by a freezing spray in winter. The western or smaller branch of the river, some forty or fifty feet wide, a crescent shape, was a beautiful sheet of water. The construction of Brown's Race, extending along the bank of the river nearly to Brown's Mill, had made a second island which was studded with a growth



Matthew Brown, Jr. From the Collection of the Rome Historical Society, Rome, N.Y.



Once identified as Frankfort developer Francis Brown, this painting is now thought to be his son, Francis, who assumed a major role in the development of Frankfort. From the collection of the Rochester Historical Society.

of maples of medium size; the ground covered with a grassy lawn made it a desirable spot from which to view the scenery. The river bank above the falls from the race to the hay-market spread out to near Mill Street.¹

To Hatch, who was one of the earliest shoemakers to arrive in neighboring Rochester, it must have seemed a short time ago that Frankfort was a village on paper only. The land on which Frankfort was laid out was partly owned by Charles Harford who built a grist mill in 1807 near the Upper Falls. There were few settlers in the area, but they traveled a great distance to have their flour ground. Still, Harford was frustrated by the difficult portage above and below the falls. He was willing to sell out to Matthew and Francis Brown in 1810 when Francis Brown found the site quite by accident.

Francis was only twenty-one years old when he was traveling alone to Rome, New York from Detroit where he lived with his uncle, an Indian trader. Enroute, Francis was shipwrecked on Lake Ontario near Niagara. He nearly lost his life before collapsing on the lake shore. When he recovered, he bought a canoe and continued his journey to Rome. At the mouth of the Genesee River, a bitter storm drove him into the shelter of the natural harbor there. He dragged the canoe ashore and walked up river to wait out the storm. He was impressed with the power of the Upper Falls and set out to convince his brother, Matthew, that they should purchase Harford's mill site.

Matthew Brown was a physician in Rome who also operated a general store and apothecary. Francis convinced him, Thomas Mumford and John McKay to join him in purchasing Harford's mill and 200 acres on the northern border of the 100-acre-tract purchased by Nathaniel Rochester, Charles Carroll and William Fitzhugh.

In 1812, Benjamin Wright was hired to survey the 200-acre-tract and to divide the land into lots. A public square, bisected by Court Street, was set aside as the future site of a court house. Though a few sales were made before the outbreak of war that year, the fear of British invasion frightened prospective buyers and some in the area even sold out.

But Francis and Matthew Brown were not deterred. That spring, Francis Brown and others traveled from Rome with mill irons obtained from Albany. The mud was so deep near the present Power's block at the corner of Main and State Streets that the mill irons rusted on the floor of the wet, muddy wagons.

In the winter of 1812, Matthew Brown had sent his clerk, Gaius B. Rich, from Rome to the falls with two sleighs loaded with goods. Though travel was difficult, the snow and ice of winter conveyed the heavy sleighs more easily than the deeply rutted, muddy roads of spring. Rich stopped at Stone's Tavern in Brighton, then traveled to the mouth of the river on the east side, crossed on the ice and drove south past Harford's Landing to the Upper Falls on the west side. Rich recalled forty years later, "It was all new then. There was a framed barn and a small log house. These were all the buildings then there." Much of the land was uncleared forest, but Rich and others built a store and in the spring Matthew Brown sent additional goods, millwrights and mill irons. Two houses were then built, one on the top of the hill on the northeast corner of Brown and Plymouth Streets. From there he could overlook the public square.

Harford's mill was repaired and three run of stones were added. Harford's old mill was described by Edwin Scrantom as much cruder than the celebrated mills of later decades. The main wheel was a tub wheel. Once the water gate on the race was opened, the machinery could not be thrown out of gear. It remained in operation all day. Scrantom recalled, ". . . if it became necessary to stop the mill before night, it was done by letting the stones together, which produced a great roar, and made a sulphurous smell in the mill almost stifling to one's breath."²

Working under the same frustrating portage conditions that drove Harford from the milling business, Francis Brown thought it



The Granite Mills, Leary's Dyeing Factory are visible in this photograph of the Brown's Race area.

best to have a road up the river. He asked Col. Rochester's permission, but even before approval came through, the road work was begun from the Eagle Corners along the state road to the mouth of the river. The bridge at Main Street was completed in 1812.

The Beginning of Rochesterville

Col. Nathaniel Rochester traveled in 1800 with Charles Carroll and William Fitzhugh from Hagerstown, Maryland to Dansville where he bought 120 acres of land with mill sites on both sides of the Canaseraga Creek. Three years later when the three men left their homes to visit their land and to make payments at Geneva, they learned from the land agent about a series of falls on the Genesee River. The three set out through the forest over the rough road from Canandaigua to the falls. They crossed at the fording place near the present Court Street bridge and a short distance away, viewed the ruins of Indian Allen's mill. The men decided to buy the 100-acre-tract because the fourteen foot falls could provide enough power for mills built along the river and the two falls down river assured neighboring development.

In 1811, the land was surveyed and laid out in lots. Rochester required that a building be constructed within a year of purchase. At first, because of the War of 1812, lot sales were slow, but like Frankfort, when the war ended in 1814, hundreds of settlers arrived seeking homes and job opportunities. Many moved on west but many stayed and Rochester's population boomed. Craftsmen, storekeepers, blacksmiths, leather workers, teamsters and laborers poured into the settlement. Homes were needed faster than the sawyers could cut boards. The roads, some cut and some only marked with ties, were littered with boards and stone and other building material. Col. Rochester worked with the Browns to coordinate the lay-out of their streets. By 1818, Rochesterville's population had grown to a thousand after it annexed Frankfort to become a village.

Matthew and Francis Brown did not think much of the water power on the 100-acre-tract according to Brown's clerk, Gaiu Rich, who tried to interest Matthew in buying some of the lots there. Brown's Race was unquestionably the most powerful source of waterpower in the area by 1817, but Rochester's advantage over Frankfort was shipping. Carthage and Hanford's Landing as well as the Port of Rochester at Charlotte were all competing for shipping superiority. But when the Erie Canal was completed through

Rochester in 1825, the shipping supremacy was decidedly in Rochester, the one settlement with the least access to the lake. But the advantage of canal shipping was a longer season, cheaper shipping and freedom from the lake storms and shipwrecks caused by high waves that often rivaled those of the ocean.

The War of 1812

The threats of occupation by the British in the War of 1812 were met personally by the youthful Francis Brown, who not only believed in the potential of the village, but intended to defend his property by joining Isaac Stone's squadron of dragoons as a captain. When the British threatened the Genesee River with invasion at Charlotte in May of 1813, the flour from Brown's Mill was hidden in the forest. The British landed at Charlotte looking for supplies and a few marines took on barrels of flour, pork, salt and whiskey. These added to the supplies and grain on board two captured American schooners. Though the British left a receipt with Bushnell's store from which the supplies came, the British threatened to occupy the mouth of the river as well as Hanford's Landing to gain control of the Genesee region, and this was a serious threat to the developing settlement of Frankfort.

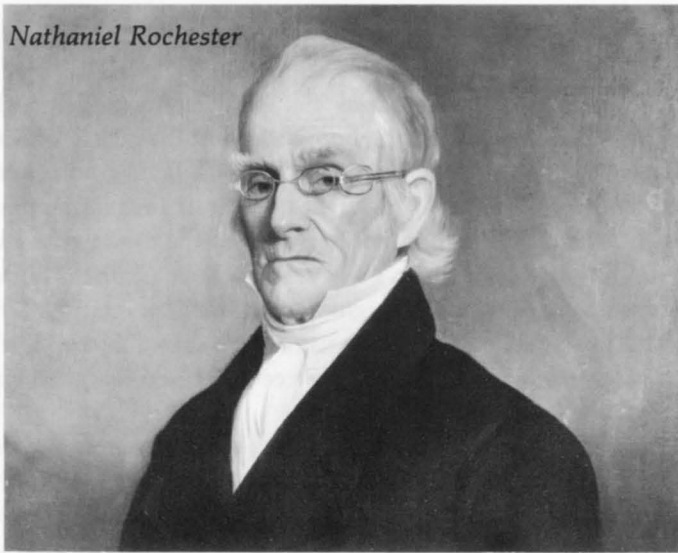
In September the British returned for supplies. The militia gathered on the beach at Charlotte to drive them off, when American ships appeared around Bluff Point. The militia cheered as the American ships fired on the British so heavily that a sheet of flame crossed the fleet. The ships fired into the darkness until the British ships sailed away.

The following year, when British commander, Sir James Yeo threatened the settlements with destruction if Brown and others did not surrender supplies, Brown supposedly replied, "Blood knee deep first!"

The end of the war seemed to open a flood gate of people held back only by the threat of British invasion and hungry for land and opportunities. Edwin Scramton recalled:

These were the years of rapid building. The sawmills ran constantly, getting out lumber, and every night I could hear Ezra Mason, who ran Brown's sawmill, filing his saw, after which he would sleep two hours, leaving the mill in the care of a man named Bill Bloomer, after which, he would resume his labors. Although the contractors worked day and night they could not keep up with the demand for houses, and fre-

Nathaniel Rochester



quently families would bivouac for several weeks in their covered wagons. One family bought a lot on Buffalo Street, cleared away the bush, drove into the clearing and commenced building around their covered wagon! By day the edifice came up as if by magic, and at night they worked by the light of burning pitch-pine knots. When, at the end of a week the roof, floor, and three sides of the house were completed, they disposed their household traps in the house, and ran the wagon out into the woods. The seventh day finished the front part with two square glassless windows and batten door; and then and there, that family became citizens of Rochester.³

Enterprising businessmen from Frankfort, Rochesterville and the Johnson and Seymour Tract met frequently to plan the growing villages. Silas O. Smith, Abelard Reynolds, John Mastick, Hastings R. Bender, Enos Stone, Elisha Johnson, Josiah Bissell, Jr., Elisha Ely, Hervey Ely and Matthew and Francis Brown were among the men who shaped the early development of those settlements and created a setting for strong industrial growth. That relationship led to the annexation of Frankfort and later the Johnson and Seymour Tract to Rochester. The Brown brothers were active in political and civic affairs. Francis was the first president of the Village Board after the annexation of Frankfort to Rochester. Both worked with Nathaniel Rochester to create the new County of Monroe in 1821. Matthew became the first chairman of the Board of Town Supervisors.

Village Life

Brown's Race dominated village life. Residents were primarily workers in the mills. A boarding house stood at the corner of Mill and State Streets and there were many single family homes including the Brown's homes. The larger number of Irish immigrants who lived within the neighborhood prompted the organization of St. Patrick's Church on Brown's Alley. A Catholic Orphans Society was also located across Vought Street from the church. The Cathedral Free School was built nearly across Brown Street. On a lot near the corner of Platt and State Streets, the Red Rover #3 Fire Station was built.

Around Brown Square neighbors struggled to maintain a quiet park. Vandals defaced some of the original trees and around the Civil War, young men began to play ball there, bringing complaints that the grass was wearing and the ground was as hard as rock.

Not only were ball players a problem, soldiers drilled in the square, prompting the planting of trees to prevent the practice. But in 1856, the militia was granted permission by Common Council to cut the trees on the western end. Aldermen and private citizens protested and the cutting was stopped pending a meeting of the Council. But the military gathered a crew of men and around midnight began cutting the trees. Word reached the civil authorities who called police, and the mayor was routed from his bed, but he refused to become involved. The special meeting of the Common Council was canceled because the trees were already cut, but the *Rochester Daily Union* wrote, "The elements seemed to wax wrath over the work; for the lightning flashed, the thunder roared and rain fell in torrents while the workmen were executing their task."⁴

By 1834 Frankfort was a neighborhood, becoming more identified as an industrial section of Rochester, than a village in its own right. Successive groups of immigrants made their homes there, but eventually, the neighborhoods became undesirable as a residential area. The New York Central & Hudson Railroad ran tracks through creating traffic congestion, noise and dirt. The tracks were elevated, relieving much of the traffic congestion. But the canal continued to carry much of the mill freight. A canal boat could carry 80 tons. That same amount of freight would require ten railroad cars. Since NYCRR regulations permitted one engine to pull a maximum of twenty cars, it would require a full train for every two loads of freight that left the mills. It would require seven

trains each day to carry the freight of the 22 flour mills. The canal was more economical and had greater facilities than the railroad.⁵

The Rise of the Flour Milling Industry

The Brown's began work on a race 1,300 feet long, thirty feet wide and three feet deep. It took laborers 1,500 days to blast out the limestone and haul it to the river. The laborers were paid 62c plus subsistence per day. The entire project cost about \$3,872. The Brown's moved their axe and sythe factory from Vernon, Oneida County to the race. A cotton mill began operation even before the race was finished. East side mill sites sold quickly because water-power was generated directly from the race, but west side mill sites sold more slowly because they were dependent on power generated by east side water wheels and transmitted by cable or shaft to the west side. The Triphammer Mill (originally Brown's Sythe and Tool Factory) and Kidd Iron Works both later powered mills across the race.

By 1879, Brown's Race generated three times as much power as the next most powerful race generating 3,670 HP compared to 1,300 at the Johnson and Seymour Race and 1,085 at the Rochester, Fitzhugh and Carroll race.

The sawmills, foundries and gristmills operated continuously to meet the demands of the growing settlement, but it was the flour industry that, measured in capital, was the largest industry in the Genesee country. Farmers, many of whom once grew corn for the small number of distilleries, now grew acres of wheat. There was great money to be made at the mills by farmers and millers alike. Rochester became the center of the wheat market for the Genesee Valley including most of Ontario, Wayne, Orleans and Genesee counties.

Maude Motley wrote:

The crowding in of teamsters for sales of wheat, made store trade, and with newcomers dropping in, and buildings being erected, the young village was a scene of actual enterprise. Hanford's Landing was the principal shipping point. Vessels began to make regular trips to the mouth of the river and to Hanford's Landing from all the lake ports. Flour and wheat, pot and pearl ash, whiskey and stoves (sic, staves) were the principal articles of commerce.⁶

By 1855 the ten grist mills on Brown's Race had a total capacity of fifty run of stones and a capacity to produce 500,000 barrels of flour annually. From north to south along the race, the mills were:

WHITNEY MILLS - built of stone with five run of stones and capable of producing 300 barrels a day.

FRANKFORT MILLS - adjoining the Whitney Mills, turning out 150 barrels a day on three run of stones.

BOSTON MILL - with four run of stones producing 250 barrels a day.

SHAWMUT MILLS - with seven run of stones producing 400 barrels a day.

WASHINGTON MILL - with four run of stones producing 250 barrels a day.

CLINTON MILLS - with four run of stones producing 275 barrels daily.

NEW YORK MILLS - with six run of stones producing 360 barrels a day.

PHOENIX MILLS - four run of stones producing 275 barrels daily.

GRANITE MILLS - ten run of stones producing 600 barrels a day and the CATARACT MILL.⁷

In Rochester in 1851 there were twenty mills with a total of 103 stones that milled 5,885 barrels of flour a day, 561,818 barrels annually. Four and a half to five top grade bushels of wheat were required to produce one barrel of flour. To run a mill like Whitney's that produced 300 barrels a day, it would require 13 to 15,000 bushels of wheat to operate the mill only 24 hours. Multiplied by the number of mills in the city, Rochester was the "Flour City" unequalled in production of flour anywhere in the world.

But it was not to last. The wheat crops produced poorly for several years in the 1850s owing to drought and insects. The Genesee Valley Canal created competition for Rochester mills. The frontier moved farther west and the wheat fields and mills with it. Soon Minneapolis became the new "Flour City." Though at the turn of the century, Rochester was producing more barrels of flour than earlier when there were more mills, Rochester was still losing its position as a leading mill city. In 1901, Rochester shipped about one and a half million barrels compared to 561,818 in 1851.

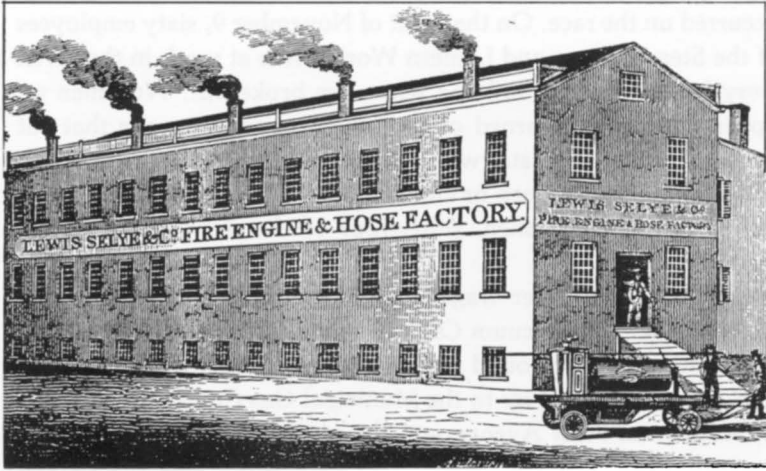
Disasters in Frankfort

Floods and fires were disasters that often struck the mills in a time when firefighting methods could little more than stall the spread of fire, but in 1888, two particularly devastating disasters occurred on the race. On the night of November 9, sixty employees of the Steam Gauge and Lantern Works were at work in the seven story brick Gorsline Building when fire broke out. Workmen on upper floors were warned of the fire by choking smoke that cut them off from the stairwell. Some workers jumped into life blankets held by firemen or climbed down their ladders. When the flames were extinguished, thirty-four of the sixty workers were dead.

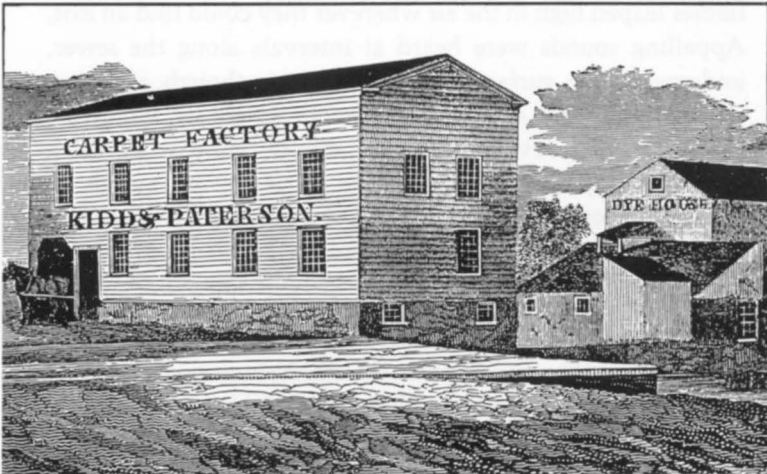
Only a month later tragedy again struck Brown's Race. On December 21, the Vacuum Oil Works was sending 15,000 gallons of naphtha by underground pipe from their refinery between Mansion Street and the river to the Municipal Gas Company on Canal Street between West Avenue and the canal. The pipe was broken during sewer construction at Atkinson Street and the naphtha escaped undetected into the sewer running along the WNY & PRR and through Platt and Mill Streets. The naphtha ignited at a Platt Street factory between State and Mill Streets and exploded all along the sewer line for two miles from the foot of Factory Street. Historian John DeVoy wrote:

Man hole covers were blown off at various points and flames leaped high in the air wherever they could find an exit. Appalling sounds were heard at intervals along the sewer, underneath the surface of the streets, as though a subterranean discharge of artillery was in progress. Following quickly on each reverberation volumes of flame would belch from the adjacent openings, like as from the mouth of monster canon or from the fissures of a volcano. These horrid sights and sounds continued for two hours.⁸

Men in the area reported to newspaper reporters that they ran into the streets when they heard the explosions and at every intersection along the way they saw the manhole covers blown with a terrific force. Five men were killed and several, including women were seriously injured. The Jefferson Flour Mill exploded and the Washington and Clinton Mills burned down.⁹



The Lewis Seyle Fire Engine Company. From Henry O'Reilly's Sketches of Rochester.



Kidd Carpet Company. From Henry O'Reilly's Sketches of Rochester.

A Visit to Brown's Race

Once the site of Brown's Saw mill built in 1820 and the Red Bird Saw Mill in 1851, the Rochester Water Works (1) (see map) now stands empty, waiting to be converted into an interpretive center as part of the Urban Cultural Park. Above the door is the date 1873. This building was designed by architect J. Foster Warner to provide the high pressure Holly water system for the downtown. Downtown Rochester was plagued by fires that destroyed several buildings before being extinguished by firemen arriving in horse-drawn vehicles. The increasing height of downtown buildings concerned firefighters whose ladders could not reach the upper stories.

Daniel Powers, owner of the cast iron, fireproof Power's Building that stands today at the Four Corners, opposed the Holly system to avoid a tax increase, but when he heard the cast iron buildings were destroyed in the great Chicago fire he quickly threw his support behind the system. A demonstration of the pressure of the Holly system drew a large crowd in front of the Power's Building in 1874. The stream of water shot 460 feet into the air easily reaching the tallest buildings. The Holly system not only provided pressure for the fire hydrants, it also provided hydraulic power for many downtown elevators, including the Power's Building.

To the south of the Rochester Water Works is the RG&E General Maintenance Division (2). A number of mills including the Eagle Foundry and Machine Shop once made custom gear castings and other machine parts. The Robinson Chair Factory and the R.T. French Spice Mills were located there as well as the D.R. Barton Edge Tool Company.

Barton and Kidd's Iron Works were among the earliest manufacturers to install the "atmospheric triphammer" invented by Rochester resident Bernard Hughes and manufactured by the Rochester Iron Works Company. In 1856, the invention received a gold medal at the Fair of the American Institute at New York. The atmospheric triphammer was invented to replace the "lumbering, awkward beam hammer" used in foundries.¹⁰ It was manufactured in several sizes to occupy the least space possible and was placed upright rather than sprawling. A newspaper reported in 1856, "the power (of the atmospheric triphammer) is joined by atmospheric pressure—the piston being the hammer, the cylinder containing the air. A child five years old can so vary the weight of the blow of this hammer that it will give its full power and weight of an ounce upon the anvil at alternate strokes."¹¹



The Triphammer Mill where once Seyle's Fire Engines were manufactured. From the Landmark Society of Western New York.

The Triphammer Mill, built sometime between 1818 and 1826, was first occupied by William Cobb's Sythe and Tool Factory. Its hydraulic triphammer was powered by an overshot wheel large enough to generate power transmitted by cable or shaft across the race to several mills with "associated" water rights.¹²

In 1832 Louis Seyle began to manufacture fire engines on both sides of the race (3 and 8), powering the west side factory by a series of gears and an iron shaft, part of which is visible today. The buildings burned in 1837 and again in 1849. Seyle stopped manufacturing there in 1848 and Junius Judson took over the buildings in 1868 to manufacture steam governors that controlled the speed of steam engines and turbines. The building was destroyed by fire in 1977, but the thirty foot water wheel remained in the wheel pit, sheltered from the elements for over a century by the floor above.

In 1892, the Edison Electric Illuminating Company, the first of its kind in the city, established a steam and hydroelectric plant near the Triphammer Mill and electricity soon replaced hydropower in this and other factories. Industries were enabled to move away from the river. Judson's son, James, formed the Judson Power Company to power the Triphammer Mill. This power company was the beginning of RG&E Beebee Station.¹³

A short distance to the south at the intersection of Brown's Race and Commercial Street, the race (4) is visible beneath a grating. The race still powers and cools RG&E Station #2 and the Beebee Station as it drops 96 feet onto the hydroelectric turbine. Brown's Island, between the river and the race, was the gathering place of over 3,000 people in 1834 when the newly incorporated city of Rochester celebrated the election by council of Jonathan Child as the city's first mayor.

Across the grating on what was once Brown's Island, is William Gorsline's fireproof shoe factory (5), built after the devastating 1888 fire at the Steam Guage and Lantern Works (operated there between 1884 and 1888). It was earlier occupied by Cornelius Parsons Sawmill built in 1827.

The corner of Brown's Race and Commercial Streets was the site of William Kidd's Iron Works from 1836 to 1874. Previously the site of Kempshall and Bush Furnace, the Works was bought by William Gleason, the superintendent. Kidd manufactured lathes, drills, planes and punches. Gleason shared the building with William Kidd's son-in-law and partner, Charles Chapin, who established the Rochester Car Wheel Works. By 1900 Gleason required the entire building to manufacture beveled gear grinding

machines. His company later relocated to University Avenue and the old site became the Rochester Heel Company and later RG&E.

Across Commercial Street stands the building used to power the Rochester Railway Company that replaced the horse-drawn trolleys. Built in 1889, it later served as a garage for the Rochester Transit Corporation.

It is a short walk west on Commercial Street north on Mill Street to Furnace Street. The names of this narrow alley and other streets are a reminder that the Brown's Race was once a part of an early 19th century industrial village. Men's voices were once heard in the streets shouting to their horse teams as their heavily loaded wagons clattered through the streets. Other men stood in the doorways of factories and mills and talked or ate from their lunch carried from home that morning. Voices were broken by rhythmic sounds of the triphammers that echoed through the narrow streets. More than a century ago the early morning air was filled with the sounds of men tramping over the paving bricks on their way to work. Even now the streets are not silent. They are filled with the sounds of electrical generation and small industries that have found affordable rents and the refurbishing of these historic buildings for modern use. The importance of the historic industrial village is recognized and appreciated by hundreds throughout the city who view the falls from the Pont de Rennes bridge.

Spanning the entire south side of Furnace Street between Mill Streets and Brown's Race is one half of Seyle's Fire Engine Factory (8), the other half being the rubble across Brown's Race (3). Elevator shafts on the sides of the building are still visible.

Directly across Furnace Street was a building built in the 1860s for the Rochester Barrel Works (9A) which operated there until 1875. D.R. Barton later moved his edge tool factory there. The Wilson Works fabricated metal there and the Sagamore Paper Box Company later occupied the site. This building burned down in the mid 1980s. Just north on Mill Street is a second building (9B) occupied by the Rochester Barrel Machine Works, in 1888 the largest factory in America making machinery to manufacture barrels.

Near the corner of Mill and Platt Streets is the current Holly Pumping Station (10) directly across Brown's Race from the original building built in 1873. From this corner (11), the oldest standing Kodak Building is visible, built in 1882 at Platt and State Streets to house the Eastman Dry Plate Company, established a few blocks away with money loaned to George Eastman by Henry

Strong, owner of the Woodbury and Strong Buggy Whip Company. Eastman began making dry plates in his mothers kitchen on Jones Street. In 1892 he built the "camera works" building and in 1914 he erected the sixteen story Kodak Tower which served as a warehouse and office building. In 1930, Eastman added the top three stories and cupola to the Tower.

Opposite the Kodak Tower stood the Rochester Button Company (13), once the leading manufacturer of buttons in the world. Begun by M.B. Shantz across the river on North Water Street, the company manufactured buttons from vegetable ivory, a nut imported from Mexico, South America and Africa. The nut was sliced and perforated to make buttons. This material made Shantz a major producer, but later buttons were made from a dairy product called casein and more recently made from plastic.

Nearby at the corner of Mill and Platt Streets is a parking lot where Daniel Leary's Dyeing and Scouring Establishment (14) once stood. The building was built in 1828. Francis Peacock ran a dyeing business there before 1842. It burned down and was rebuilt in 1849. Leary's Steam Dyeing Establishment filled orders for merchants locally as well as mail orders for merchants out of state.

Next door stands the building built in 1865 and once used by D.R. Barton Edge Tool Factory and the Rochester Button Company (15). It is a short walk down Platt Street to the intersection of Brown's Race where the original Harford Mill once stood (16). Matthew and Francis Brown improved the mill in 1812 and when it burned down in 1818, they immediately rebuilt the Phoenix Mill as if rising from the ashes of the old mill. Michel's Machine Shop manufactured lathes, planes and grain scouring machinery in the 1870s and the Widdowson Stave Jointer operated there later. Today only the northern third of the building stands, the rest was demolished to make way for the Platt Street Bridge in 1890. A brick facade now covers the cut wall.

The Platt Street Bridge was closed to traffic in 1968 and reopened as a pedestrian walk in 1982. From the edge of this bridge, the RG&E Beebee Station is visible on the northwest side as well as Station #2. The Beebee Station generates electricity from coal, oil and gas-fired turbines and produced steam heat for downtown buildings. Station #2 is a hydroelectric generating station. Its turbines are located on the southwest side of the bridge where turbines receive the full power of the 96 foot falls. Across the river, the mills on North Water Street once drew their power from the abandoned hydropower electrical Station #4.

The parking lot (18) on the south side of the bridge opposite the Phoenix Mill is the site of the Granite Mill, built in 1838 and one of the largest producing mills in the city.

From the middle of the bridge, there is a good view of the falls, where in November 1829, thousands of people crowded the banks on both sides of the river to witness daredevil Sam Patch's fatal leap from a platform on Brown's Island 120 feet above the river. Though he jumped successfully from 100 feet at Niagara Falls, this jump on Friday the thirteenth, ended tragically and the guilt felt by the crowd lasted for generations. Patch's frozen body was not discovered until the following spring near the mouth of the river. He was buried in the cemetery at Charlotte not far from where he was found.

Just below the bridge at Beebee Park, Jesse Hatch stood waiting for his grist at Brown's Custom Mill (later the Phoenix Mill). The same building stands 163 years later, enabling us today to feel one with the past. That site continues to offer one of the best views of the falls. Since Hatch's passing, industry has changed greatly as has our source of power, but Brown's Race remains important as an example of a nineteenth century village and the industrial power that made Rochester at once the "Waterpower City" and the "Flour City."



McCracken Tavern on the northwest corner of State and Brown Streets offered soldiers refreshment after drilling at Brown Square in the mid 19th century. The tavern was later known as the North American Hotel, a temperance house. This photograph was taken in 1891.



Above: Parson's Saw Mill on Brown's island.

Tim O'Connell contributed to the research and illustration of this publication.

FOOTNOTES

1. Rochester Historical Society, *Publication Fund Series (RHS-PFS)*, v. 4, p. 239.
2. RHS-PFS, "Scrantom Letters on the Beginning of Rochester", v. 7, p. 170.
3. RHS-PFS, Motley, Maude, "The Romance of Milling", v. 10, p. 170.
4. *Rochester Daily Democrat*, May 16, 1856, 3-1.
5. RHS-PFS, Kosok, Paul, ed.; "Lewis Henry Morgan on The Water Power and Flour Mills at Rochester", v. 23, pp. 122-123.
6. RHS-PFS, Motley, Maude, "The Romance of Milling", v. 10, p. 174.
7. *Rochester Daily Advertiser*, Feb. 13, 1851, 2-3.
8. Devoy, John, *Rochester and the Post Express*, Post Express Printing Co., Rochester, 1895, p. 41.
9. IBID.
10. *Rochester Daily Union*, November 22, 1856, 3-2.
11. IBID.
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Back Cover: Wagon loads of flour were hauled from The Frankfort Mills of Moseley and Motley every working day in season. This photograph was taken in about 1868.

