

HISTORIC BRIGHTON NEWS

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BRIGHTON BRICKS ONLINE

To learn more about the brickyards and brick buildings of 19th century Brighton, visit the Brighton Brick website under construction by Leo Dodd at <http://home.rochester.rr.com/leoj>. This painting and others are by Leo Dodd, first and immediate past president of Historic Brighton.



THE FRENCH IN BRIGHTON

TEN years before the Pilgrims landed, the French arrived in Brighton. In 1610, Samuel de Champlain sent a deputy: Etienne Brûlé became the first white man to cross the Genesee country. Champlain's map, the first to be drawn of Lake Ontario, shows Irondequoit Bay as a gateway to the south. As the land between Niagara Falls and Manhattan Island became the territory for which England and France fought for 200 years, Brighton developed into the useful center of portage.

In 1668 the Franciscan Recollect Missionaries were stranded in Brighton for the winter. In June 1679 they erected "a small Cabin of bark of trees to perform Divine Service therein." This memory is preserved in a plaque at the Mercy Complex on Blossom Rd. Meanwhile, French traders exchanged thundersticks and firewater for beaver skins.

In 1669 La Salle came to the Indian Landing seeking, of all things, a water route to China. Headquartered in the Brighton area, he came with ship-building materials. The Senecas wined and dined him hospitably enough, yet somehow never told him how to paddle up the Genesee to the Allegheny and Ohio Rivers and on to the Mississippi.

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HISTORIC BRIGHTON MEETS OCTOBER 21

Save the date:

**Monday, October 21
7:00 PM**

Brighton Town Hall



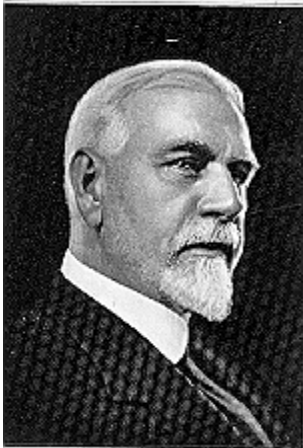
The Wallace-Schilling house, Clinton Avenue.

Cynthia Howk, architectural research coordinator for the Landmark Society of Western New York, is our speaker. Her topic:

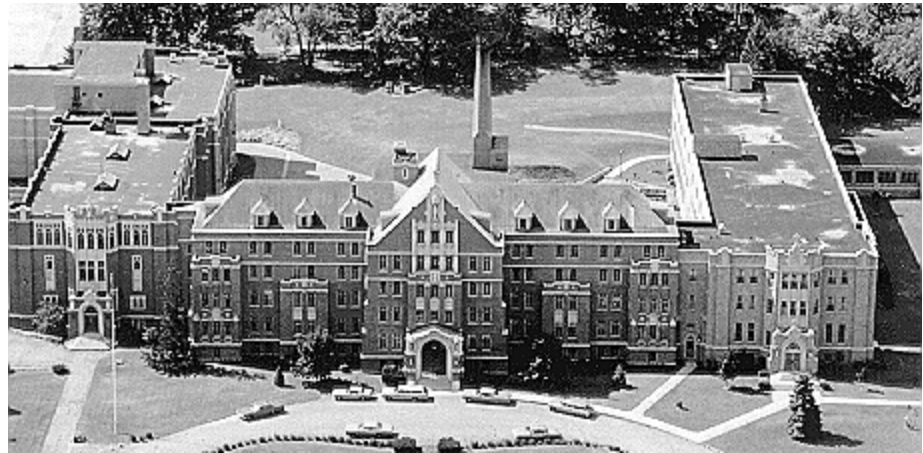
"Discover Brighton— 200 Years of Brighton Architecture"

Come and learn about the architecture in your backyard. Discover the wealth and variety of architectural styles in our town. Ms. Howk will use slides and information that resulted from her research for the Brighton Historic Preservation Commission. She will include Brighton buildings from the past to the present.

MERCY COMPLEX DESIGNATED BRIGHTON LANDMARK



J. Foster Warner



Our Lady of Mercy High School

By Mary Jo Lanphear

2 The educational and religious buildings of the Sisters of Mercy at 1437 Blossom Rd. comprise one of the largest, non-commercial complexes in the town of Brighton. Designed by a famous architect and erected on historic land, the complex is one of great importance to the town. On May 25, the Brighton Historic Preservation Commission designated it a Brighton Landmark.

Orring Stone was the original owner of lot 12 in Township 13, Range 7, of the Phelps & Gorham Purchase. On the southern part of the 210 acres, he operated the farm and tavern that hosted so many visitors and town events in the settlement years, 1790-1820. After his death in 1839, his daughter, Harriet Stone Hagaman, continued farming the land. Eventually, John Patrick Tolan purchased it in 1860.

Pat Tolan was a nurseryman at a time when domestic horticulture was thriving in Brighton. He traveled the countryside, as far south as the Allegheny Mountains, selling seeds and bulbs. His supplies and equipment were stored in the barn that still stands on the Stone-Tolan property. His death in 1879 left his widow, Ellen, with two young daughters: Mary, age seven, and Ellen, age five. Ellen McKeon Tolan died in 1914. Mary Tolan became a Sister of Mercy in 1917, taking the name, Sister Mary Joseph. That was the same year that the Tolan sisters gave thirteen acres of land in lot 12 to the Sister of Mercy. Their convent on South Street having burned in 1914, the religious order

was living in temporary quarters in Charlotte. Mother Liguori, the Superior at the time, proceeded to negotiate the purchase and acquisition of additional land, bringing the total amount to eighty-three acres. Plans were made for a Motherhouse and school to educate young women.

J. Foster Warner was the architect of the original building completed in 1928. Three stories high, it housed the Sisters on the third floor and the school on the first two floors. In 1931, the Sisters moved into the new Motherhouse, freeing the third floor for additional classrooms. Leo Ribson, of the J. Foster Warner firm, signed the Motherhouse blueprints with Warner.

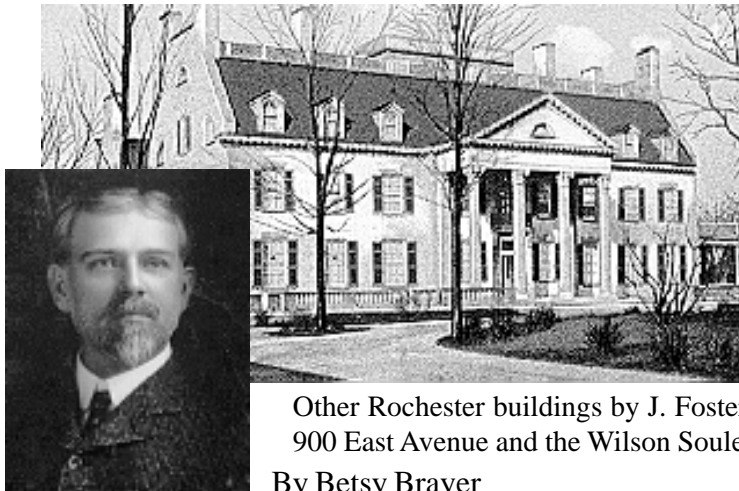
In 1941 the auditorium and gymnasium wing was added to the east side of the complex. From 1941 to 1945, civilian air raid wardens gathered on top of the school, the tallest building in Brighton, to watch for enemy aircraft. Since its completion, the auditorium has opened its doors to the community for a variety of educational and cultural events. The name of the architect for this part of the complex has not been determined.

In 1951 John Flynn and H.H. Bohacket are the architects of record for the chapel that was added to the south side of the Motherhouse. Terence O. Dugan of Boston designed the stained glass windows that warm the marble interior.

The most recent addition is the Catherine McAuley Junior College wing on the west side of the complex. The college opened in 1951 in the

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J. FOSTER WARNER: AN ARCHITECT FOR ALL SEASONS



Other Rochester buildings by J. Foster Warner include, l. to r, George Eastman House at 900 East Avenue and the Wilson Soule House at 1050 East Avenue

By Betsy Brayer

J. Foster Warner (1859-1937) was one of the area's leading architects of the first half of the 20th century. He also represents the third generation of a family of distinguished architects. His father, Andrew Jackson Warner (1833-1910), was the leading Rochester architect of the 19th century—designer of the Powers, Academy, and Wilder buildings, city halls for Rochester and Buffalo, and many churches and homes in Western New York. His maternal uncle, Henry Austin, was the leading architect of New Haven, CT in the early 19th century, while Uncle Merwin Austin came to Rochester in 1845 where he became the architect of the first city jail, the county's second courthouse, and introduced the English cottage style popularized by Andrew Jackson Downing to Rochester. Foster Warner's brother, Pete, and two cousins, Frederick and William Brockett, were architects too. All four apprenticed in A. J. Warner's office and in 1884, Foster Warner opened his own office.

Foster Warner was elegant, dashing, tough, stubborn, contentious, and generous—a bon vivant, a ladies man, and a lover of fast cars. New York license plate # “5”—first on a steam car, then a Marmon—signified that he was fifth person in New York State to own a car. His favorite diversion—in goggles and duster with terrified passengers in tow—was to race the crack Empire State Limited along the corduroy roads between Buffalo and Syracuse. Each winter, he motored to New Orleans for Mardi Gras. His unique formula for measuring the worth of a car by the amount of steel used to fabricate it translated into architecture measured by the amount of marble, granite, brass, and precious woods.

Clients were as much in awe of the architect as the Marmon passengers were. Helen Ellwanger, a founder of the Landmark Society, recalled that “when Foster remodeled our house, he assigned

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Warner buildings: l. to r, Sibley's, Monroe County Office, Granite Building, Barry-Lindsay House on East Avenue.

MERCY COMPLEX *CONTINUED*

Motherhouse as a three-year junior college, pre-dating Monroe Community College's Brighton campus and making it the first college-level institution in Brighton. The college wing was completed in 1959 under the direction of architect Walter Nugent.

The campus includes two important historical features: the stone grotto on the hill behind the complex and the 1935 marker commemorating the 1679 construction of a bark church, the first worship site in the Rochester area.

Mary Jo Lanphear is Town of Brighton Historian.

THE FRENCH IN BRIGHTON *CONTINUED*

In 1687 the French resorted to force to crush the Senecas. The leader of a punitive expedition was Rene de Brisat, the Marquis de Denonville, whose forces landed at the sand bar of Irondequoit Bay, marched along the highlands east of the bay as their batteaux followed by water to the Indian Landing (now in Ellison Park in Brighton). The French made camp there, then proceeded south through Cobett's Glen, crossing Allyn's Creek where the large railroad arch is now located. They reached the Seneca stronghold at Totiakton (Victor) where they inflicted widespread damage, but failed to destroy the Senecas.

HISTORIC BRIGHTON

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J.FOSTER WARNER *CONTINUED*



Canandaigua County Court House, 1910

each family member the bedroom *he* thought most suitable. It was years before we decided that we could chose our own rooms.”

A perfectionist who supervised the smallest job as if it were Eastman House, Warner had a favorite phrase: “Get the maul, Leo.” This was the signal for Warner's colleague, Leo Ribson, to retrieve the five-pound maul from the trunk of the Marmon so that Warner could hack out the poorly installed marble before the eyes of the offending craftsman.

His long friendship with the Rev. Frank L. Brown, pastor of St. Simon's, began when Warner saw the black minister gazing longingly into an automobile showroom. The architect took the minister inside, bought him a car, and paid for its gas and maintenance from that moment on. Later he presented Mr. Brown with architectural plans for a new church on Oregon St. In 1937, Mr. Brown officiated at Foster Warner's funeral. A friend read a poem:

*Gone is our friend the architect,
From his drawings, stone and steel;
His loves were his home, the country roads,
And the sound of the automobile.*

Franklin Street branch of the Rochester Savings Bank by McKim, Mead & White and J. Foster Warner, 1926

