



HISTORIC BRIGHTON NEWS

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HISTORIC BRIGHTON MEETING

Tuesday, May 6 at 7:15 p.m. Brighton Town Hall Auditorium
2300 Elmwood Avenue

Cynthia Howk presents:

DISCOVER BRIGHTON: 200 YEARS OF HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE



Tudor Revival house at 239 Sandringham Drive

Come and discover the wide variety of historic buildings, structures, objects, sites, and neighborhoods that define the history and architecture of Brighton, showing over 200 years of the “built environment” in one of Monroe County’s most historic communities. This slide talk will provide an “armchair tour” of your own town and highlight its architectural treasures!

Cynthia Howk is the Architectural Research Coordinator on the staff of The Landmark Society of Western New York, one of the oldest historic preservation organizations in the U.S. Founded in 1937, it serves a 9-county area in the Genesee/Finger Lakes region. Its mission is to discover, protect and revitalize the architectural and related cultural heritage of the region, and to educate and inform the community about that heritage. Ms. Howk is a Rochester native and graduate of

Mary Washington College of the University of Virginia. She joined the Society staff in 1976 and since 1978, has been a member of their Preservation Services Division, where she coordinates the Historic Resources Inventories, annual preservation conference, and National Register program. In addition to working with individuals, organizations and government agencies, she lectures extensively on regional history and architecture.

Carl Traver, architect

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Historic Brighton’s Fifth Annual Summer Tour, June 27-28

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Disc golf in Brighton

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CARL TRAVER, ARCHITECT:
HE DESIGNED SOME OF BRIGHTON'S FINEST HOMES
By Arlene A. Vanderlinde



*Photograph courtesy of
Department of Rare Books
and Special Collections,
University of Rochester
Library*

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The Town of Brighton boasts some of the finest early twentieth century homes in America. Neighborhoods such as Home Acres, the Houston Barnard Tracts and others, have some of the best examples of the Tudor, Colonial and Mediterranean Revival styles found anywhere. The finest materials and craftsmanship were employed and these homes have beautifully withstood the test of time, both in style and condition.

Some of the most prominent architects of this period designed locally. Many even called Rochester and Brighton their home. One such architect was Carl R. Traver, 1890-1985. His name isn't known to most, but Mr. Traver made wonderful contributions to the quality of life in Brighton through the many substantial homes he designed for his clients. Research didn't reveal the date of his death, where he had lived locally or information about his family life. The University of Rochester Rare Books Department houses a portfolio of photographs of his work and limited information about his early years. That was the only source that was found, yet this man designed Gleason Works, Graflex, the Ritter-Clark Memorial at RIT, the main Central Trust Company building downtown, Castle-Wilmot Company, the Temple Building and dozens of exquisite homes in Brighton, Rochester, Irondequoit and Toronto, Canada.

The home of Thillman Fabry, at 101 Southern Parkway, was designed by Carl Traver in 1913. Fabry and Traver had worked on the Temple Building together through the architectural firm of Gordon and Kaelber and no doubt, came to greatly respect each others' work. Their collaboration on Mr. Fabry's home resulted in a blending of the work of a genius artisan in Mr. Fabry and expert architectural design by Mr. Traver. Carl Traver also designed the home at 75 Southern Parkway (1923). He also designed homes at 40 Sandringham Road (1929), 199 Ambassador Drive (1928), 42 (1945) and 55 Trevor Court, and 472 Claybourne Road (1928). He lived in a house of his own design at 315 Cobbs Hill Drive. There is no doubt that the owners of these homes appreciate the fine detail that was incorporated. Carl Traver was born in Rochester in 1890. He graduated from West High School and studied at the University of Pennsylvania College of Architecture 1914-16. His work in architecture began in 1909 when he worked in the architectural offices of Gordon & Madden. From 1911-1914, he worked as a senior draftsman at Hutchinson & Cutler. Back at Gordon & Madden in 1917, he was a delineator and draftsman, until World War I beckoned him into the service in the Construction Division of the US Army Air Service. Following the War he worked briefly in England in construction.



*Gleason Works,
University Avenue*

Kate Gleason sent Leo Waasdorp of Gordon & Kaelber to Washington, D.C., to see the Pan American building so the architects could use it as a model.

In 1920, Traver earned his registration as an architect in New York State and entered professional practice here. He was a charter member of the Rochester Society of Architects. He associated with Gordon & Kaelber on the Baptist Temple and also designed the North Side Furniture House, Irondequoit District

School #5 and the Irondequoit Firehouse on Culver Road. In 1942, Mr. Traver became architect for John Pike & Son, and designed many of the buildings mentioned earlier in this article.

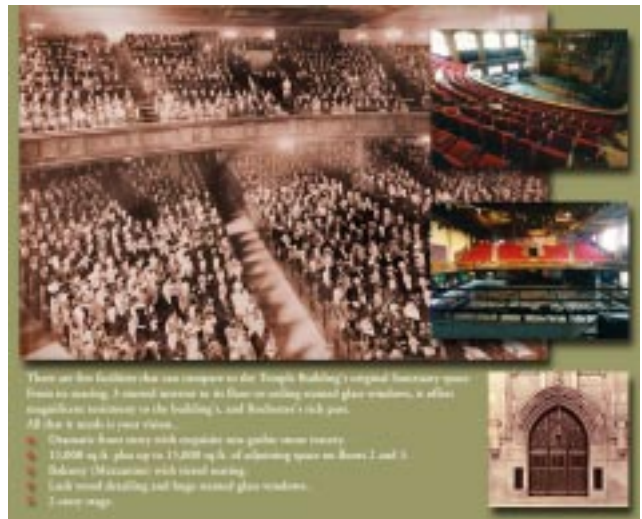
If you live in a Traver-designed home, we would like to hear from you.

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BAPTIST TEMPLE, ROCHESTER, N. Y.

Gordon & Kaelber
Carl R. Traver



*Delineation of Baptist Temple, left
Brochure with sanctuary and door, above*

Sources: University of Rochester Library - Rare Books Division

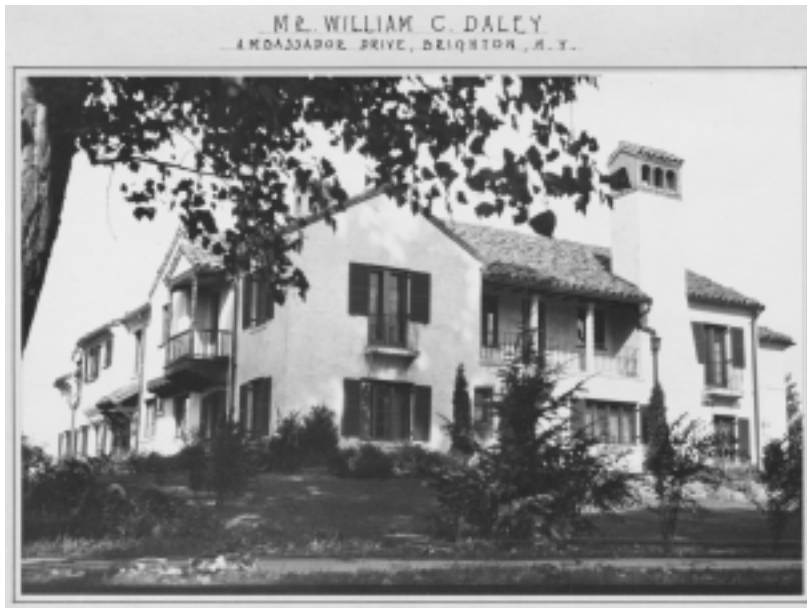
Architecture and Architects of Rochester, NY - *Carl and Ann Schmidt, 1959*

A Chronicle of Architecture and Architects in Rochester - *November 16, 1939*

Special thanks to Elizabeth Hansen

CARL TRAVER: THE MOST FAMOUS ARCHITECT THAT NO ONE HAS HEARD OF

By Julian Goldstein



Photographs pages 4-5 courtesy of Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, University of Rochester Library

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I live in a beautiful home that was designed by local architect Carl Traver, who designed homes and buildings in the area for over 40 years and died at age 95 in 1985. I have come to know several other owners of significant homes designed by Carl Traver in Brighton. I always liked their homes, but never until recently did I know that they were all designed by the same man. Many of us belong to a “club” that we didn’t know existed. We all live in Carl Traver-designed homes.

If Carl Traver was so good, how come so many of us have never heard of him? Why isn’t he famous like Syracuse-born Architect, Ward Wellington Ward? A possible answer is that Carl Traver designed each property to be unique. Maybe that is why none of us realized that they were all designed by the same man. We are all used to seeing tract homes that are all the same.

Before the era of tract homes and cookie-cutter office buildings, people used to employ an architect to do a custom design for their new home or building. Many of the most prominent homes in Brighton and Rochester, as well many fine commercial structures were designed by a man that few of us have heard of, yet we admire his work every time we drive down the beautiful streets of our area.

Carl Traver put his signature on his designs with quality construction techniques and materials that have withstood the test of time. He had a great aesthetic sense. All lines flow beautifully into one another. The comfortable interior layouts still work for today’s families even though they were designed more than 75 years ago. Families tend to own their Carl Traver homes for long periods of time because they appreciate living with the high quality and comfort offered.

There are many reasons that Carl Traver homes are so comfortable to live in: They were built well and have aged well. Quality materials were used throughout the house. In my case, we stripped years of paint off the walls down to bare wood and were amazed at the quality of the wood that was used. The quality bath fixtures and the door knobs are still great 75 years later. The plaster walls are solid and have never cracked or settled. There was a tremendous attention to detail. Someone watched the houses being built; no short cuts were taken; no corners cut. The floor plans are very carefully designed. There is no wasted space anywhere in a Traver house. All the rooms are bright and cheerful. Even my attic and basement space were well thought out. In an era when most homes were being built with very small closets, Carl designed huge closets and dressing areas into his homes.



CARL R. TRAVER
COBBS HILL PRIDE.

Traver's own home on Cobbs Hill Drive

According to one restoration contractor, in life there are always “smart, little things” that you learn over time that makes your product or service better than someone else’s. While restoring the house and taking it apart and putting it back together again, he was amazed to see first hand the “smart, little things” that Carl Traver employed to ensure that his high-end homes such as the ones on Ambassador and Sandringham have lasted so well.

My home had suffered long-term neglect before I purchased it. The following quality construction details allowed my home to survive:

1. A 1½” air channel between the stone wall and the frame allowed the house to “breathe” with air circulating in the walls. In my case, there was extensive water damage, but this air channel saved the house by preventing moisture from being trapped in the walls and from mildew or mold forming. In today’s world, black mold inside the house is the new fear for many homeowners. The air channel probably also prevented my plaster walls from moving and cracking over time.

2. Air vents on the exterior pillars allowed them to breathe and prevented them from rotting out. The pillars themselves were raised off the ground slightly on a concrete pad so that the wood wasn’t always sitting in the water and rotting.

3. There are massive posts and beams in the attic to hold up the heavy slate roof preventing the roof from sagging.

4. The house was solidly built. My floors are built on steel I-beams and there is a layer of concrete in the floor. My exterior and interior walls are thick and solid.



Every contractor that had worked on my home was amazed that the structure was so solid given its age and the degree of neglect the house had suffered.

Between 1928-1945, Carl Traver designed seven homes in the Houston Barnard neighborhood and made them all different and distinct.

- 80 Ambassador Drive - 1928 - 8026 sq. ft
- 199 Ambassador Drive – 1928 - 7795 sq. ft
- 40 Sandringham Road – 1929 - 5926 sq. ft
- 68 Sandringham Road - 1929 - 3714 sq. ft.
- 191 Trevor Court – 1930 - 3775 sq. ft
- 55 Trevor Court – 1934 - 2882 sq. ft
- 42 Trevor Court – 1945 - 4841 sq. ft

Edited by Arlene A. Vanderlinde

Update on
HISTORIC BRIGHTON'S FIFTH ANNUAL SUMMER TOUR, JUNE 27-28

Yes, rain or shine, there will be a tour of important Tryon/Ellison Park sites on Saturday June 28—by horse and wagon with **Mary Jo Lanphear, Brighton Town Historian**, and by foot to the two surviving Tryon houses and to Fort Schuyler, the replicated English trading post. Perhaps there will be nature tours.

Besides Mary Jo, there will be other local historians on site such as the Penfield heritage group, Gary Lehman, the Heberles, and so forth.

The Rochester Disc Golf Club will hold a disc golf tournament. (See page 8)

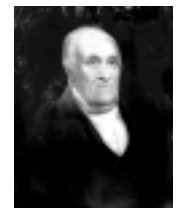
The 1938 WPA recreation of the trading post known as Fort Schuyler off of the Landing Road will be open. Inside will be displays of historic information with surprising information about the park. Activities for all ages will be featured.

Gary Lehman and his brother Bernie will perform historical music.

A catering cart from Sonny's Catering will be present.



Reviving turf, 1912



Oliver Culver

GIDEON COBB LUNCHEON: FRIDAY, JUNE 27TH, 11:30AM—2PM

PLACE: THE GATHERINGS AT DAISY FLOUR MILL

Featured speaker will be corporate attorney **James Quinn**. Quinn's topic will be "**The Lost City of Tryon and Oliver Culver.**"

The area is the oldest in Brighton history.

Indian Landing began as part of the indigenous Senecas' portage route from Lake Ontario to the Genesee River at Red Creek and moved through 17th century French incursions of LaSalle, the Sulpician missionaries, and Denonville. During the 18th century, the English established a short-lived trading post known as Fort Schuyler. Butler's Rangers may have camped here.

The planned commercial community of Tryon dates from 1797 when John Tryon began to build what he hoped would be a settlement at the junction of many trade routes. Two houses still stand as testament to that early settlement. Oliver Culver lived in one of them.

Oliver Culver was Brighton's first supervisor. Born in Connecticut, he first visited this area in 1796. Returning about 1800, he found that John and Salmon Tryon had built a store, an ashery, a tavern, as well as tanning, blacksmith, and shoemaking shops. In 1802, Culver and the Hatch brothers built the first sawmill in Allyn's Creek. He worked in at various jobs and boarded at Orringh Stone's Tavern. In 1800, Culver bought 105 acres in Northfield (after 1814, Brighton, and after 1905, Rochester).

Details will follow in mailings to Historic Brighton members and guests during May and June.



Current sledding hill as seen in 1912

Update on
HISTORIC BRIGHTON'S FIFTH ANNUAL SUMMER TOUR, JUNE 27-28



From the dugway, 1912

Ron Richardson is hoping to borrow older Ellison images or documents (such as those you see on these pages) that show the development of the park over the years. He is looking for old garden views, toboggan slide pictures, photos of recreational activities, drawings, maps, etc. He wants to carefully scan and display them at the event. Contact Ron at rerpph@rit.edu



Seneca woman enjoys her pipe, 1912



Schuyler trading post



Smugglers cove, 1912



Chief Freeman Johnson, 1912

THE ELLISON PARK DISC GOLF COURSE



DESCRIPTION

The Ellison Park Disc Golf Course is a championship-caliber hillside course featuring grassy fairways and tall trees. All types of elevations come into play, with uphill, sidehill and downhill fairways. Signature holes include hole No. 7; measuring 528 feet down a steep hill to the basket, the hole affords a spectacular view of the Irondequoit Creek Valley. The 590-foot-long hole No. 17 features a tricky fairway that slopes down to the right, leading errant shots to a row of trees bordered by a road. The total distance/length of the course is 6234 feet

COURSE HISTORY

The course was first laid out and used in the spring of 1975 for the Rochester Frisbee Club.

The temporary course that the club set up occupied the same general area as used for today's permanent course, and had the same general configuration. The site was used for the club's series through 1977, and also hosted 18 holes of the 36 holes set up for the 1976 and 1977 American Flying Disc Open events of the big Wham-O NAS tournament series.

Due to budget considerations, the Monroe County Parks Department closed down the Landing Road portion of Ellison Park at the end of the 1977 summer. Grass grew to waist-deep height and rendered the area useless for disc golf. From 1978 though 1983, all disc golf events in the Rochester area were held at St. John Fisher College, or at the Genesee Valley Park disc golf course that was permanently installed in 1980.

In 1984, the Rochester Frisbee Club hosted the Professional Disc Golf Association world championships. The club convinced the parks department that the Landing Road portion of Ellison Park would be a perfect venue for the event, and that led to a summer of cutting and grooming. The Frisbee club designed

36 holes of disc golf course, separated into two distinct courses. The "A" course was based on the Ellison Park design of 1975, and the "B" course was shoe-horned in between and around the perimeter of the original course.

The neighbors of the park loved the groomed look of the park and petitioned to have it maintained in its present state instead of having it go back to seed. This set up the potential to do more disc golf at Ellison Park.

In 1986, Royce Racinowski, Jim Palmeri and Jamie Moldt redesigned the course layout in anticipation of using it for the 1986 American Flying Disc Open, as well as for the effort they were making to get the course installed as a permanent facility. Three years later in 1989, the dream of a permanent course finally came to pass. The Racinowski, Palmeri and Moldt design was updated in 1998 in anticipation of Rochester hosting the 1999 Professional Disc Golf Association world disc golf championships. Parts of the course were redesigned Doug Corea and Bob Nelson.

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Call Betsy Brayer at 244-0402 to contribute articles or letters

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