



HISTORIC BRIGHTON

CELEBRATING OUR TOWN'S HISTORY AND
EDUCATING OUR COMMUNITY ABOUT BRIGHTON'S PAST

VOLUME 14

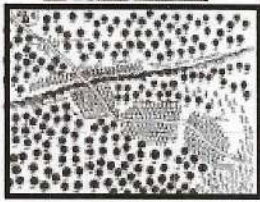
FALL 2013

NUMBER 4

Brighton before it was Brighton

April 5, 2014 will mark 200 years since the Town of Brighton was formed at the Stone Tolan house and Oliver Culver became Brighton's first supervisor. In this anticipatory issue we introduce the French explor-

ers who began to found New France in our region in 1534, the English who fought the French for 200 years and briefly introduced the Dutch to the area we now call Brighton, as well as the first Americans who settled this region after the Revolution and War of 1812.



Denonville's army marched through in 1669; France occupied much of North America in 1750.



A replica of Fort Schuyler was built by the WPA in 1938 at the Landing, which since then has been used as a logo for the Town of Brighton. RR

The English governor had Peter Schuyler Jr. "make a settlement or trading house...upon land belonging to the Sinnekes" in 1720. RR



The old Tryon house, ca 1797 EB

Father Hennepin built a small bark cabin for divine services in 1679.



In 1669 LaSalle came through Jerundequat Bay (also spelled Gerundegut, now Irondequoit) with a fleet of canoes. EB



The new Tryon house EB



The Oliver Culver house, 1805-1815



The original Orringh Stone Tavern, 1792, is the rear part of today's Stone-Tolan house.



Painting of the Great Falls by Count Beaujalais who stopped at the Orringh Stone Tavern GCV

Jacques
Cartier
1534



In 1534, a fateful wind delivers Jacques Cartier's ships to the Gulf of St. Lawrence. By swift and silent couriers, the news reaches the Iroquois tribes south of Lake Ontario.

This will modify forever the Genesee Country and the land we now call Brighton.

Samuel
de
Champlain

1603

In 1603, Samuel de Champlain (1574 - 1635) explored the St. Lawrence River to the rapids above Montreal. Champlain is the founder of Quebec, the father of New France, and the European discoverer of Lake Champlain. By slaughtering Mohawk chiefs, he kindled in the Iroquois an enduring hatred for New France. Seeds of revenge were reinforced in 1615 when Champlain attacked Oneidas on their home ground.

2 was the first European to come to what is now Brighton—ten years before the Pilgrims landed! We know he came here to Tryon's future location because Champlain drew the first map of Lake Ontario in 1612. That map shows Iroquoit Bay; its importance as a gateway to the south is obvious.

As the land between Niagara Falls and Manhattan Island became the territory for which England and France fought for 200 years, Brighton developed into a useful center of portage.

Robert
Cavelier
Sieur de
la Salle

1669



From Sea Breeze bluffs, a Seneca scout watched closely, then loped swiftly south to the Indian Landing to report. It was the tenth of August in 1669, a martyr's day, that Robert Cavelier Sieur de la Salle came to the Indian Landing seeking, of all things, a water route to China.

*La Salle arrived at the Indian Landing on the Anniversary of Cartier's
discovery of the vast village he called Canada*



It was the feast of Saint Lawrence. One hundred and thirty-five years earlier, on the tenth of August in 1534, a fateful wind delivered Jacques Cartier's three ships to the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Thus both bay and river were named for the saint who bravely bore hot coals.

In 1669, the fleet quickly paddled up the bay to the River of Sands and the Indian Landing. La Salle, age thirty-six, had thirty-four men with him—two priests, some Christian Huron guides, and Quebec *coureurs de bois* (colonials).

La Salle came with shipbuilding materials and sought on his several visits to persuade the Senecas to provide him with a guide to the western waterways. The Senecas wined and dined La Salle, yet somehow never told him how to paddle up the Genesee to the Allegheny and Ohio Rivers and on to the Mississippi. Nineteen years later, in 1688, Father Pierre Rafféix, a Jesuit missionary, drew the first map showing the Genesee River as part of the famous Ohio Trail.

La Salle had been in New France for three years, having acquired lands he called *La Chine* (China) near Montreal. He had heard rumors of a fabulous river—the Oheeyo, beyond the nation of Raccoon—that might lead to the Pacific and China. He came to Brighton before it was Brighton, historians later decided, to find out what the Seneca could tell him of this route.

The Seneca welcomed the French cordially. Father Galinée recorded: "We had no sooner arrived than we were visited by a number of Indians, who came to make us small resents of corn, pumpkins, blackberries, and whortleberries.... We made presents on return of knives, awls, needles, glass beads and other articles that they prize.

"Our guides urged us to remain in this place until the next day as the chiefs would not fail to come in the evening to escort us to the village. Night had no sooner come than a large troop of Indians with a number of women loaded with provisions arrived and camped nearby. They made for us bread of corn and fruits."

The next day the Seneca accompanied a small party including La Salle and Father Galinée to their "great village that is in a great plain about [ten miles] in circumference. In order to reach it we had to ascend a small hill" where La Salle and Galinée found "a random collection of about one hundred cabins surrounded by palisades of wood twelve feet high." The French were told that there were four Seneca villages in the area—two with one hundred cabins, two with thirty cabins.

The hosts remained elaborately polite. There were speeches by old men claiming friendship. The guests were given the best cabin. The next day the chiefs and their retinue, numbering about sixty, gathered

(continued on the next page)

for the great council. The moment they sat down each Seneca lit his pipe. "They say that good thoughts are produced by smoking," Father Galinée observed dryly. The council dragged on for eight days during which a prisoner, a young Erie scout, was tortured and put to death in the most horrible way and then eaten as part of the entertainment.

Father Galinée described the food as inedible and served in unwashed wooden bowls. The great council disintegrated into a drunken brawl because of the "Dutch brandy." But the women and children touched him.

"There was not a little child who was not quick to bring us his little gift sometimes stalks of Indian corn, and again pumpkins, and the small fruits they know where to gather in the woods."

But when La Salle asked the guides to take him to Ohio, he was told that the Eries living there were

very very bad. The Eries would search out the camp fires of the French at night, they were told, and murder them with arrows. Father Galinée concluded that the Seneca "trifled with us from day to day" and that "we suffered much from this detention because we lost the most favorable season for traveling." La Salle and his party eventually headed back to Irondequoit Bay, then paddled westward and made their way south to the Allegheny River, spent the winter near Louisville, Kentucky and continued their exploration of the Mississippi.

La Salle returned to Irondequoit Bay in 1678 and 1679 in a substantial sailing vessel that he built and named *The Griffin*. With him came more French missionaries. One, Father Hennepin, was credited with discovering Niagara Falls. But before that, Father Hennepin built a small bark church near the Indian Landing.

4

The Game of Empire Begins and Ends

In May 1677 a small English expedition from Albany was sent to explore the Landing area. The soldiers probably traveled up the Mohawk, down the Oswego River to Lake Ontario. During the next ten years the British established better trading relations with the Iroquois while the French saw a decline in beaver pelts delivered to their outposts.

The demise of New France began because the French were traders, not settlers and because of blunders by Champlain in attacking the Iroquois in the early 1600s and Denonville's expedition of 1687, advertised as a gesture to show the Seneca that they could not "mock" the power of France. Instead, the Senecas became allies of the English in the French and Indian War. In 1759 and 1764, large forces of English



New France once included the land which became Brighton.

soldiers camped at the mouth of Irondequoit Bay on their way to do battle against the French at Niagara.

Had the French prevailed in the French and Indian War, what kind of laws and government would we have now? Would we resemble Quebec? Would we be speaking French today?

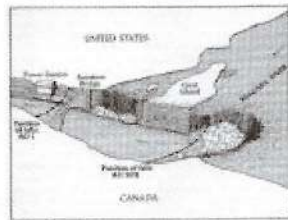
1679



The Reverend Louis Hennepin built "a small bark cabin for divine services" near today's Mercy School for Girls in Brighton.

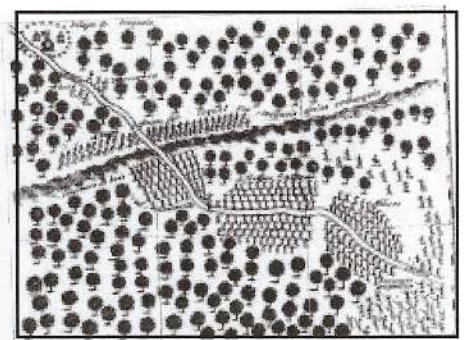
A plaque with these words can be found on the campus of the Mercy School for Girls in Brighton:

In Commemoration of
The First Building for Christian Worship in the Rochester and Irondequoit Valley area,
a small Cabin of bark of trees to perform Divine Service therein. Erected near this spot in June, 1679 by the Franciscan Recollect Missionaries, Reverend Louis Hennepin Reverend Gabriel de la Ribourde Reverend Zenobe Membre and in Memory of other early Missionaries and explorers who visited the region of Irondequoit Bay: Reverend Rene Galinee, Sulpitian, 1669, Reverend Dallier di Casson, Sulpitian, 1669, (Associates of Sieur De LaSalle) Reverend Julian Gamier, Jesuit 1684, and Reverend Pierre Charlevoix, S. J., Historian, 1721.



Left: Father Hennepin is credited with being the European discoverer of St. Anthony's Falls in Minneapolis, the only falls along the Mississippi. Right: Hennepin also "discovered" Niagara Falls, the most voluminous flow of any in North America. The Genesee River falls over the Niagara escarpment too.

1687



Denonville's army marched.

The Marquis de Denonville, Governor General of Canada, led a punitive expedition into Iroquois territory, destroying four Indian towns.

In retaliation for the humiliating defeat at Niagara, the "Sun King," King Louis XIV of France, recalled his ineffectual governor of New France. The king sent in his stead a colonel of the Dragoons who had made his mark fighting the Turks in Austria—René de Brisay, Marquis de Denonville. Men, money, and munitions were assembled at Fort des Sables, a hastily constructed stockade at the entrance of Irondequoit Bay to crush the Iroquois. Because it was so hot, Denonville took off his armor and marched in his underwear through the sand hills. Four hundred men were left to protect supplies and boats while raids commenced on the Seneca settlements. Corn was destroyed in the hope that the Iroquois would perish from starvation. Denonville's punitive expedition provoked the burning of Montreal and contributed to the brief supremacy of the English.

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In 1688 Montreal was destroyed by a Seneca war party in retaliation for the Denonville raid. In 1716 Fort de Sables, a small trading station, was erected by the French at Sea Breeze on Irondequoit Bay. In 1721 the English built Fort Schuyler at the Indian Landing. When Peter Schuyler learned that Fort de Sables was unarmed, his group went back to Albany.

A Dutch Contingent spends a year at the Landing at the behest of the English governor of Colonial New York



The Dutch called them "bush loopers" and the French called them "coureurs du Bois."

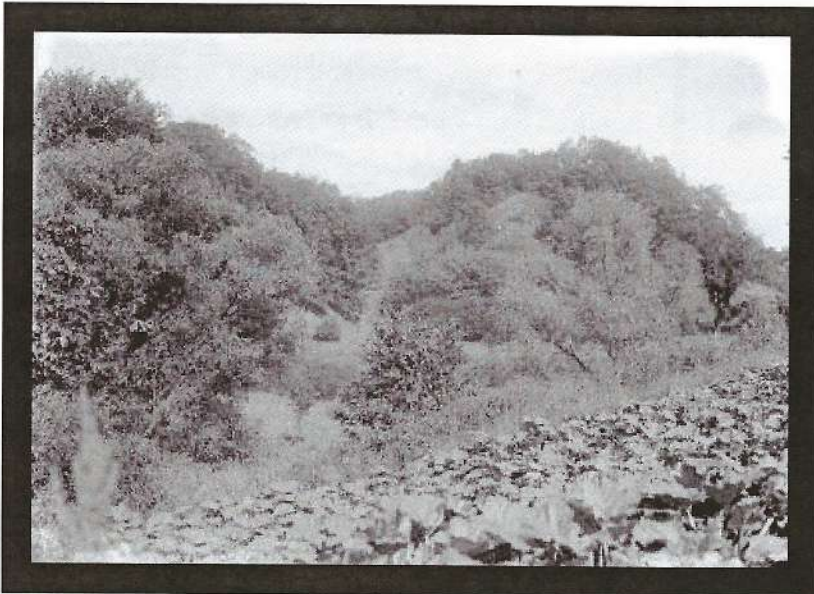
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In 1721 William Burnett, English governor of New York, commissioned Peter Schuyler Jr. and eight other Dutch volunteers from Albany to establish a fort and trading post at the strategic Indian Landing. Its purpose was to keep tabs on the French, to intercept Senecas before they could reach the French trading post at the mouth of the bay, and to influence the Senecas to trade with the English. According to A. Emerson Babcock, "Governor Burnet's instructions were very forcible and explicit and disclose the intense feeling of rivalry between the English and the French.

"Make a settlement or trading house at Jerundequat or any other place this side of Cederahqui Lake [Ontario] upon land belonging to the Sinnekes and use all lawful means to draw fur trade thither by sending notice to the far Indians that you are settled there for ease an incouragement (sic) . . . that they shall have goods cheaper here than ever the French can afford them in Canada." Schuyler was warned "to keep his eyes wide open and send out skouts and spyes and be on your guard. The French are not to be trusted."

Difficulty in supplying the fort from Albany led to Capt. Schuyler and his band being recalled within the year and the trading post/fort disappearing.

In 1938, the WPA under President Roosevelt built what someone considered a replica of the original Fort Schuyler. According to A. Emerson Babcock the original trading post was "a long rectangular building."



Smugglers Cove

Smugglers Cove was so-called because a band of desperate men made this their headquarters after the War of the Revolution. The road to the south from there over which Denonville traveled was called Smugglers Road, according to A. Emerson Babcock, longtime Brighton supervisor. Photo, RR

Butler's Rangers

Butler's Rangers, 1777-1784, was a British loyalist (Tory) provincial regiment during the Revolutionary War. It was originally a ranger company under the command of Major John Butler but was reorganized and expanded to regimental size in the fall of 1777, to serve with and lead the Iroquois forces against the Patriots.

In July 1777, the British General Carleton sent Butler to meet with Seneca representatives at the Indian Landing. Butler and his rangers camped at the oxbow for several days after which the Seneca made the momentous decision to ally themselves with the British.

Six companies of rangers (likely 360 men) were assembled at Fort Niagara in December of 1778. Most members of the regiment were Loyalists from the Mohawk and Susquehanna valleys of colonial New York. Among the regiment were former black slaves; the total number of black soldiers in Butler's Rangers is unknown, with estimates ranging from two to more than a dozen.

Butler's Rangers were accused of participating in — or at least failing to prevent — the Wyoming Valley massacre in July 1778 and the Cherry Valley massacre in November 1778 of white settlers (including some Loyalists) by Joseph Brant's Iroquois. These actions earned Butler's Rangers a reputation for exceptional savagery. They fought principally in western New York and Pennsylvania, but ranged as far west as Ohio and Michigan and as far south as West Virginia.

In 1779, Butler's Rangers fought against Sullivan's army when the latter was destroying many Seneca villages. They may have camped near the Indian Landing during that campaign too.

The rangers' winter quarters were constructed in what is today Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, Canada. After the war, Butler and others fled there and were welcomed with cash bonuses for bravery. Their quarters are still partially standing, and serve as a museum. In Canada, Butler's Rangers are heroes.

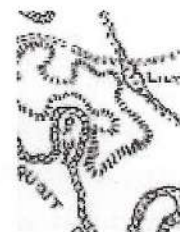
The Sullivan-Clinton Campaign, 1779

The Sullivan-Clinton Campaign of the American Revolution against the Iroquois broke the united war strength of the League of the Iroquois. Most importantly, the soldiers' extended knowledge of the fertility of the Genesee Country led to its rapid settlement after the revolution.

General John Sullivan, leader of the campaign against the Iroquois in 1779, GCV



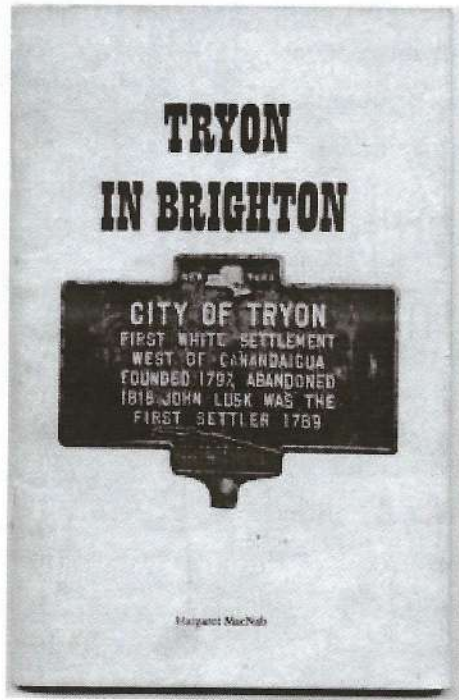
Artist Frederick Remington portrayed Roger's Rangers, another Revolutionary War unit. Detail from Internet



Detail of oxbow at Indian Landing



The Lost City of Tryon



1975 Booklet by Margaret MacNab, then
Town of Brighton Historian

8 In 1796 the Northfield District of Ontario County was organized into the Town of Northfield. The town included all of what is now Rochester east of the Genesee and also Brighton, Pittsford, Perinton, Henrietta, Irondequoit, Penfield, and Webster. A year later John Tryon came to the area and on the east bank of Irondequoit Creek laid out a village at the Indian Landing that he named "City of Tryon."

John Tryon built a five-story log warehouse and made other preparations for a community of considerable size. He and others soon opened a store, a tavern, a distillery, a tannery, an ashery, and a shoe-making business. Agent Augustus Griswold became the first merchant when he brought five sleighloads of merchandise from Schenectady and opened a store in 1798. According to the *Sesquicentennial History of The Town of Brighton*: "Among the goods sold were furs, farm products, liquor, . . . potash, salt, and flour. . . . Barter for furs and bear and deerskins was the

principal means of exchange, particularly with the Indians.

The best-known resident was probably Oliver Culver who worked for the Tryon firm off and on. Another was Asa Dunbar, described as a giant seven-foot mulatto.

Tryon was governed by civil laws of its own enacting. "Famed through a wide area," Dorothy Cumpston writes, "it served customers from the western towns of Ontario and Wayne, and the northern towns of Livingston County. Even a solitary settler of Orleans county was a regular visitor."

"By 1802, Tryon had become a village of families," Margaret McNab writes, . . . "with at least thirty children . . . rather than one of bachelor explorers."

In the end, the death of John Tryon in 1808, the naval activity of the British on Lake Ontario, and the opening of the Erie Canal killed the little Tryon settlement. By 1818, Tryon had been abandoned.

Sources for this newsletter

BoB *The Building of Brighton: A Town with an Interesting Past and a Promising Future* by Mrs. Edward H. Cumpston, Brighton Town Historian, 1952; edited and updated by Margaret MacNab, Brighton Town Historian, 1973.

EB Photo by Elizabeth Brayer

GCV *Genesee Country Village: Scenes of Town and Country in the Nineteenth Century* by Stuart Bolger, 1985

PTT *Preface to Tomorrow: Monroe County History Briefly Told and Illustrated*, 1971

RHSPS *Rochester Historical Society Publication Series*, 1922-

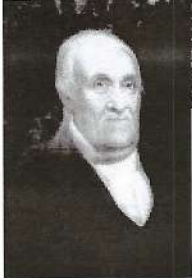
RR Photo courtesy of Ron Richardson

SHTB *Sesquicentennial History of The Town of Brighton, 1814-1864*, Andrew D. Wolfe, 1964

TIB *Tryon in Brighton* by Margaret MacNab, 1975

VORGC *Views of Old Rochester and the Genesee Country*, by Andrew D. Wolfe, 1970

W Wikipedia



The "new" Tryon house at 421 North Landing Road was home to Oliver Culver before he built his East Avenue house. As an old man, he had his coachman drive by to check on the poplar trees he once planted when they were so small he placed barrels over them to protect them from the boys who lived in the Seneca village on Kelly's farm. RR



The "old" Tryon house as seen from the never-failing spring that is now just a marshy spot at the bottom of the hill.



The "old" Tryon house at 319 North Landing Road was once home to the Asa Dunbar family with its seven children.



Two miles south of the City of Tryon, this house was built in 1800 by one Abel Eaton. The original farm of 100 acres was full of springs, all of which were tributaries of the historic Rattlesnake Creek. It was purchased by Matthew Dryer in 1818. Five generations of the "Brighton Dryers" subsequently lived in this house.

The content of some of this newsletter is adapted from the forthcoming book Boomtown Echoes by Elizabeth Brayer.

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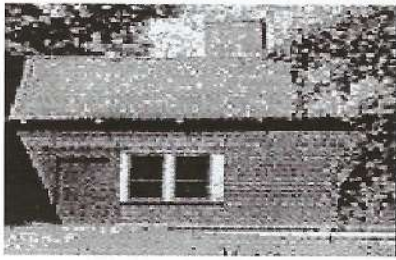
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Editor of this Issue of *Historic Brighton News*: Elizabeth Brayer

From Stone Tavern to Stone-Tolan House

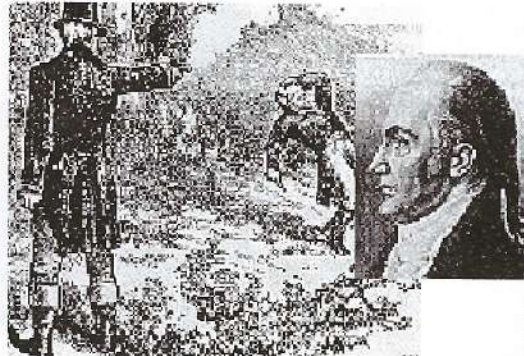


The Stone Tavern was built about 1792, the rear or kitchen portion first. It is 25 by 30 feet, constructed of post and plank with clapboard on the outside. A nine-foot wide four-foot deep fireplace dominates the room.

The Stone Tavern was located on the portage trail from the Landing to the Genesee, near the Seneca Council Rock. After Oliver Culver, Sam Spafford, Orring Stone and others had cut what would become East Avenue, the tavern's choice location on the Canandaigua-Genesee Falls route made it a stopping point for many travelers.



Lafayette



Aaron Burr dispatches Alexander Hamilton



Joseph Brandt



Louis Phillippe



The Great Falls by the Duc de Beaujalais

10 These travelers included Lafayette, Aaron Burr (before he dispatched Alexander Hamilton), Joseph Brandt, and Louis Phillippe — whose brother, the Duc de Beaujalais painted the Great Falls of the Genesee from memory. They all stayed at the Stone Tavern, now the oldest surviving house in Monroe County.



STONE-TOLAN HOUSE
Miss Ellen Tolan • 2390 East Avenue

In 1860 the house with its farm was acquired by John P. Tolan and in 1956 the Landmark Society acquired it, with Miss Ellen Tolan maintaining lifetime use. Allens Creek Garden Club planted and restored the grounds.



Sophisticated wooden Federal quoins adorn a simple wilderness building. Photo by Hans Padelt

The Oliver Culver house



Oliver and Alice Ray Culver moved into this house, then at today's East Avenue and Culver Road. Measured drawings of the house were made by the Department of the Interior.



Photo by Hans Padelt

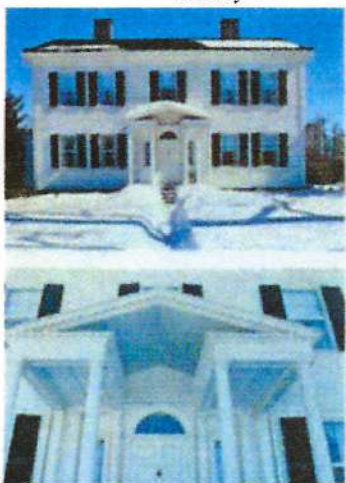
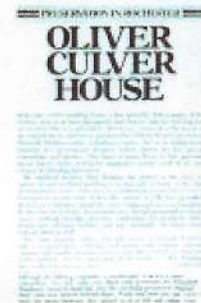
Oliver Culver house and Elizabeth Holihan



Elizabeth Holihan in her library



Oliver Culver



A sophisticated Federal entryway



The White House honors Elizabeth Holihan



Elizabeth Holihan as a young woman



11



Dining room of the Oliver Culver house

Pioneer preservationist, interior designer, and restorationist Elizabeth Holihan (1903-2002) acquired the Oliver Culver house for a reputed \$3,000 in 1941. Prior to that time, the early 19th century inn/residence had remained in the Culver family down to Oliver's great-grandson. For the next sixty years, Miss Holihan lovingly restored the exquisite Federal structure while adding her own touches such as a superb library of rare art and architecture books. Two portraits of Oliver Culver adorned her walls and the third floor was a ballroom with coved ceiling, a pair of fireplaces, and a double-floor system designed to absorb noise and prevent the cracking of plaster.

Miss Holihan, one of the classic grandes dames of local history, became interested in preservation under the tutelage of Helen Ellwanger who formed the Landmark Society of Western New York to save the Campbell-Whittlesey house in the late 1930s. Miss Holihan served as president of the Landmark Society and then, for 23 years, president of the Rochester Historical Society. During her life, which spanned almost a century, Elizabeth Holihan superbly restored and furnished many local landmarks, notably the Campbell-Whittlesey house, Richardson's Inn, and the Patrick Barry house.



Patrick Barry House

The Patrick Barry house is described by Paul Malo, professor of architecture at Syracuse University, as a "splendid and significant example of mid-nineteenth century design and decorative art. Especially notable are the plaster ceilings ...exquisitely detailed and painted.... Throughout the decor is sumptuous, especially the rich window and door hangings."

From Northfield to Brighton, 1796-1814

