

# HISTORIC BRIGHTON NEWS

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NUMBER 1

## 1818 Bear Alert !

In 1818, Gersham Dunham encountered a bear while walking from Penfield to Rochester. The encounter became a chase and Gersham took refuge on top of Council Rock where he loaded and primed his rifle. Whether in desperation or cool calculation, he then shot the bear. History does not record whether he killed it, but he certainly discouraged it some.



## Bravo to the Mighty Ox!

Gideon Cobb had two yoke of oxen for sixty some years in the Town of Brighton. In the earliest days for fitting the fields for sowing and for harvesting crops, the ox was the most important work animal on the frontier. For this there were several reasons. The ox could forage for himself in a new land, eating leaves of trees and shrubs if necessary. The horse, in general, required good hay and grass, items missing in a country so heavily forested. The ox, a slow moving creature, was also a careful one that seldom got into trouble traveling over the uneven ground of fields newly reclaimed from the forest. He never slipped and fell or broke a leg by stepping into a deep hole. Nor was he in any sense a delicate animal. He could stand any kind of weather without sickening from exposure unlike the more delicate horse. His chief disadvantage was that he was slow, but he got the job done.



Source: James Marvin Edmunds, *Farming on the Frontier*, unpublished manuscript.

## Meeting Today @ Stone Tavern

*Town Organization & Laws... April 5, 1814*

**Beware original spelling**

Agreeable to a special act of the Legislative Body of the State of New York in setting off the above mentioned Town of Brighton. Met at Orrangh Stone's on the 5th day of April agreeable to the above date for the purpose of Appointing offices for said Town.

**1st.** Made choice of Nehemiah Hopkins for Town Clerk. **2nd.** Oliver Culver, Supervisor. **3rd.** Orange Stone, Ezekiel Morse, Solomon Gould, Assessors. **4.**



Sylvester Cowles, John Hatch, Jesse Taintor, Commissioners of Highways **5.** Ezra Rogers, Rufus Messenger, Overseers of the Poor **6.** Enos Blossom, Constable **7.** Samuel Spafford, Enos Blossom, David Bush, School Commissioners **8.** Enos Stone, Jobe C. Smith, William Billinghamurst, Inspectors of School Districts. **9.** PathMasters for each Division are as follows: Rufus Messenger for the first Division. Philip Moore 2nd. William Moore 3rd. Robert M. Gordon, 4th. Solomon Gould 5th. Israel Salter 6th. James Scofield 7th. Orange Stone 8th, John B. Lee 9th. Joseph Coldwell 10th. **10.** Voted every pathmaster to be fence viewers. **11.** Voted all rams to be confined from the first day of September to the 10 day of November, and upon neglect of the owner to forfeit and pay to the complainors the sum of five dollars. **12.** Voted all stud horses over the age of eighteen months old that are suffered to run at large the Owners shall pay the sum of ten dollars from the first day of May to the first of September. **13.** Voted all hoggs may run at large agreeable to the Statute Law in such cases. **14.** Voted all cattle found within twenty rods of a tavern in said Town owned by any inhabitant of this Town any time from the first day of December until the first day of March following which shall forfeit the sum of one dollar each. **15.** Voted The supervisor shall have power to raise a sum of money equal to the sum allowed by the State. **16.** Voted to raise Twenty five dollars to defray necessary expenses. **17.** Voted to adjourn said Meeting to the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday in April next at the school house near Nehemiah Hopkins in Town.

Source: Raymond C. Keople, Brighton Town Historian, *A Chronology of Brighton*, a typed manuscript based on town meeting records, 1956.



# Editorial Page



## A REMARKABLE FIFTY YEARS

by: Mary Jo Lanphear  
Town of Brighton Historian

Bracketed by two wars and encompassing major advances in transportation, communication, and human rights, Brighton's first fifty years took place during a period of enormous change.

Only five weeks after Brighton's first town meeting on April 5, 1814, Capt. Sir James Yeo anchored thirteen British warships near the mouth of the Genesee, continuing the War of 1812 that would not end officially until the Treaty of Ghent in December of 1814. That same year, Francis Scott Key wrote *The Star Spangled Banner*.

Plans for a canal across New York State, shelved by the war, came to fruition with the first shovel-full of dirt turned at Rome on July 4, 1817 for the Erie Canal, the greatest public works project of the nineteenth century. Stage coaches and Canal packet boats were augmented by railroad passenger cars when the first trains began interurban service in the Rochester area in 1837.

With the Canal and the railroads came changes in communication. Letters that once took weeks when carried by stage coach were delivered to the post office in Brighton in a few days. By 1844 Samuel F.B. Morse invented the telegraph, making possible the transmission of news as it occurred.

The Abolitionist movement gained strength with the founding of the American Antislavery Society in 1833. The passage by Congress of the Fugitive Slave Act in 1850 impelled citizens into action on the Underground Railroad. The 1848 Women's Rights Convention in Seneca Falls and the passage of the Married Women's Property Act in the same year were milestones on the road to gender equality.

The surrender of General Lee on April 9, 1865 brought an end to the American Civil War.

Other notable national movements, 1814-1864: the Industrial Revolution (1820-1870), the Second Great Awakening (1820-1840), the "Year without a Summer" (1816), the Mormon Church (1830), the Whig party (1834), the Panic of 1837, and the Emancipation Proclamation (1863). Truly, a remarkable era for Brighton's first fifty years!

## CELEBRATING LOCAL HISTORY

by: Arlene Wright Vanderlinde  
Founder & President of Historic Brighton

As the Town of Brighton celebrates its 200 years of history, HISTORIC BRIGHTON, a private, not-for-profit, 501 C-3 organization, marks fifteen years of successfully bringing that history to the community through programs, research and publications. Believing that our history gives us a sense of time and place and an appreciation for what still exists in our built environment, HISTORIC BRIGHTON has delivered on its promise to present four programs and publish four newsletters annually since 1999. We focus on Brighton's rich cultural and architectural heritage, publishing articles on early architects and their work, local institutions, important personages, and our many fine neighborhoods, sites and landmarks. We are very proud of our website which contains much of the research of the organization and its members. Please visit [www.historicbrighton.org](http://www.historicbrighton.org) to see the amazing body of work accomplished by your neighbors who love history and want to share what they have learned.

Unlike our neighboring towns, Brighton's history is not obvious to the passerby. Our landmarks are scattered throughout the town and our historic village was annexed by the growing City of Rochester in 1905. Most people don't realize that Brighton predates Monroe County and Rochester by nearly twenty years and was a booming Erie Canal town with thriving brickyards, nurseries and farms.

HISTORIC BRIGHTON would like all members of this community with a love for history and pride in this town to join HISTORIC BRIGHTON and help keep the celebration going.

### Historic Brighton

Founded 1999

#### Officers:

Arlene Vanderlinde, President  
David Whitaker, Vice-President  
Janet Hopkin, Secretary  
Rome Celli, Treasurer



#### Board of Directors:

Ellen Adams, Elizabeth Brayer, Leo Dodd,  
Monica Gilligan, Beth Keigher, Phil Lederer,  
Gary Lehmann, Sally McGucken,  
Marjorie Perlman, Ron Richardson, Jeff Vincent  
Mary Jo Lanphear - ex-officio.  
Town of Brighton Historian



# Pioneers - 1814 - 1820

The **1814** organizational meeting of the town established 5 school districts. On May 2, 1815 a 6th was added. Schools were run by the parents who organized them. They built the building, hired the teacher, determined the curriculum and supplied the firewood needed to keep the school warm during the cold winters.

**1815** William C. Bloss kept a tavern on the South side of East Avenue, then called River Road and East of Winton Road, then called Holton Road].

In the fall of **1815**, Abner Buckland came with his father to Brighton, cleared a small patch of ground and built a log cabin near Main Street and Culver Road. They wintered over in Phelps, but returned to Brighton in May to see bears, hear wolves and do battle with rattlesnakes. Abner got sick with the fever, but survived.

In **1816**, Dr. Janna Holton purchased 136 acres of land and laid out a road North of East Avenue. He called Holton Road, but we now know as Winton Road. Over the years he bought more land extending up to Irondequoit Bay.

**1817** The first cemetery in the village was started at the corner of East Avenue [River Road] and Winton Road [Holton Road] near the Brewer & Hartsen Store.

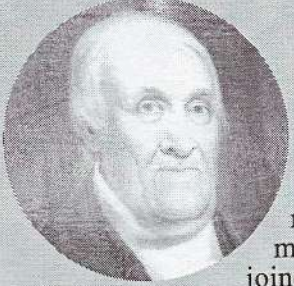
**1817** The first Post Office was started by James Holton. The very next year, he handed his duties over to Benjamin B. Blossom who kept the post moving in the area for the next 30 years.

**1817** The first church was organized by Rev. Solomon Allen, Comfort Williams and Mr. Collins

along Congregational lines. The faithful consisted of 9 men and 13 women at first, but the congregation grew rapidly as the town developed.

**1817** Isaac Barnes opened a popular grain mill on Allen's Creek near the present Brighton Fire Department building at East Avenue and Linden

a flour mill. He constructed a horse-drawn railroad between his new town and Rochesterville. He sold town-lots for stately homes, and town-lots for stores along the river bank. He provided land for warehouses, flour mills, hotels and steamboat docks. And the town grew. In 1815 it had a population of 331. By 1821, it had grown to over 2000.



## Oliver Culver

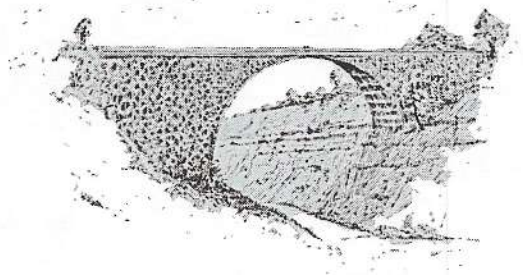
Oliver Culver was born in East Windsor, Connecticut, moved to Vermont, and then migrated to New York. At 18, he joined a band of explorers and traders who stopped at Irondequoit Bay. He concluded a profitable trade deal in Cleveland. A few years later, about 1800, he returned to the area and married Alice Ray of Pittsford. He helped set up a school at the Landing and attended it himself. In 1814, he became Brighton's first Town Supervisor and a year later built a Federal style home at the NE corner of Culver Road and East Avenue. It was moved in 1905 to 70 East Boulevard where it stands today. When the Erie Canal opened, he built the first packet boat in this part of the canal. It was highly profitable, making it possible for him to build a fleet of packets. He remained interested in politics and was elected Supervisor of the town again in 1838 and 1844.

In May of **1818**, work began on a wooden bridge to span the gorge of the Genesee at Carthage. Carthage prospered as a landing place for lake boats. Access to both sides of the river was essential to its further growth. The bridge opened in February, 1819. Unfortunately, it withstood the winds and harsh weather for only 15 months before it collapsed on May 22, 1820.

In **1819**, Fanny Wright, the outspoken English feminist, abolitionist and free thinker, predicted the fall of the Carthage Bridge after climbing down to view the supporting structure that held up this so-called "wonder of the world." She noticed what

Ave. Grain mills were essential to early communities. Grain went bad if not processed. Grinding grain into flour was a way to preserve its value for an extended period of time. Milling allowed farmers to hold on to their grain until they could time its sale to maximize their profit.

In **1817**, when Elisha Strong purchased Caleb Lyon's farm, he laid out town and farm lots for a village he intended to call Carthage, after the Mediterranean powerhouse of antiquity. He set up a school and



the engineers had evidently failed to notice. The center of the arch was badly sprung, as the pilings on each embankment leaned toward each other, causing the bridge to slowly break down in the middle.



# Settlers - 1820's

In **1820** Brighton's population was 1792 of which 355 were farmers, 115 mechanics, and 8 were free blacks. There were 4221 acres of improved land on which grazed 1048 cattle, 245 horses and 1928 sheep. 8477 yards of cloth were manufactured. There were 11 schools serving 614 children.

In **1821** the Warrant House was built at 1956 West Henrietta Road by Thomas White Warrant to replace a log cabin built on this site in 1819. The beams in the basement, with bark still on them, were fashioned from local beech trees. The new structure was originally built in an L-shape but before the Civil War it was squared off by another addition.

**1822** The chestnut trees along Clover Street had to be cut down after an infestation.

The impact of the opening of the Erie Canal in **1822** on Brighton's growth and development can hardly be overstated. Everything grew faster and bigger now that the canal provided an inexpensive way to move products from field to table. Brighton farmers no longer had to scramble to get their farm produce sold before it went bad. Now they had rapid access to markets and could focus on farming more efficiently.

In **1823**, Rochesterville had so expanded that it annexed 257 acres of what was previously Brighton land. After the completion of two bridges over the upper rapids of the Genesee River, the area East and West of the river joined to create a

single entity. It made more sense to govern them as one unit.

**1823** Justus Yale opened a shop at the NW corner of Winton Road and East Avenue.

According to the **1825** New York State census, the population of the town of Brighton was 4375.

Between **1814 and 1825**, the town commissioned 78 surveys for new roads.

In **1826**, a small native American village existed at the Ox-Bow in Ellison Park.

In **1826**, the town elected 7 constables whose main job seemed to be rounding up stray animals and fining those who had let them run wild.

In **1828** a compilation of animal brands was assembled to assist them.

Also in **1826**, Henry Donnelly deeded 50 acres of land near the corner of Elmwood and Monroe Avenues to Hiram Peck, thus subdividing an already successful farm with an existing tenant farmhouse on it.

In **1826** John Hagan built a brick house at 895 Highland Avenue thus replacing a log cabin he built there in 1814. By this time, Hagan owned most of the property around Highland Avenue and Clinton Avenue which is the reason it was called Hagan's Corners.

On Friday the 13th of November in **1829**, Sam Patch leapt to his death into the upper falls of the Genesee on a dare. 8000 breathless spectators watched, hoping that he would pop to the surface downstream. He never did. In the winter, his body was recovered from the icy river and buried in Charlotte Cemetery. Local ministers blamed the crowds for inciting him to jump, but, in fact, Sam had no other occupation, and he had jumped into many rivers before, including the Niagara at the Falls.

## Gideon Cobb

Gideon Cobb arrived in the area in 1812. He fought in the War of 1812 attaining an officer's rank. He bought 300 acres and set up a brick factory. In 1817, he opened an axe and scythe factory with his brother. He cut roads, directed schools, operated a cattle and hog yard, and ran a



tavern, though in his later years he joined his neighbor William Bloss in decrying the evils of alcohol. He was a staunch abolitionist who actively participated in the Underground Railroad. With his four oxen, he cleared the land that became Monroe Avenue. But for all his accomplishments, he was best known as a storyteller.

By **1825**, the town had a cemetery, church, and post office, as well as stores opened by William Perrin and Justus Yale. Louis Wilcox and William C. Bloss ran taverns, drinks only, while Israel Blossom opened a public house where both food and drink were served.



# Farmers - 1830's

By 1830, the Spring House was built on Monroe Avenue by Joseph Tousey to act as a canal-side rest stop for food and overnight lodging. There was a sulphur spring nearby but many believe the name came from the sprung dancing surface on the third floor.

In 1830, the last wolf was killed in Monroe County. The wolf, which measured five and a half feet long, was pursued by a posse of about 100 men with guns.

Also in 1830, the Town Meeting voted that a lawful fence shall be four and a half feet high. Fence viewers were paid a dollar a day to insure it.

About 1830, David Hagaman, son of John Hagaman, built a brick home at 661 Highland Avenue at the corner of Highland and Howland Avenues. The bricks were made from local clay and fired by Gideon Cobb in his kiln.

In 1830, Austin Crittenden built the Federal style frame house at 1600 Crittenden Road for his bride Sarah Warrant. Austin was Town Supervisor from 1871-2 and first trustee of the Number 4 School District.

In 1831, a \$5 fine was levied on any farmer who failed to cut his Canadian thistle at least twice a year.

1832 Clover Street was named for the clover that grew along its path.

1832 A severe cholera epidemic caused many deaths. A man who came to area on the Erie Canal brought the first case.

## Amasa & Cornelia Drake



Amasa Drake traveled all over New York as a master mason and engineer, but Brighton was his home. He was instrumental in building the stepped locks at Lockport. For two years, he was foreman of masonry for the Delaware and Hudson Canal. He supervised the construction of the Clarissa Street and Main Street bridges across the Genesee River. But Drake's greatest achievement was supervising the masonry construction of the Erie Canal aqueduct at Rochester which cost an astounding \$600,000. It is still being used as a bridge today. In 1834, he built a home at 474 Winton Road adjoining the Hooker Nursery on Clover Street. There he and his wife Cornelia raised 6 children. Not surprisingly, the canal ran right through his property. Despite a life of heavy masonry work, he lived to well over 80. Cornelia Drake was a devout Christian Congregationalist who spent much of her life doing charitable work for the poor, especially at the Home for the Friendless where she was an energetic manager.

In 1835, the town voted that Oliver Culver's yard be considered the town pound. Into this compound Culver received a "good sized brown horse with white foot" and a "star on the forehead" and "a black cow with some white spots on her hips and belly." Stray animals caused a great deal of damage and appear to have been one of the main issues for early town government. The fine of \$1 was considered punishment enough for those responsible.

By 1835, Brighton had a thriving woolen trade which included 2 fulling mills which cleansed raw wool of oil and dirt, 4 carding mills which oriented the wool fibers so they can be spun, and 1 woolen factory which wove the wool into fabric.

Sources: Raymond C. Keople, Brighton Town Historian, *A Chronology of Brighton*, a typed manuscript based on town meeting records, 1956 and *History of Monroe County, New York*, Everts, Ensign and Everts, Philadelphia, PA, 1877

In 1833, the town voted to give school inspectors \$1 a day for their services PLUS \$.37 1/2 for certifying each teacher. The next year it was increased to \$.50, but the year after that it was reduced to \$.25. Obviously, the job of inspecting teachers was difficult to value.

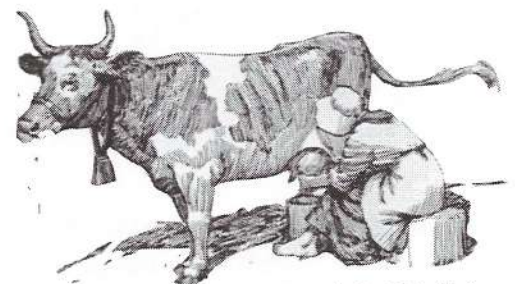


Illustration by: Edwin Tunis



# Farmers - 1830's

**1837** Justis Yale opened a nursery. At first, he grew only apple trees, but after a few years he expanded to fruit trees of all kinds.

On May 22<sup>nd</sup>, **1837**, Marshfield Parsons wrote a long, sad letter to his sister Tirzah Parsons in Granville, MA which reflects his troubles after the national financial panic of 1837. "Times are hard. We are all standing still. The Rich as well as the Poor do not know which way to turn." Marshfield complains that his brother, the banker, has wool he can't sell and that his own mill has ground to a halt for lack of commerce. During a recent trip to Buffalo, he was shocked to discover that all the banks were closed. "Never was there such times I wish I was back on the farm."

In **1838**, Hiram Peck, who had a farm at the Twelve Corners between Elmwood Avenue and Winton Road, proudly announced the birth of his son Henry.



Illustration by:  
Edwin Tunis

In **1838**, Isaac Moore asked his sister-in-law, Celestia A. Bloss, to teach his children, because he had a

dispute with the residents of the local school district. She suggested that adding other children to the student body would benefit the Moore children. When that school outgrew the room in the Moore house, Isaac built the Garden School in his backyard. When the Garden

wing was added. His house became Brighton's first designated landmark. Wallace was elected to the Monroe County Agricultural Society in 1842 and Town Supervisor in 1855. In 1865, he was appointed warden of the Monroe County Insane Asylum soon after it was separated from the Alms House.

Charles Frederick Crosman founded Crosman Seeds in **1838** to supply reliable seeds to farmers settling in the Genesee Valley and those heading west.

In **1838**, Mount Hope Cemetery was established in Brighton. Two years later, the area in which it was located was annexed by the City of Rochester. That year the population of Brighton was 2373, down from earlier counts due to the annexation of land by Rochester.

In **1839** Mr. and Mrs. Myron Holley were joined by 54 of their neighbors in a petition to abolish slavery delivered to the House of Representatives

In **1839**, people in Brighton's northeastern quadrant were granted independent status as the Town of Irondequoit. In **1839** three-quarters of Irondequoit was uninhabited. No roads existed until 1830. No inhabitants lived north of Norton Street until after 1830.

## Isaac Moore



Isaac Moore was a community leader with a "take charge" attitude. He was an active Whig Party member, a nursery owner, a farmer, a director of a brick factory, active in the temperance movement, VP of the NYS Agricultural Society, Superintendent of the Erie Canal, instrumental in creating the Clover Street Seminary, President of the Rochester & Pittsford Plank Road and an avid whist player. He was an important community-builder.

School became too small, he sold Celestia five acres at the corner of Elmwood and Clover and incorporated the Clover Street Seminary.

Sometime in the late **1830s**, Timothy Wallace built the Greek Revival brick house at 2169 Clinton Avenue South. The house was converted to a two-family residence in 1867 at which time the north



# Community Development - 1840's

**1840** The Auburn & Rochester Railroad started to serve Brighton via a station near Winton and East Avenue which was part of the New York Central's "Auburn Road."

According to Census records, in the **1840s** Brighton experienced a 31% rate of population growth from 2376 in 1840 to 3117 in 1850.

**1841** Careful accounting revealed that the Brighton town government was in the black by \$42.08. The town promptly voted to do a new survey of town roads not to exceed \$100.00!

In **1842**, Thomas C. Caley, originally from the Isle of Man, settled in Brighton and opened a blacksmith's shop near the NW corner of East Avenue and Winton Road. Most blacksmiths were farriers, repairing and replacing horseshoes, but many also had other related trades. Caley made wagons and stagecoaches. Wagons were the work-a-day need of common farmers and trades people. Stagecoaches were much more complicated, involving complex joinery and harness work. Caley is said to have kept five forges working at once.

In **1842**, a wood framed farmhouse on a cobblestone foundation was built at 1564 East River Road. It is a beautifully proportioned example of

settle Brighton and other communities along the canal's route.

In **1843**, Charles P. Barnes, previously of Stockbridge, MA, came to Brighton to purchase land along Allyn's Creek near Linden Avenue for a grist mill. He quickly became a respected merchant and for 8 years was a Justice of the Peace.

**1844** Brighton supported 5 taverns each of which paid a permit fee of \$15 to operate.

**1845** Brighton supported 5 taverns each of which paid a permit fee of \$10 to operate.

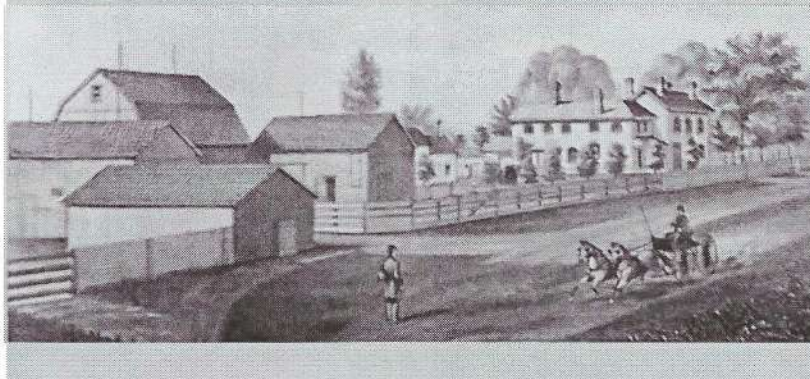
In **1849** Brighton voted to raise the fee to \$25, but rolled it back to \$10 before the year was out. What this checkered history means is difficult to tell. By the 1840s the Temperance Movement was well underway. Drunkenness was a common problem and regulating liquor was becoming a big issue for every town.

By **1851**, there were 7 taverns in Brighton.



## Abner Buckland

Abner Buckland was just 23, when his father died leaving him to support his mother and 6 siblings. Instead of buckling under the burden, Abner got to work "with uncommon energy," and 6 years later, he had saved \$150 which he used to purchase 50 acres of wild woodland near the current corner of Winton and Westfall Roads. There he erected a log cabin and cleared enough land to make bricks which he did for the next 30 years. Buckland's bricks were used to build many of Rochester's businesses and stately homes. In 1830, he built a brick home for himself and his family of six. He was an ardent and faithful Christian.



the kind of fine carpentry and masonry which became available in the wake of the canal's construction. Many of the craftsmen who found work building the canal stayed to



# Community Development - 1840's

**1845** Isaac Moore and his wife sold Celestia Bloss 5 acres of land at the corner of Clover Street and Elmwood Avenue for the expansion of the Clover Street Seminary. It attracted pupils from Vermont, Virginia, Canada, Michigan, Ohio, and in New York from Syracuse, Oswego and Albany.

In **1845**, Jason Baker Esq. built a small farmhouse at 1600 Highland Avenue. Over the years, as he prospered, it grew in size to its present stately appearance. Baker was elected Town Supervisor in **1849**. The original property was bounded by Culver Road, Harvard Street, Winton Road and Highland Avenue.

William Bloss ran a tavern until he saw the error of his ways, poured all his liquor into the canal and took up the cause of temperance -- amongst others. He edited an abolitionist newspaper and advocated for women's rights. With his friend, Zebulon Brockway, he conducted church services at the Monroe County Penitentiary.

Zebulon Brockway, Warden of the Monroe County Penitentiary, realizing that he had far too many repeat inmates, recommended indeterminate sentences, thus

trade skills so prisoners could get jobs when they were released.

In the late 1840s, Brighton was still largely rural. Everyone hunted. So

it is no surprise that Brighton supported 3 powder mills, Marshfield Parsons, Fairbanks and Conley, and the Brighton Powder Mill.

In **1849**, Austin Crittenden, age 41, worked his farm in West Brighton with his wife, Sarah, age 39, their sons Austin F, age 14, Thomas, age 11, Cornelius, age 10 and William, age 8, and their daughters Sarah, age 16, Caroline, age 13, and Pharcus, age 4. They also had a hired man named William Gladden, age 19, who lived with them. Large families were common on farms.



## Taxes Then & Now!

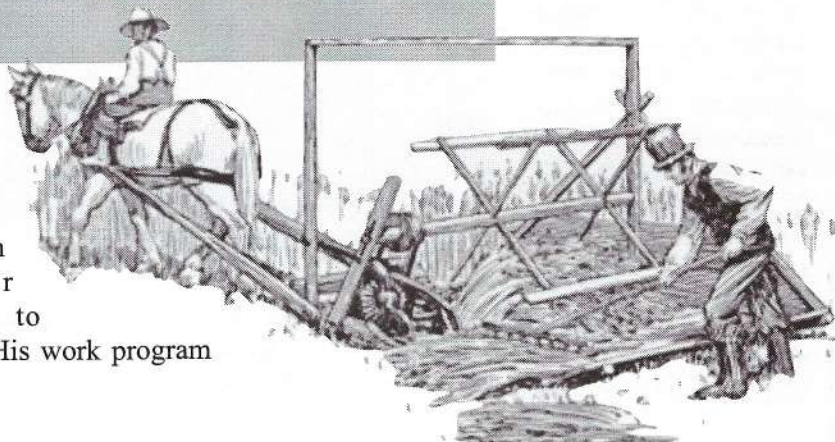
In 1841 the town assessed the total of all taxable property in Brighton at \$68,552. Today the assessed value of all taxable property is something like \$2.5 billion.

**That's 37,500 times larger.**

The total town taxes collected in 1841 were \$43.18. Today, that is in 2012, the tax receiver collected \$22.4 million dollars. That's 520,930 times larger. We're taxed a whole lot more than our ancestors. Of course, today we receive a lot more from the town in services such as police, fire, library, street maintenance, and funding for the town historian! In 1841, it cost \$2.05 or 4.7% to collect these taxes. The tax collector was paid a percentage of what he brought in. Today, the Receiver of Taxes is also the Town Clerk who does a lot of other things in addition to tax collection, but nonetheless, in 2012 it cost the town just \$112,325 or one half of one percent to collect the taxes.

creating  
a

motivation  
f o r  
prisoners to  
reform. His work program  
taught



The first McCormick reaper.  
Illustration by: Edwin Tunis



# Business Development - 1850's

**1850** Census of Brighton revealed there were 458 families, but only 429 houses. Families of merchants who lived over their stores may account for some of the difference, but many larger farms provided housing for tenant families all in one large farmhouse.

The **1850** Census of Brighton reported the white male population to be 1665; the white female population to be 1431 and the total population to be 3096, not counting 21 "colored" people, not differentiated by sex and not added to the total. One thing is clear. They were not slaves. New York State had engaged in a long and complex process of legally freeing the slaves which was more or less complete by 1827.

In the **1850s** most fences were either made of stone or split rails, but there were still plenty of stump fences left over from pioneering days. By this time, however, these stump fences were grown over with vines and creepers which were just as effective as barbed wire. Barbed wire was first patented in 1867 but wasn't made commercially available until the mid 1870s.

As of **1851**, the Town of Brighton had been in existence for 37 years and yet town meetings were still being held in private residences. Over this period the business of

government changed. Less attention was being paid to regulating fences and restraining wild animals and more attention was being paid to highway development, regulating schools, licensing taverns and grocery stores, and law enforcement. Brighton was

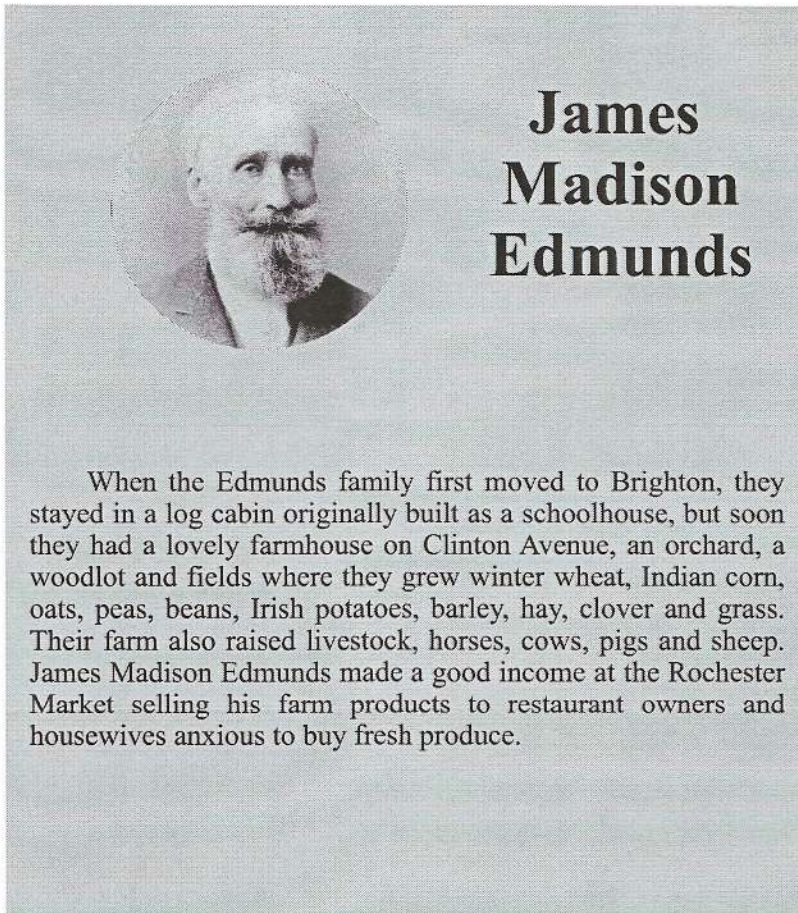
his horse, for the generous sum of just \$1, but to gain access to this land, the university had to buy an additional 17 acres along University Avenue which cost \$17,000!

In **1853** the Rochester and Syracuse Railroad was put into operation.

**1853** the Rochester, Auburn & Syracuse Railroad built a second line east out of Rochester following the Erie Canal directly to Syracuse. this later became the New York Central Main Line.

**1853** Gideon Cobb's brickyard merged with the Brighton yards of Burton & Wilson to form the Rochester Brick & Tile Co. Rochester was expanding rapidly and brick buildings were both beautiful and fire resistant.

In **1855**, Timothy Wallace, well known for his brick house at 2169 Clinton Avenue and his work with the Monroe County Agricultural Society, was elected Town Supervisor.



**James  
Madison  
Edmunds**

When the Edmunds family first moved to Brighton, they stayed in a log cabin originally built as a schoolhouse, but soon they had a lovely farmhouse on Clinton Avenue, an orchard, a woodlot and fields where they grew winter wheat, Indian corn, oats, peas, beans, Irish potatoes, barley, hay, clover and grass. Their farm also raised livestock, horses, cows, pigs and sheep. James Madison Edmunds made a good income at the Rochester Market selling his farm products to restaurant owners and housewives anxious to buy fresh produce.

developing a more complex community.

**1853** Frank T. Ellison was born. In 1926 he donated to Monroe County the land that became Ellison Park.

In **1853**, Azariah Boody sold the University of Rochester 8 acres of cow pasturage in a strip of land between Goodman Avenue and Prince Street, a street named after



Illustration by: Edwin Tunis



# Business Development - 1850's

**1853** The five railroad lines radiating out of Rochester were all consolidated and joined to 10 New York lines by the New York Central System, thus creating a railroad monopoly in Rochester.

In the **1850s**, steam locomotives were being made lighter and faster than ever, achieving speeds of up to 30 mph! At these speeds passengers worried they would lose consciousness or have their brains scrambled from the raw sensation of speed.

In **1850**, an acre of cleared farmland cost \$500, but relative to today, food prices were high. A bushel of wheat cost \$1.12. Corn brought in \$.50; barley \$.50; oats \$.30 and potatoes averaged \$.25. So at today's corn prices, for example, it takes the value of just over 370 bushels of corn to equal the value of an acre of farmland, whereas in 1850 just 100 bushels of corn would do it.

*Source: Rochester Historical Society VIII 315.*

In **1855**, the miller C. M. Barnes, age 44, lived with his wife H. Maria Barnes, age 40, and their children C.P. Barnes, age 11 and Franklin age 7. They lived with a hired hand named Nicholas Wabel, age 29. As

a general rule, merchants and millers didn't need large families to run their family businesses.

**1854** Rochester merchants built the Rochester & Genesee Valley Railroad to connect Avon with the

would blow up again September 12<sup>th</sup>, both times with no loss of life. To limit the damage, the various stages of black powder production were performed in 5 separate buildings along Allen's Creek.

In **1856** the Town Meeting was held at the West Brighton House.

In **1857** the Town Meeting was held at the Tavern House in East Brighton.

**1856** The second Carthage Bridge was completed.

**1857** The second Carthage Bridge collapsed.

**1858** The East Avenue Hotel thrived at the corner of Winton Road and East Avenue.



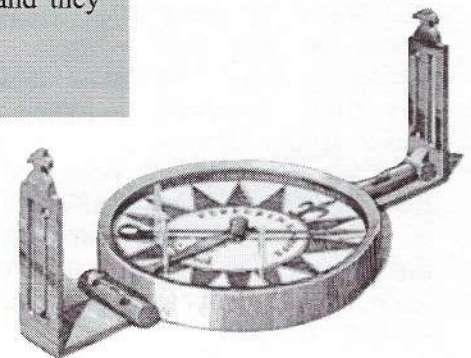
## James Vick

In 1860, James Vick began the business of growing flowers to sell seeds by combining his two passions, printing and growing flowers. His success was largely dependent upon three factors: (1) the growth and new sophistication of the American family and home. Women in particular wanted a variety of flowers for their gardens. (2) The growth of lithographic printing methods made it possible for Vick to advertise his flowers by means of brilliantly colored illustrations. His seed packages were likewise bright and attractive thanks to lithographic color. (3) The rise of women's magazines gave Vick the ideal media outlet for his advertisements. Improvements in education were creating women who were reading books and magazines much more widely. The net effect: Vick sent his seeds all over North America, and they changed the look of the Victorian home

Erie Canal.

February 6, **1855** the temperature dipped to 26 below zero.

Tues. May 8<sup>th</sup> **1855** while it was alternately snowing and raining, the Genesee Powder Mills in Corbett's Glen exploded killing 5 men. The same mills blew up January 3d and



Surveyor's Compass

Illustration by: Edwin Tunis



# Regional Development

## & the Run Up to War 1860-1864

Annexation of land reduced the population of Brighton repeatedly. As a result, it took until **1860** for Brighton's population [3138] to exceed its 1830 number [3128].

**1860** Local politics was particularly hotly contested in this year. Henry H. Holden beat out Gideon Cobb for the office of Town Supervisor 223 to 214. Ebenezer Bowen beat out Benjamin Blossom in a race for Town Clerk 225 to 210. The population of Brighton was 3138. This means that only roughly 25% of the eligible voters exercised the franchise, about the same as many local elections today. Of course, at this time, eligible voters included only adult white males. Black males were enfranchised by the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment in 1870, but women didn't get the right to vote until 1920 after the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment.

**1860** The Clover Street Seminary came to be known as the Genesee Model School.

**1860** West Brighton was located along what is now West Henrietta Road near Elmwood Avenue. It had 15 houses and a Congregational Church in addition to the County Penitentiary, Poor House, Insane Hospital and several factories.

**1860** Seth Green, fish farming pioneer, caught a 45-pound sturgeon below the lower falls of the Genesee River. In **1864** he opened a Salmon farm in Caledonia, the first in America.

actively involved in the Underground Railway which moved escaped slaves from the South to Canada where they could resettle without fear of slave-catchers and re-enslavement.

**1864** Gideon Cobb died. Before 1820, he founded a brick kiln and yard on Monroe Avenue. In the same year, he married Roxana Worden. He later opened his house as a stage coach tavern. Cobb's Hill is named after him.

In **1865**, the Episcopal Reverend Thomas Drum bought the Clover Street Seminary and opened a boys boarding school which lasted for about a dozen years. Tuition was \$300 a year.

### Robert Bell



Robert Bell was a Brighton fruit farmer. Born in Ireland but of Scottish ancestry, he came to America in 1845 to scout out a farm. Two years later, he returned with his family and settled in West Brighton where he had 5 children. On his new farm, about a mile south of Mount Hope Cemetery, he focused on growing pears. He cultivated 1500 trees with 47 varieties of fruit. He named his farm "Pear Valley." He took top honors for his pears, fine horses and Durham cattle at both county and state fairs.

Some 200 Brighton men fought in all branches of the military during the Civil War **1861-1865**, and at least 4 died in the service.

In **1862**, the Rochester and Brighton Railroad began providing horse drawn service between the two towns.

William Clough Bloss and many members of the Warrant family were



Bake Kettle

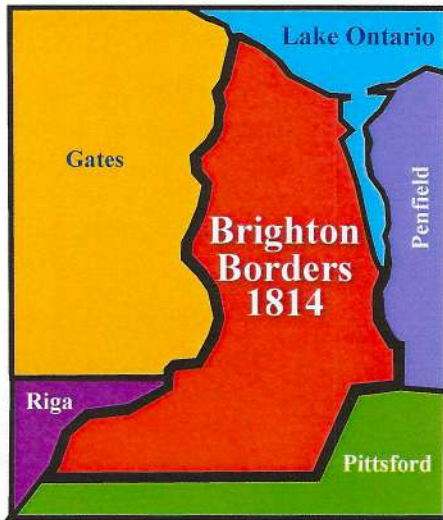
Illustration by: Edwin Tunis



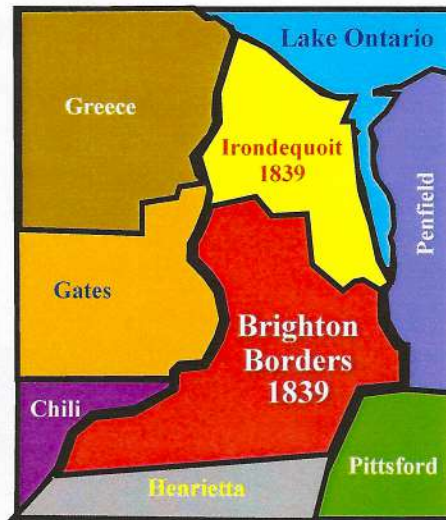


# PICTURE PAGE

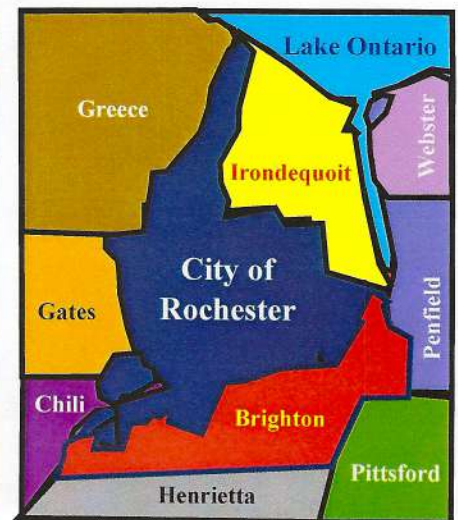
## 1814-1864



1814 BRIGHTON KING



1839 IRONDEQUOIT  
ESTABLISHED



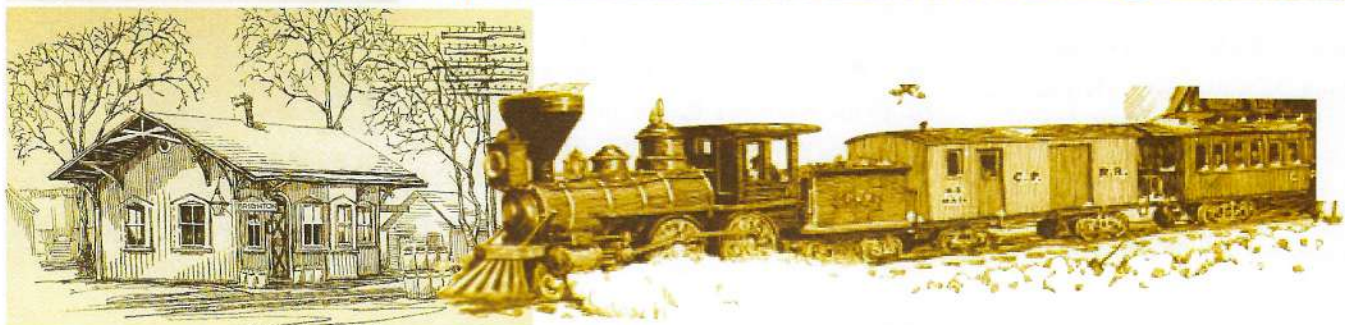
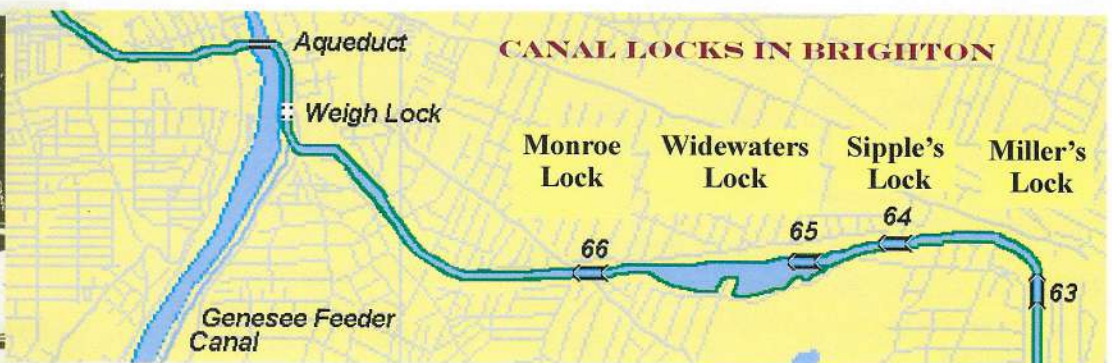
ROCHESTER GROWS  
ON BRIGHTON'S LAND



PINNACLE RANGE  
FORCED A SHARP TURN TO ERIE CANAL



VIEW OF NEW YORK STATE FAIR GROUNDS AT ROCHESTER, 1862  
VIEW NYS FAIR GROUNDS  
WEST BRIGHTON 1862



BRIGHTON STATION @ BRIGHTON VILLAGE