

HISTORIC BRIGHTON NEWS

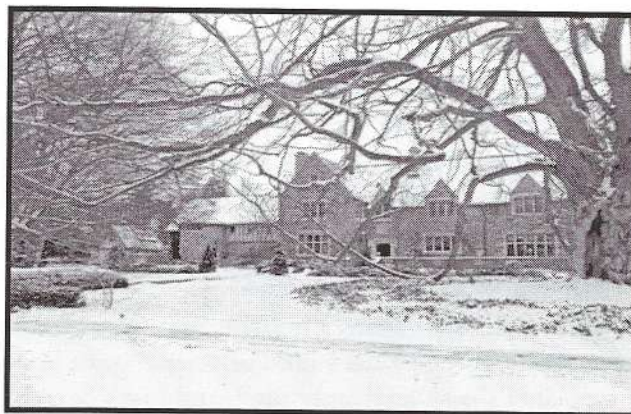
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"Celebrating our town's history and educating our community about Brighton's past"

Hornbeck-Gannett House
1928-1929
195 Sandringham Road
Architects: Arnold & Stern
Designated Brighton Landmark



Photos courtesy of the Brighton Historic Preservation Commission

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A BRIGHTON LANDMARK: THE HORNBECK - GANNETT HOUSE

195 Sandringham Road

by Arlene Wright Vanderlinde

When Paul Malo, Syracuse University architecture professor emeritus, was consulting on the Town's Historic Structures Survey in 1998, his comments on 195 Sandringham Road were as follows: "Oh, this is gorgeous! Is this a house? It looks more like a college! Well, this is really a 'RED PLUS' (highest rating). This is really remarkable - we'll never see this stuff built again. This is a private family home?! Good heavens, that plasterwork alone is remarkable (on the rear elevation)."

These were the strongest comments Mr. Malo ever made about Brighton's collection of fine homes. They are well-deserved. The Hornbeck-Gannett home, built in 1928-29 for Rochester dentist, Dr. Charles Sahler Hornbeck, his wife, Louise, and their two young children, is an outstanding example of Tudor Revival architecture. It was designed by the Rochester architectural firm of Arnold and Stern and is the largest example of this style in Monroe County. It is located in the Houston -Barnard Tract, which features some of the most outstanding architecture in the county.

The interior of the house features seventeen rooms, including eight bedrooms and two kitchens. The large living room features a decorative plaster ceiling, wood moldings and fireplace.

The Hornbeck-Gannett House retains a high degree of integrity of design, materials and outstanding craftsmanship, as well as imposing scale. It represents a kind of period "great home" which is no longer being constructed. It features details that are typical of the style: steeply-pitched roofs; side-gabled plan with multiple cross gables and dormers; stone cladding; half-timbering; tall chimneys; narrow casement windows in multiple groups with multi-paned glazing and lead muntins. Also of note is the elaborate, decorative plasterwork with foliate details seen on the projecting center gable of the rear elevation.

The Tudor Revival style is loosely based on a variety of early English building traditions ranging from simple folk houses to late Medieval palaces. Many draw from Renaissance or even the modern Craftsman tradition. The popular name for this style is historically imprecise since few examples closely mimic the architectural characteristics of 16th century Tudor England.

The Tudor style exploded in popularity in the 1920s and early '30s, then faded from fashion quickly, only to become popular in building design from the 1970s on.

The landscape of this property was designed by landscape architect, Alling DeForest and is exceptional in the use of the variety of trees and plantings. While there have been major changes in the landscape over the years, a great deal of DeForest's design remains, including the beech trees in the front. The original DeForest drawings for the property were intact and stored in the house until the early 1990s. The colored drawings, showing site plans, planting lists, and a Tudor Revival out-building, totaled more than a dozen large sheets. In the early 1990s, landscape historian Jean Czerkas photographed this remarkable collection of documents. At the time, the property was for sale and the realtor had the drawings in his possession. Today, only one original document survives, so Mrs. Czerkas' photographs will have to serve in their place.

This property is historically significant for its association with Frank E. and Caroline Werner Gannett, who owned the property from 1933-1977. Mrs. Gannett donated the home to the University of Rochester in 1977 and retained life use. Gannett had become an internationally known figure who co-founded Gannett newspapers, which became the largest chain of newspapers in the nation.

Following Mrs. Gannett's death in 1979, the house and property were sold. In 1991, the owner asked the Brighton Planning Board for permission to subdivide the 2.6 acre parcel, creating a one-half acre parcel to sell separately from the house. This controversial plan met with spirited opposition from the neighbors. The owners withdrew the request and sold the house as one parcel in 1995. The current owners have completed extensive, carefully-planned renovation work on the property.

Source: Town of Brighton Cultural Resources Survey



Hornbeck-Gannett House-195 Sandringham Road
Photo by Betsy Brayer

Caroline Werner Gannett - 1894-1979

Civic Leader - Brighton Resident

Written by Arlene Wright Vanderlinde

Caroline Werner Gannett, known as "Cirrie" by her close friends and family, was an extraordinary woman in her own right. The wife of publisher Frank E. Gannett, Caroline forged her own strong presence in the community and beyond. Although shy as a child, Mrs. Gannett grew to be a socially assured adult, fostering a stronger community through her many civic endeavors.

The youngest daughter of New York State Appellate Court Judge William E. Werner and Lillie Boller Werner, Caroline experienced a diverse and worldly education that included Rochester public schools, Miss Hake's School, The Columbia School, and Rosemary Hall in Greenwich, Connecticut. She also spent a year at "Pension Glucker", a girls' school in Munich, Germany, and traveled extensively throughout Europe with her two older sisters, Clara Louise ("Clayla" - Mrs. F. Hawley Ward) and Marie ("Blondie" - Mrs. Douglas Townsend).

Caroline's formal education stopped short of receiving her high school diploma until a year after her retirement from a 16-year appointment to the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York (1947-63). She was the first woman ever to serve on this board and her role in education went far beyond that official capacity. She often lectured before high school and college audiences and she held strong opinions on the role of education in this society. She once described the press as the "poor man's university." Mrs. Gannett was awarded honorary degrees from several major colleges and universities for her civic and philanthropic activities, including University of Rochester, Syracuse University, Ithaca College and Elmira College.

Frank Gannett came to Rochester in 1918 and met Lillie Boller Werner through a mutual friend from Elmira. During a visit to the Werner home at 399 Oxford Street, Frank, age forty-two, met twenty-four year old Caroline Werner. After a two-month courtship, Frank and Caroline became engaged and were married two years later. In 1923, Sarah Maria (Sally) was born. Then, the Gannetts suffered five miscarriages, due to an RH factor blood incompatibility, a problem that, by the 1950s, would be treatable by a simple inoculation. The couple adopted their son, Dixon, in 1929.



Portrait of Caroline Werner Gannett age 69,
by renowned photographer, Yousuf Karsh

The family moved to their Tudor Revival mansion at 195 Sandringham Drive c. 1934 where they raised their children and entertained such notables as British Prime Minister Anthony Eden, Prince Otto, the heir to the Austrian throne and his brother, Archduke Felix, and Jacques Cartier, the French jewelry designer. The Gannetts also maintained homes in New York City and Miami Beach.

A strong supporter of her husband's business and political careers, Mrs. Gannett campaigned actively for her husband when he sought the Republican nomination for the presidency in 1940. She also served as a board member of the Gannett Company from 1952-1969, and as Vice President and Director of the Gannett Foundation. She was involved in the Frank E. Gannett Newspaperboy Scholarships and the Gannett Youth Center. Remaining active in Republican politics after Frank's death, she was co-chairwomen of the Senior Americans for Nixon-Lodge Committee in 1960.

Her work on behalf of children and the disabled was considerable. She served on the Board of the Convalescent Hospital for Crippled Children for twenty-five years, beginning in 1918. She was appointed by Governor Thomas E. Dewey to the War Council of New York and worked in centers caring for children of war plant workers from 1943-1945. She also served as co-chairwoman of the First Aid Department of the Rochester Chapter of the American Red Cross from 1941-1944 and as honorary chairwoman for the Lights-on-for-the-Blind Drive of the Rochester Eye Bank (1958).

Mrs. Gannett was a member of numerous organizations and clubs, including the Chatterbox Club (charter member), Allendale Country Day School, the Junior League of Rochester, Rochester Chamber of Commerce, and the Allen's Creek Garden Club. She was a patron of the arts and had interests in both education and medicine. Her main philanthropies were the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, the University of Rochester, the Rochester Museum and Science Center, the Rochester Institute of Technology, and the Eastman House.

Through Mrs. Gannett's personal generosity and that of the Gannett Foundation, many people and organizations continue to benefit. The Frank and Caroline Gannett Emergency Center at the Strong Medical Center was largely financed by a gift from the Gannett Foundation. The Thomas Mees Observatory was made possible by a land transfer by Mrs. Gannett to the University of Rochester. The Observatory is located on Gannett Hill, the nineteenth century Gannett family property in the Bristol Hills, Ontario County, which had been sold in 1871 and re-purchased by Frank in 1940.

Mrs. Gannett died at age 84. Her obituary in the Brighton-Pittsford Post, January 11, 1979, stated that Caroline Werner Gannett "will be remembered as a friend of youth, champion of education and gracious humanitarian."

Sources: The Brighton Cultural Resources Survey

Mary Jo Lanphear, Brighton Town Historian

Preston Pierce, Ontario County Historian

Brighton-Pittsford Post - Obituary of Caroline Gannett - 1/11/79

Gannett Family Papers - University of Rochester Library Archives

Frank Ernest Gannett 1876-1957

Publisher, Politician, Philanthropist, Brighton Resident

Written by Arlene Wright Vanderlinde

"My long experience in the newspaper business", said Frank Gannett in 1932, "has impressed upon me how vital it is to have real freedom of the press....It would be a sad day for America if all our newspapers expressed only one view....." Frank Gannett felt strongly that newspapers should never be treated as personal possessions or promote personal advantage, but should reflect many views. He never dictated the editorial policies of his papers. He stated, "I have said that if I want to make a statement I would do so in the news columns or over my signature." Mr. Gannett stood by this principle throughout his long career as publisher of what has come to be one of the largest media empires in the world.

Frank Gannett was born on what is now known as Gannett Hill in Ontario County where his parents struggled to farm the stony soil. The family moved on a year later, sharecropping and running hotels in various upstate communities. By age thirteen, Gannett was on his own in Bolivar, NY doing odd jobs and tending bar. This last experience led him to the conviction that "booze under a man's belt makes his mind and morals as unsteady as his feet." Later, his editors knew of his strong feelings about alcohol and that he would rather not have liquor or beer advertisements in any of his papers and they honored Gannett's wish by not allowing such ads to appear for many years. Gannett never actually dictated this or other policies to his editors. The papers lost at least a million dollars a year by foregoing liquor ads, but Gannett believed that he recouped in other ads appealing to "the family circle in the home rather than the crowd that lines up on the brass rail." This ban had some interesting spin-offs; cocktail dresses were called "waltz-length gowns," while food pages featured "cooking-beer" in recipes.



*Frank Gannett at a rally during his 1940 bid for the Republican presidential nomination
(original source unknown)*

- 4 In 1894, Gannett entered Cornell on a four-year scholarship and \$80 in savings. By the time he graduated he had saved \$1000 by doing odd jobs and working as a newspaper stringer. By 1899, Gannett became city editor of the Ithaca "Daily News".

In 1905, he left to work at magazines in New York and Pittsburgh, and within a year paid \$20,000 for half interest in the Elmira "Gazette" becoming partners with Edwin R. Davenport, owner of the other 50%. Later that year, the owners had added the "Star" and began publishing the "Star-Gazette." He and his associates founded the Gannett Company in 1906.

In 1918 Gannett and his partners came to Rochester, bought and merged two of the city's five dailies, the "Evening Times" and the "Union and Advertiser" into the "Times Union", the only one of Gannett's chain which he was always and ever the editor. By 1923, Gannett had bought out his partners and was on the road to an empire.

Also in 1918, at age 42, Gannett met the 24-year-old Caroline Werner, the socialite daughter of William E. Werner, judge of the New York Court of Appeals, while visiting the family home on Oxford Street. They were married two years later and had one daughter, Sarah. The Gannetts suffered five miscarriages due to the RH factor blood incompatibility - a condition that would be treatable by the 1950s. The couple eventually adopted a son, Dixon, who did not carry on the family interest in newspapers.

Gannett joined forces with George Eastman in 1924 in challenging a move by Republican boss George Aldridge to create the city manager form of government in Rochester. He also joined Eastman in setting up Rochester's first radio station, WHAM, at the Eastman School of Music. Although eighteen years younger, Gannett shared many qualities with Eastman. Both had been compared to Horatio Alger because they rose from humble backgrounds. Both were tight-lipped and bespectacled, hard-working and hard-driving. Both loved success and prosperity. Both were said to lack personal charisma; Eastman changed the face of Rochester yet its people never really warmed up to him. Gannett badly wanted to be President of the United States (he ran for the Republican nomination in 1940, but lost to Wendell Wilkie) yet lacked the ability to gain widespread support. Both were visionaries - Eastman envisioned color photography 30 years before Kodak produced a saleable product and Gannett envisioned a national newspaper 50 years before the company that bears his name founded USA Today. Both knew how to make money as young men, and grew their

fortunes from pennies to millions and both hoarded paper clips and worried about petty expenses but loved to give money away on a grand scale.

In 1935 Gannett established the Gannett Foundation. Its main purpose at the start was to protect his newspapers from President Franklin Roosevelt's proposed heavy taxation on them. Today, it is one of the largest charitable foundations in the US, funding such projects as the Frank and Caroline Gannett Emergency Center at Strong Memorial Hospital; the Frank Gannett Building at RIT, and the 18,000 volume Frank E. Gannett Memorial Library at Utica College. Gannett served as an advisor to Governor Thomas E. Dewey and associated with many of the major figures in pre-World War II Europe, including the British Prime Minister, Stanley Baldwin. He also met with Mussolini, Rudolf Hess, and Pope Pius XII.

Shortly after Gannett came to Rochester, he looked up a distant cousin, Rev. William Gannett, who was minister of the First Unitarian Church. He then became a Unitarian and remained a leader in the church throughout his life.

Records show that Frank and Caroline Gannett lived in Brighton in 1930 at 2950 East Avenue. They moved to the grand Tudor style manor house at 195 Sandringham Road c. 1934 where they lived until his death in 1957, from complications from a fall, and hers in 1979. In the 1930s, the Gannett chain of newspapers was among the six largest in the nation. After his death, his corporation converted to public ownership and became the largest newspaper company in the nation.

Sources: Time.com - Gannett Foundation - Article published October 7, 1935

Frank Gannett - A Biography, by Samuel T. Williamson (Duell, Sloan & Pearce, NY - 1940)

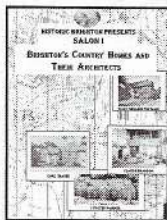
Town of Brighton Cultural Resources Survey - 195 Sandringham Road, pages 13-16

Unitarian Register - February 1958 - Frank Gannett Dies

SALON I, II & III Booklets are now available for purchase.

SALON I - Brighton's Country Homes and Their Architects

Features homes designed by Ward Wellington Ward, Claude Bragdon, Gordon & Kaelber,

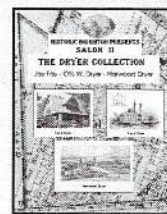


J. Foster Warner, and Carl Traver.

(Made possible by a grant from the State of New York)

SALON II - The Dryer Collection

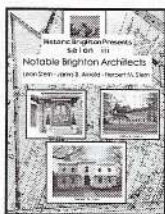
Features the designs of Brighton architects Jay Fay, Otis W. Dryer, and Harwood Dryer



SALON III - Brighton's Notable Architects

Leon Stern, James B. Arnold, and Herbert Stern

(Made possible by a grant from the Genesee Country Antique Dealers' Association)



\$10 per copy

Proceeds will go into Historic Brighton's publishing fund

Supply is limited

Remembering Ruth Kingston Porter

Fifth generation descendant of Brighton pioneers, Ruth Blossom Kingston Porter died at St. John's Home on February 26. Ruth's great grandfather was Marshfield Parsons who came from Massachusetts in 1830 and married Eliza D. Blossom, daughter of Enos Blossom, on November 1, 1837, at the Brighton Presbyterian Church. The Parsons family owned property along East Avenue in Brighton and the homestead, a large brick farmhouse, became the first clubhouse for the Country Club of Rochester when it was founded in 1895.

Marshfield and Eliza Parsons had six children and the eldest, William Marshfield, married Arvilla Lord in 1873. Their only child, Jane Lord Parsons, married Henry Kingston in 1903. They were Ruth's parents.

Ruth grew up in Brighton, graduated from Nazareth College, and served in World War II as a lieutenant in the Women's Army Corps (WACS). When the war ended, she married Clyde H. Porter, a Navy veteran, and went to live on Drury Lane in Brighton where they raised their three children.

One of Ruth's volunteer activities was serving as a trustee on the Brighton Cemetery Association. A major undertaking was her organizing and publishing of the extant cemetery records in 2000. The loose-leaf book features Ruth's drawing of the cemetery entrance. The accompanying photograph shows Ruth with the book in hand, standing next to the headstone of William Marshfield Parsons, her grandfather, during her tour of the cemetery for Historic Brighton in May of 2001.

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Ruth was a charter member and ardent supporter of Historic Brighton. We will all miss her.



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There are 57 properties in the Town of Brighton that have received historic designation by the Brighton Historic Preservation Commission.

Of these 57 historic properties 17 have already ordered and received the 7 1/2" by 9" bronze like plaques and have mounted them on their buildings as an indication of the pride they have in historic preservation.

The black and gold plaque that you see below is available to owners of designated properties for a price of \$145.00, including shipping and handling. As a special incentive your order includes a one year tax deductible membership [or one year extension if already a member] in Historic Brighton. A small portion of the money raised will support the programs of Historic Brighton.

If you would like to purchase a plaque please complete the following order form and send it with your \$145.00 to:

Historic Brighton
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Any Questions? Call: David Whitaker @ 271-7895

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in their Spectrum Gallery

February 1 – March 16, 2013
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Historic Brighton display table at
their March 16-17. 2013
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