



# HISTORIC BRIGHTON

## Newsletter and Journal

*Celebrating our Town's history and educating our community about Brighton's past.*

Volume 19, No. 1

Winter 2018

### A Tribute to Betsy Brayer

Since 2000, part of Historic Brighton's mission has been to produce a quality publication to bring information relating to our community's historic personages, landmarks, neighborhoods, sites, and landscapes. Most of the sixty-eight issues were produced under the leadership of Elizabeth (Betsy) Brayer. Betsy served as our editor and wrote many of the articles the community has enjoyed over the past 17 years. Betsy generously shared her love of history, research, and writing, creating and editing our quarterly publication. Over 34,000 copies have been distributed to our members and to the community. We are grateful and proud to have worked with Betsy all these years. Sadly, we, and the community, lost this amazing treasure on November 1, 2017.

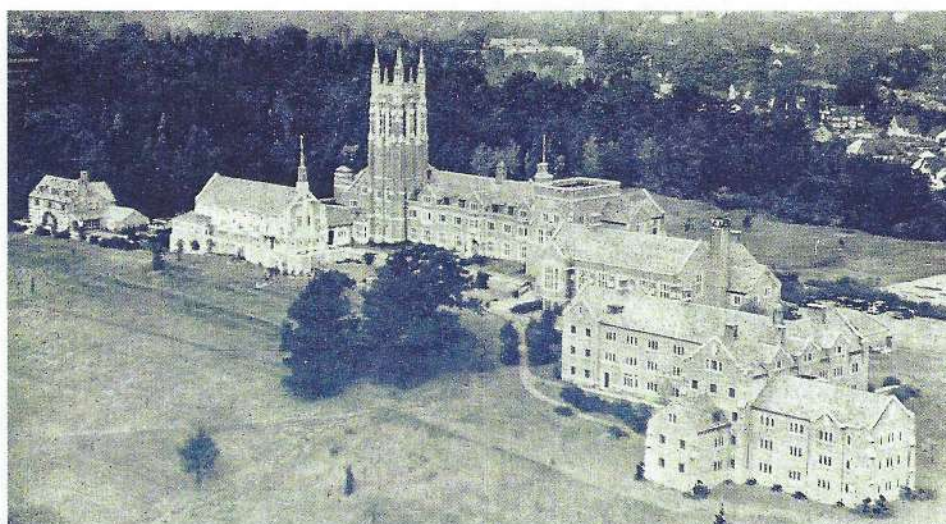
Both Betsy and her husband, the late Sheldon Brayer, were long-time trustees of Historic Brighton. Shel was a past president and made many meaningful contributions to our organization. They will be remembered as steadfast supporters of Historic Brighton and are both greatly missed. We are grateful for the legacy of history they have left us.

*Historic Brighton Board of Trustees*

### 18<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL MEETING OF HISTORIC BRIGHTON

#### The City on a Hill

*Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School: Past, Present, and Future*  
*Presented by: Christopher Brandt*



Aerial postcard view looking northwest, c.1936.

**Sunday, January 28, 2018 | 2:30 pm**  
**First Baptist Church of Rochester**  
**175 Allens Creek Road, Rochester, NY 14618**

All Historic Brighton quarterly meetings are  
free and open to the community.

**Historic Brighton acknowledges with gratitude:**



Founded in 1968

1720 Monroe Avenue  
Rochester, NY 14618  
(585) 271-4931

*for their generous support and sponsorship of this  
issue of Historic Brighton News and Journal*



# The Burned-over District

By Mary Jo Lanphear, Town of Brighton Historian

Along the line of the Erie Canal in the second quarter of the nineteenth century stretched the Burned-over District, so called because the fires of evangelization swept over it again and again. Of this phenomenon historian Whitney Cross says, "Upon this broad belt of land congregated a people extraordinarily given to unusual religious beliefs, peculiarly devoted to crusades aimed at the perfection of mankind and the attainment of millennial happiness."

Settled primarily by New Englanders, the frontier settlement on the Genesee River rapidly evolved into a prosperous agrarian and manufacturing urban area. With their Yankee heritage came a solid religiosity and moral intensity that welcomed the waves of revivalism that occurred often during the pioneering period in western New York. Into this milieu in September of 1830 came Charles Grandison Finney, a Presbyterian minister and evangelist who had been invited by Josiah Bissell, a Brighton merchant. Bissell's invitation to Finney said "Rochesterians had a large budget of evils rolling through our land & among us along the canal, and that the citizens know not the power of the Gospel of Jesus to stop the corruption." (Paul Johnson, *A Shopkeeper's Millennium*)

Finney used rhetoric, all night prayer meetings, and individual exhortation by church members going door-to-door. Householders were encouraged to have family devotions. All were urged to read and share the Bible. This had a side effect as the literacy rate for women greatly increased.

Another side effect of the evangelization was the formation of the Whig party in 1834 when a group of leading citizens of Rochester came together to organize a party that would challenge the prevailing Democrats. The Whigs proposed using state laws to enforce sobriety and economic discipline on the populace. The religious zeal of the revivals had produced a single mindedness among the city's elite. The party appealed to entrepreneurs, planters, reformers, and the emerging middle class, but by 1854 most Whigs had joined the newly-formed Republican party.

Contemporaneous to the Second Great Awakening, as the evangelization movement is often called, was the beginning of the Mormon religion by Joseph Smith, Jr., in nearby Palmyra. In 1833 William Miller formed the Millerites who believed that the Second Coming of

Christ would occur about 1843-1844. Also about this time, perfectionist groups began forming self-contained communities that found their way to western New York State. Charles Fourier published *The Phalanx*, a journal devoted to social reform, and founded a phalanx community in Ontario County. Later he reorganized the Brook Farm community in Massachusetts. In 1843 John Humphrey Noyes established the Oneida community, a communal religious society. His 1869 book, *A History of American Socialisms*, detailed seventy-two perfectionist groups in New York State and the Mid-west founded in the second quarter of the nineteenth century.

The history of the Burned-over District is part of the rich heritage of the Genesee Country.

—HB—





# The First Baptist Church of Rochester: 1818-2018

By Arlene A. Vanderlinde

There is no cornerstone to mark the beginning of the First Baptist Church in 1818. The church began with seven women and five men, all residents of rural Brighton. On June 22, 1818 these people met at the home of Captain Jacob Kennedy: Amos Graves (appointed clerk); Ira Sperry, Johnson Sperry, Luther Minor; Immer Reynolds, Sally Sperry, Laura Sperry, Lydia Reynolds, Urancy Kennedy, Lydia Culver, Anna Graves. They could never have imagined that the modest institution they were creating would have such an immense influence on the community.

After a brief period of meeting in private homes, the small congregation, known as the First Baptist Church of Brighton, moved to nearby Rochesterville. They held services in several places as their congregation grew. Among them were the No. 1 Schoolhouse at South Fitzhugh and Buffalo Street (later renamed Main Street); the jury room of the first Monroe County Court House on Buffalo Street; Leonard's Ballroom located over the stable of the Clinton Hotel on Exchange & Mill Street. After ten years, the First Baptists purchased the small frame meeting house which had been built by the First Presbyterians and later used by the Second Presbyterians (later known as Brick Presbyterians). They paid \$1500 for their first permanent home, located on State Street (Carroll Street), and remained there for ten years.

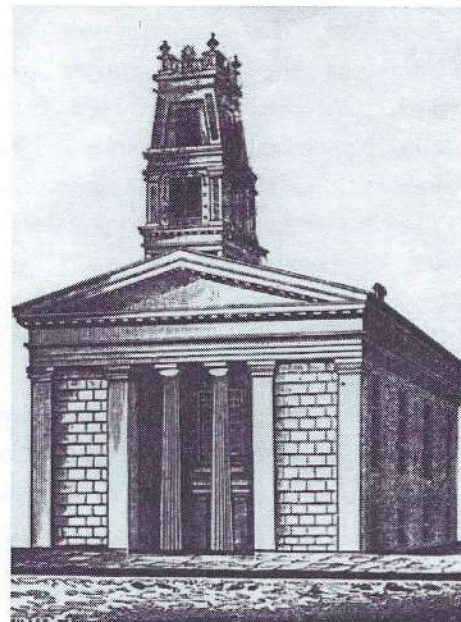
Quotes from letters and diaries of early church members reveal some details about the colorful personalities that served as some of the church's first pastors:

Eliphalet M. Spencer was the first pastor (1819-1820). He had been a teacher at Middlebury Academy, Wyoming County, NY. He was "Credited with eloquence and zeal", but remained only one year because of lack of funds for salary.

Eleazer Savage (1823-1826) came to Rochester on the Erie Canal. Rev. Savage was 23 years old when he was called to the Baptist Church and was the first pastoral graduate of the Theological Institute at Hamilton (later became Colgate Divinity). He was considered a "young man of energy and devotion." The church membership grew from 30 members to 100 during his leadership. He resigned after three years because there was no money for salary.

Oliver C. Comstock, D. D. (1827-1835). Rev. Dr. Comstock was an experienced clergyman, former member of Congress from Tompkins County, who had been chaplain in the House of Representatives, a man "of fine presence and great ability."

It was during the Second Great Awakening, led by Dr. Charles G. Finney (who made frequent trips to Rochester to lead revival meetings), that First Baptist saw its greatest growth in membership. It was in 1830 that this great religious awakening took root in Rochester. Young Alvah Strong attended one of the frequent revival meetings and in 1831 was received into the fellowship of the First Baptist Church of Rochester where he would remain for the remainder of his life, serving as a deacon for over four decades. His two sons, Augustus Hopkins and Henry Alvah, would have a profound influence on the future of



*Etching of the first church*

the American Baptist denomination and on the Rochester community.

The church grew to 410 members by 1838. Under the leadership of Dr. Pharcellus Church (1835-1848), a new building was commissioned. This Greek Revival stone structure, which was dedicated in 1839, was located at Church and N. Fitzhugh Streets and cost \$18,000 to build.

Next came Dr. Justin A. Smith (1848-1853) who was a man of "contemplative spirit, gentle and persuasive." During his leadership at First Baptist, both the Rochester Theological Seminary and the University of Rochester were established. The New York State Baptist Union for Ministerial Education was organized to bring a new Institute of Higher Education to Rochester. The \$150,000 cost of the founding of these institutions was largely funded by members of the congregation. Alvah Strong was one of the largest contributors to this effort. Able and distinguished professors and students were added



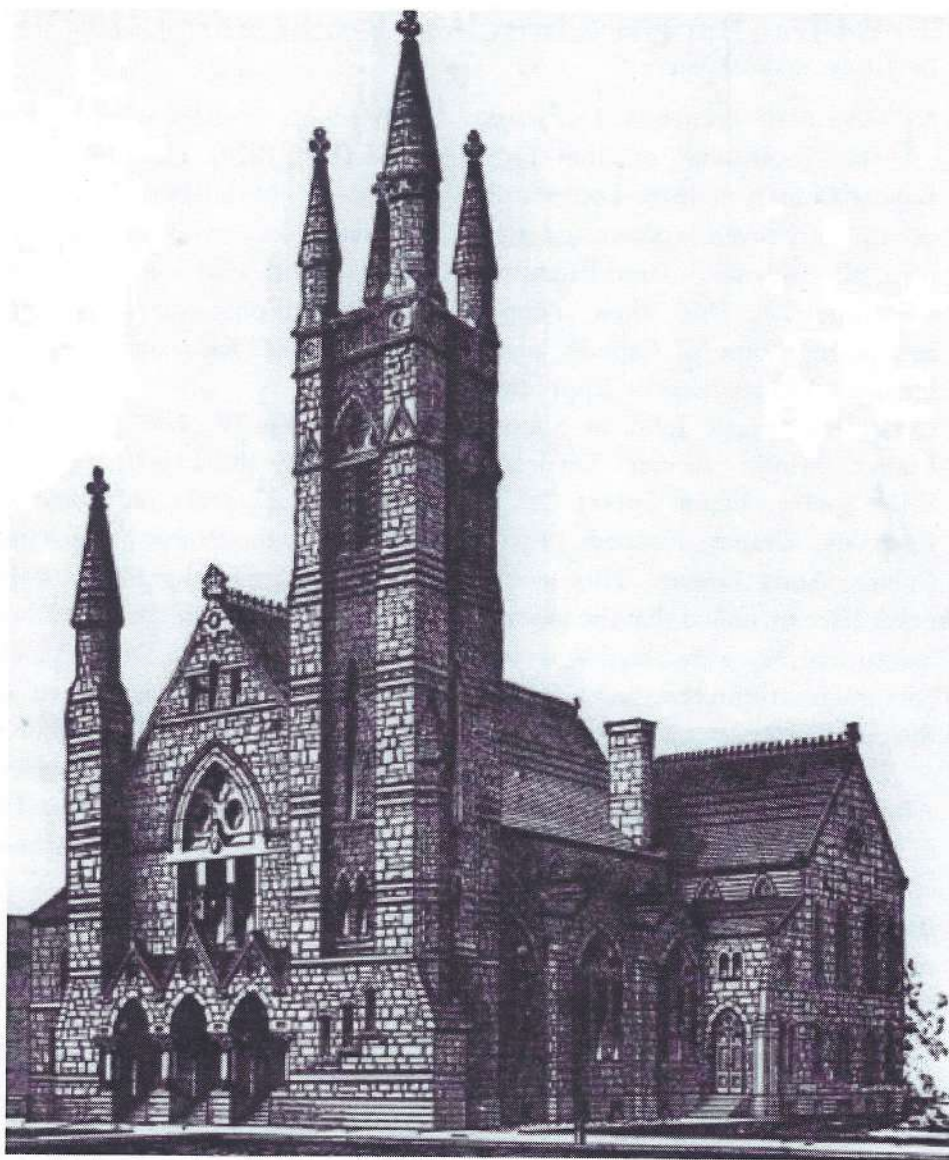
to the First Baptist congregation because of this new establishment.

By 1868, the congregation had outgrown the stone church and, with generous financial help from church members, purchased the land behind it to build a new sanctuary. They hired Andrew Jackson Warner, one of Rochester's most prominent architects, to design the new section. The new Gothic Revival addition was completed in 1876 at a cost of \$140,000. (A.J. Warner also designed the Powers Building, Rochester Free Academy, Rochester City Hall [now Irving Place], the Wilder Building and many other important buildings in Rochester and other cities)

In 1918 the adjoining property was purchased for use as a parish house. Hubbell Hall was erected in 1924 to accommodate the growing Hubbell Men' Class. Its \$150,000 price tag was funded by its members. Learn more about Walter Hubbell and the Hubbell Class on pages 7-9

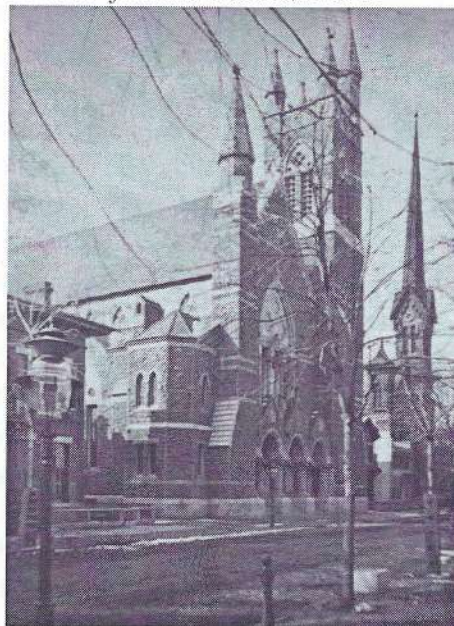
Five Rochester Baptist Churches owe their existence to the First Baptist Church. In 1834, fifty-four members withdrew and formed the Second Baptist Church, which became known as The Baptist Temple. In 1871, one hundred members withdrew and formed the Memorial Mission, which became the Lake Avenue Baptist Church. Then came the founding of the Rapids, Wilder Street, and Meigs Street Missions. These became the Genesee Calvary (1894) and South Avenue Baptist (1911).

In 1951, a membership survey revealed that most of the church's members lived in the southeast area of Monroe County. During the mid-twentieth century, many urban churches across the country



*Architectural rendering of the second church*

*Exterior of the second church, c.1890.*



*Interior of the second church, c.1890.*





experienced a downward trend in membership. The large structures built during the time of membership growth and religious fervor were aging and expensive to maintain. This loss of membership was partly due to the growing popularity of suburban living. Also, wealthy members of these churches were dying off and the new middle class was less able to

fund the work of the church as was done in the past. The congregation voted to sell the N. Fitzhugh Street property and move to a new location in Brighton. The last service in their downtown sanctuary was on June 24, 1951. For the next four years, the congregation worshiped in the chapel of the Colgate Rochester Divinity School. The first service in

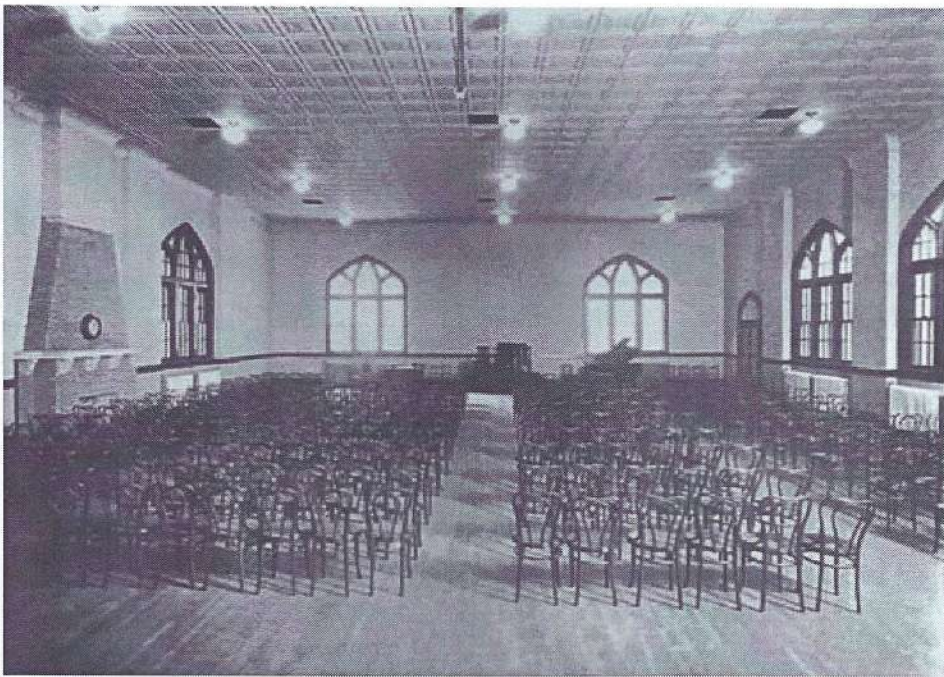
the new sanctuary on the corner of Clover Street and Allens Creek Road was held on Easter Sunday, 1955.

Many of the great church buildings in downtown Rochester, as in many other American cities, were no longer serving their congregations by the mid-1960s. A few of the buildings found new uses, such as the Hochstein School of Music & Dance's adaptive re-use of Central Presbyterian Church (1858, 1891) on South Plymouth Avenue. Others, such as First Baptist's A. J. Warner-designed structure, met with the wrecking ball. The site remains as a parking lot.

Whether it be Captain Jacob Kennedy's parlor, a temple, synagogue, tabernacle or a mosque, a "church" is anywhere people meet to exercise their faith. The edifice reflects not only the success of the church, but also the time and circumstance in which it was built. First Baptist Church's history illustrates this very well. The three structures that were commissioned during its existence were perfect reflections of the church's membership, its wealth, and of the most popular architectural styles of the day.

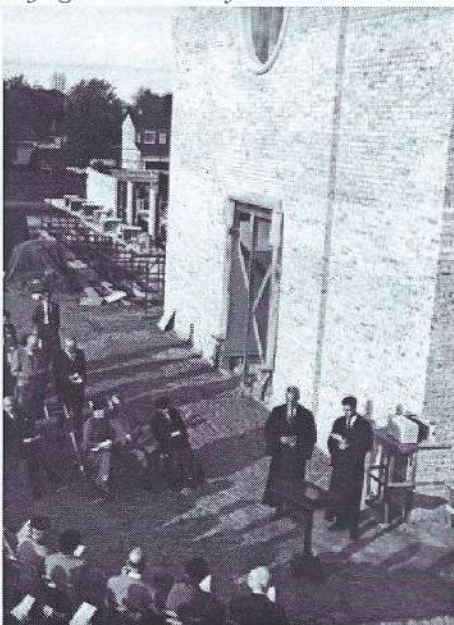
In this issue we will learn more about four members of the congregation who were immensely important in the history of the church: Alvah Strong and his sons, Augustus Hopkins and Henry Alvah, and Walter Sage Hubbell.

Throughout 2018, the congregation of the First Baptist Church will be celebrating 200 years of service to the community and the world, through its many ministries. Historic Brighton joins the celebration and congratulates its congregation for its many contributions.



*Interior of Hubbell Hall, 1924.*

*Laying the cornerstone of the third church, 1954.*



*Interior of the current sanctuary, 2017.*







*Exterior of the third First Baptist Church of Rochester designed by Martin, McGraw & Wiard, c.1960.*

## The Cross Window

Edited by Arlene A. Vanderlinde from the words of Katherine McCurdy (1923-2017)

The stained glass cross in the chancel was given by Gilbert J. C. and Virginia McCurdy to the newly completed church. Virginia McCurdy, a talented artist, designed the cross with the help of Mr. James J. O'Hara and the many skilled craftsmen of the Pike Stained Glass Studio. Lynda McCurdy Hotra, granddaughter of Virginia McCurdy wrote:

"...my grandmother was an amazing woman and artist—always creating something, whether it was through painting, needlework, or some other form of design. She was a private and unassuming person, whose passion was art. For Strong Memorial Hospital, she designed the mosaic for the chapel, as well as the stained glass windows for the University of Rochester's Interfaith Chapel."

According to the family, Mr. and Mrs. McCurdy loved flowers and their favorite was the passion flower. The design of the window was inspired by it. "Passion" of the passion flower does

not refer to love, but to the Passion of Christ. In the 15th and 16th centuries, Spanish Christian missionaries discovered this flower and adopted its unique physical structures as symbols of the crucifixion. Within the passion flower one finds radial filaments that represent the Crown of Thorns. The ten petals and sepals represent the ten faithful apostles. The top three stigmata represent the three nails and the lower five anthers represent the five wounds.

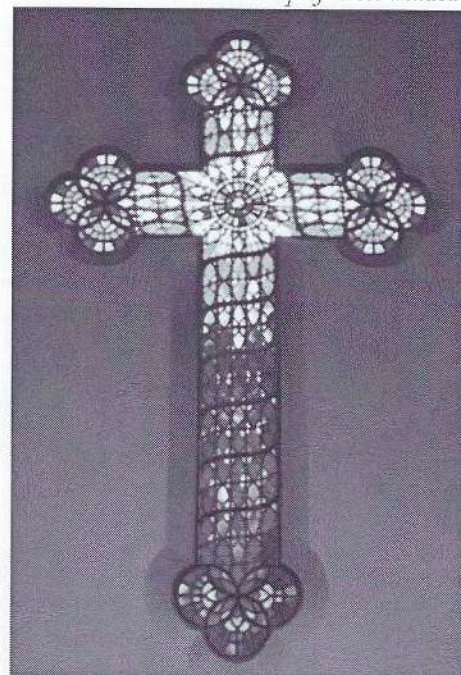
Looking at the cross, one can see a flower in the center and several purple points representing the crown of thorns worn by Jesus. Three leaf-like branches portray the Holy Trinity and the three upright marks are to symbolize Christ and the two thieves on Calvary.

In 2004 Gil and Katie McCurdy, son and daughter-in-law of the donors, commissioned to have the cross repaired and cleaned by Valerie O'Hara, daughter of James

O'Hara and the current owner of Pike Stained Glass. Ms. O'Hara and preservation expert and architect, John Bero, worked together to preserve the cross as the magnificent symbol of the passion. It continues to inspire all who view it.

—HB—

*Closeup of cross window.*





# Walter Hubbell, the Hubbell Bible Class, and Hermann Dossenbach

By Lisa Kleman

The Hubbell Class, the largest of Rochester's turn-of-the-20th-century Young Men's Bible classes, was organized in 1892 at the First Baptist Church of Rochester with 25 members, growing to 1000 members in 1909 with an average weekly attendance of 375 men. Its purpose was improvement of the men's spiritual and moral character.

The class was begun and managed by Walter Hubbell, who was a prominent Rochester attorney with at least one well-known client—George Eastman. Mr. Eastman and Mr. & Mrs. Hubbell were close friends, often vacationing together. And the Hubbells were frequent guests at Mr. Eastman's twice-weekly musicales at his East Avenue home, where they would listen to the Dossenbach Quintette, led by Hermann Dossenbach.

In fact, when Mr. Eastman was traveling, the Quintette would often play at the Hubbell home, and the next day Hubbell thanked the Quintette by sending them boxes of cigars. Walter Hubbell must have especially loved Dossenbach's breathtaking interpretation of the Bach/Gounod "Ave Maria" because he played it on at least three separate occasions at the Hubbell residence.

Hermann Dossenbach was a member of the Hubbell Bible Class, and in 1909 was President of the Class. His Quintette and Orchestra often played for Bible Class activities, with Hubbell writing how the music was often more uplifting than the sermons.

Historic evidence suggests strong ties between the Hubbells and the Dossenbachs, with the Hubbells visiting the Dossenbachs' summer cottage in Webster's Forest Lawn



*The Hubbell Bible Class before the construction of Hubbell Hall.*

on the shores of Lake Ontario. Hermann also gave violin lessons to their daughter Anna. In 1904, Walter Hubbell presented a Conductor's Desk to Hermann at a Dossenbach Orchestra concert at the Lyceum Theatre. And as early as 1897 and continuing for many years, the Dossenbach Orchestra played for the Rochester Orphan Asylum. The Hubbells were deeply involved with the care of these orphans, and the orphans loved their musical entertainments, writing poignant thank you letters to Dossenbach.

In fact, Hubbell's many letters to Dossenbach give hints as to his philosophies regarding his Bible Class. In 1906, he wrote Dossenbach: "In this world of ours we — especially the men — are too apt to give our whole time and thought to material things instead of devoting at least part of our time to higher things. Don't you think so?"

Hermann Dossenbach remained a member of the Hubbell Bible Class for decades, and always brought his music, playing in in 1909 at a dinner

attended by the UR President Rush Rhees, who gave a speech and called for larger participation in church life by lay members. In 1918, Dossenbach and his daughter Hazel gave violin solos to the Bible Class, accompanied by French and American music anthems, it being a year of world war. In 1924, he conducted an orchestra at the triumphant dedication of the new Hubbell Hall at First Baptist Church.

—HB—

*Hermann and Daisy Dossenbach  
Photo courtesy of Polly Smith.*

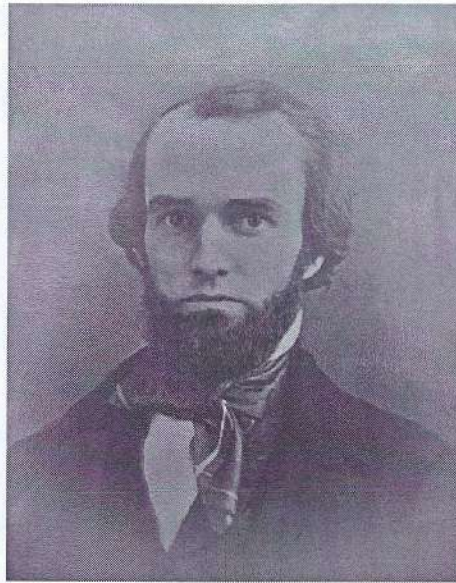




# Walter Sage Hubbell (1850-1932): Lawyer, Teacher, Community Leader

By Arlene A. Vanderlinde

Rochester became a great city in the 19th century because of the many outstanding people who lived, worked and generously donated time and money to the growth and integrity of their community. The Erie Canal helped the city grow, but it was the people who made it great. We know about Susan B. Anthony, Frederick Douglass, and George Eastman, but there were scores of other extraordinary people who generously gave of their time and talents to make our city great. One such person is Walter Sage Hubbell. Mr. Hubbell became known as a community and religious leader through his many business and community affiliations and his teachings. His proudest and most far-reaching achievement was the Hubbell Class, a bible class for men which he founded in 1892 at First Baptist Church in Rochester. It grew to be the largest and most successful class of its kind in American history. Starting with 25 men, ages 16-70, this First Baptist Church-based class grew to over a 1000, with more than 300 attending each week. In time, its numbers were so great that it needed a building of its own. "Hubbell Hall" was then built adjacent to the church. Chapters of the Hubbell Class sprung up throughout America. A peak annual attendance was over 21,000 nationally, with hundreds traveling to Rochester to attend classes led by Hubbell himself. His teaching method was described in an obituary: "Walter S. Hubbell, made for himself a national reputation by his teaching and conduct of the Hubbell Class... by no sensational methods, but by the simple exposition of regular Scripture lessons, accompanied by a cheery welcome and hearty good fellowship." Members were tradesmen and business owners, poor and wealthy alike. They came together to learn



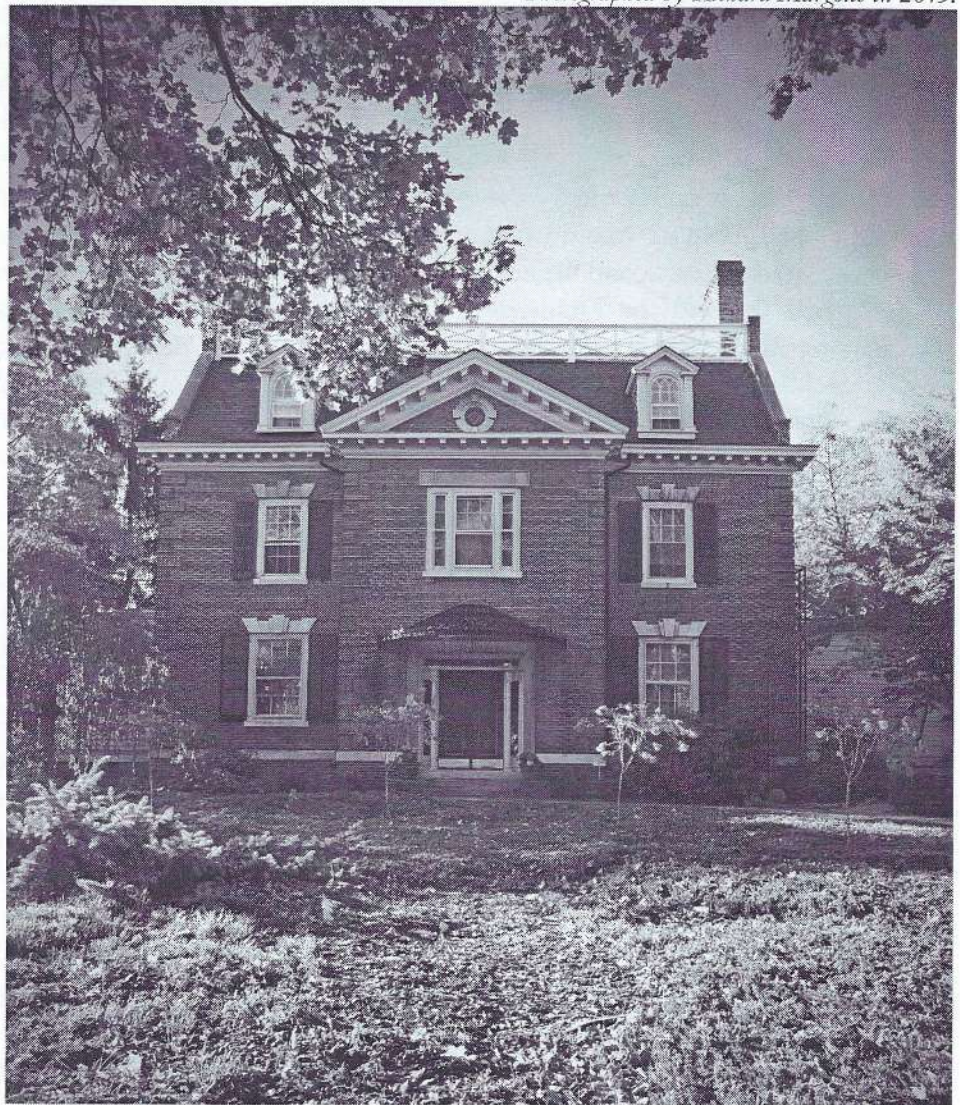
*Walter Sage Hubbell, c.1885.*



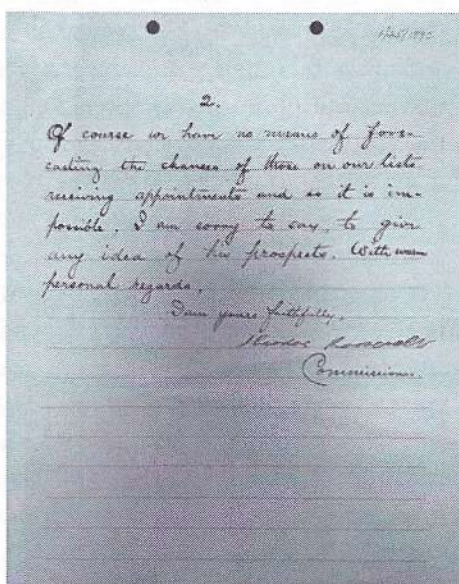
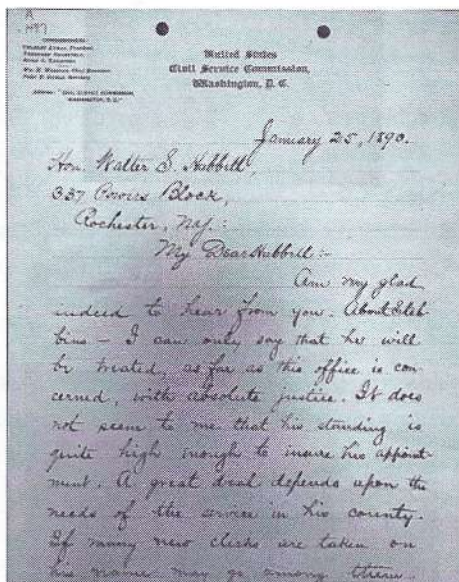
*Walter Sage Hubbell, c.1920.*

*The Hubbell House at 1209 East Avenue designed by J. Foster Warner.*

*Photographed by Richard Margolis in 2013.*







One of the many letters exchanged by Mr. Hubbell and Theodore Roosevelt over their long friendship.

The Hubbell Bible Class at First Baptist Church



the lessons of the bible and exchange ideas and the concerns of the day. Mr. Hubbell gave them his time and wisdom without pay. His office was always open when the men of his class needed advice or a friend. He formed friends among the highly cultured, but was equally at home with the disadvantaged. He encouraged them and brought them hope. The present church named their social gathering space Hubbell Hall in his honor and memory. The First Baptist Church considers the Hubbell Class one of the greatest achievements in its long history.

Mr. Hubbell was born in Cincinnati, Ohio to Charles and Anna Sage Hubbell. The first member of this family to come to this country was a passenger on the Mayflower. The family moved to Iowa when Walter was 3 and to Rochester when he was 16. He immediately entered the University of Rochester. While there, he distinguished himself academically and graduated with honors and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. He received both his Bachelors and Masters Degrees at UR. He then became a student of law in Rochester law practices and was admitted to the New York State Bar in 1876. He was a lawyer in Rochester until his

death in 1932. Among his clients was George Eastman. Hubbell became a lifetime friend of Theodore Roosevelt following their work to pass the Niagara Reservation Bill, which secured the acquisition of Niagara Falls as a NYS Park in 1885. There are many letters and telegrams from Roosevelt, which indicate their close friendship, at the UR Dept of Rare Books, Special Collections, and Preservation. Hubbell married Leora DeLand of Fairport in 1877. They were parents of five daughters. He and his wife loved cultural activities and were known as a very social couple.

Mr. Hubbell served as a member of the New York State Assembly - 1884-85; Trustee of the Rochester Hillside Home, the University of Rochester, Colgate Rochester Divinity School, and Baptist Union. He served as Senior Member of the Board of Trustees (Executive Board, Legal Counsel, and Vice-President) of the Rochester Theological Seminary and on the Board of Trustees of the First Baptist Church for many years. He was Attorney, Director and Vice-president of Eastman Kodak Company; a Trustee of Security Trust Company of Rochester (now Bank of America); a Senior Director and Attorney for Lincoln Alliance Bank (now J.P. Morgan Chase); member of the New York, Rochester and American Bar Associations; Founding/Senior Partner of Hubbell, Taylor, Goodwin and Moser Law Firm, (now Nixon, Peabody); Founding Director of Rochester Community Chest (now United Way); Trustee and Attorney for the Rochester Orphan Asylum; President of UR Alumni Association; a member of the Genesee Valley Club and the Rochester Country Club; a Knights Templar; a member of Alpha Delta Phi and Phi Beta Kappa fraternities. Hubbell Auditorium at the UR is also named for him.



# The Strong Family of Brighton and Rochester

By Arlene A. Vanderlinde

The Strong family emigrated to America from England in 1630. **ALVAH STRONG** (1809-1885) moved to Rochester in 1821 with his parents and soon entered the printing business. During an 1831 Charles G. Finney revival meeting in Rochester, Alvah became a Baptist convert and a member of the First Baptist Church. Strong married Catherine Hopkins in 1834 and they had two sons, Augustus Hopkins Strong and Henry Alvah Strong and two daughters, Kate and Belle. Much is written about his sons, but no information was found on his daughters. Alvah Strong's brother, Ezra became a noted physician.

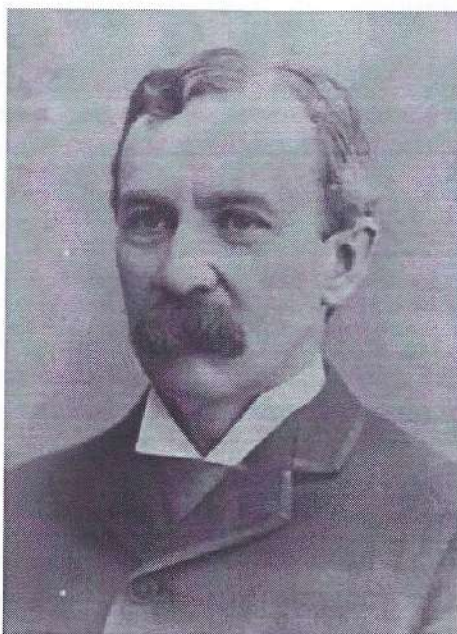
Alvah Strong became involved with the Anti-Mason movement and was part owner of a publication called the Anti-Mason Inquirer, which later merged with the National Republican and, eventually, became the Rochester Daily Democrat. From 1830 to 1864 he was proprietor and co-publisher of the Rochester Daily Democrat, which eventually became the Democrat & Chronicle. He never ran for elected office, but remained involved with politics throughout his life. His paper was the voice of the Whigs and then the Republican Party in our region.

Even though he lacked a formal education, Strong deeply believed in the importance of education and was determined to bring an institute of higher learning to Rochester. At this time, colleges and universities were mostly affiliated with a religious denomination and were privately owned. There had been attempts by the Presbyterians and the Congregationalists to start one in Rochester, but they had failed. Strong, along with the Rev. Dr. Pharcellus Church of First Baptist, became key motivators in the bringing of religious

scholars from Hamilton, New York. "In 1817, the Baptist Education Society of the State of New York was organized. This evolved into the Hamilton Literary and Theological Institution, which was chartered by the State of New York in 1846 as Madison University and renamed Colgate University in 1890." (*From Arthur J. May, A History of the University of Rochester 1850-1962*). The first classes of both the Rochester Theological

Seminary and the University of Rochester began in 1850, and held in the United States Hotel on Buffalo Street, which was purchased by the new university for the housing of both its faculty and students.

Alvah Strong died at the age of 76 at the home of his son, Henry, leaving a legacy of public and religious service that would become the hallmark in the lives of both his sons.



Rev. Augustus H. Strong

Rev. Charles G. Finney



## AUGUSTUS HOPKINS STRONG

(1836-1921) was highly regarded as a Baptist theologian and author. He served as teacher and third president of the Rochester Theological Seminary from 1872 to 1912. Augustus was a Yale graduate and received his seminary training at Rochester Theological. He was ordained in 1861. He became known for his "meticulously-prepared sermons on great themes of Christian faith." His reputation grew, and he was honored with Doctor of Divinity degrees from Brown, Yale, Princeton, and a Doctor of Letters degree from the University of Rochester. He served on the Board of Trustees of Vassar College. Augustus was a life-long member of First Baptist and writer of the centennial history of the church in 1918. His love for history led to his being a founder of the Rochester Historical Society, of which he served as president in 1890 and 91. He had a wide national audience through his impressive list of theological writings. His *Systematic Theology* (1886 and 1907-09) was widely read among Protestant ministers, as were his nine other books. Many of his books are still available.

Dr. Strong was a voracious reader from an early age, reading dime novels as well as works by Shakespeare, Milton,



Dryden, Tennyson, Byron and others. At age 16, he became a member of Rochester's first notable debating club, "The Orion." Later in life he would join the Pundit Club, which still exists in Rochester. Descendant, John Garrett is a member of this club today.

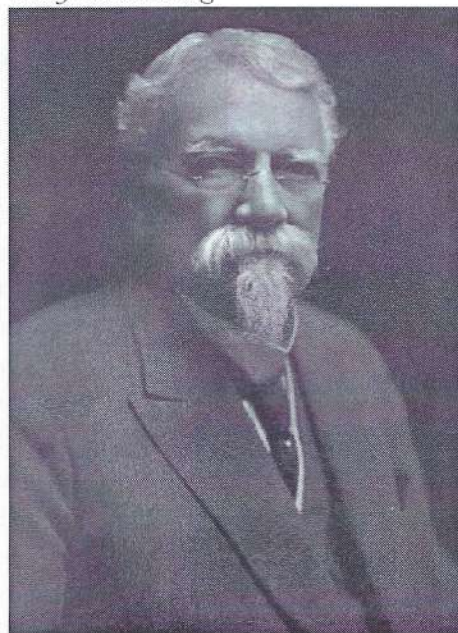
Although Augustus felt he was ready for college at 16, his father insisted that he wait a year and work for him in his printing business. Alvah felt that this experience was important to his son's future. Augustus entered Yale in 1853 and distinguished himself throughout his college career, winning numerous prizes, including the Yale Literary Gold Medal. He was asked to join Skull and Bones, a prestigious secret society at Yale. Three U.S. Presidents were part of this society along with a list of men that looks like a "Who's Who" in American history. Augustus refused the bid because they would not also admit his close friend. He graduated with high honors in 1857 and returned to Rochester to enter the Rochester Theological Seminary. Augustus felt his calling to the church a year before when Charles G. Finney returned to Rochester and gave a sermon that caused Augustus to rise from his seat. He later said, "it was like a thunder clap from a clear sky." It had been twenty-five years since Finney had influenced Alvah to convert.

Augustus Strong served churches in Haverhill, Mass. and Cleveland before being called to Rochester to become the third president of the First Baptist Church in 1872. In Cleveland, one of his parishioners was John D. Rockefeller. Dr. Strong's eldest son, Charles, married Rockefeller's daughter, Bessie and he saw this as an opportunity to encourage Rockefeller to contribute money for capital projects in Rochester and elsewhere. But, while somewhat successful, this

effort failed to bring the significant contributions he needed to realize his dream of a Baptist university in New York. Dr. Strong died in Pasadena, California where he had spent his winters in his later years.

**HENRY ALVAH STRONG** (1838-1919) was born in Rochester, son of Alvah and Catherine Hopkins Strong. He was described as charming, social, easy-going, pig-headed, an expert public speaker, and a great business networker. Henry was an independent soul who pursued various adventures, such as working the docks in New York City and travelling to France before deciding to return home to continue his education. Upon his graduation from Wyoming Academy in 1858, he worked at the American Exchange Bank on Wall Street and then entered the shoe business in Denver. When the Civil War broke out in 1861, he joined the Navy, where, according to family records, he became a paymaster. After the war Henry joined his uncle, Myron Strong, in the buggy whip business. After purchasing his uncle's interest in the company, Henry and E. F. Woodbury, grandfather of Margaret Woodbury Strong, created a partnership in the

*Henry Alvah Strong*



same business until that was dissolved in 1880.

Henry had been a boarder at the Lake Avenue home of Maria Eastman when he became interested in photography and film through her son, George. In 1880, Henry invested \$1000 in a new venture which was first known as Strong & Eastman. In 1881, Strong became president and the public face of the Eastman Dry Plate Company. The capital he supplied amounted to \$10,000, but soon grew to many millions. Strong and Eastman had opposite personalities: Strong was very outgoing and talkative, while Eastman was more reserved. Henry was also president of the Rochester Button Company and the United States Voting Machine Company. He was vice-president of the Alliance Bank, and a director of the Monroe Savings Bank and the Security Trust Company.

Mr. Strong gave away vast sums of money to several institutions and causes during his lifetime. In 1905, he gave \$150,000 to the Rochester Theological Seminary for the building of Alvah Strong Hall, honoring his father. Henry's brother, Dr. Augustus Hopkins Strong, was president at the time. Among other causes were the Brick Church Institute, the YWCA, to erect their building on Franklin Street, the University of Rochester, to start a fund for the creation of a women's college and increase their endowment fund, the YMCA, for new central and branch buildings. During World War I, Henry and his wife donated vast sums to the American Red Cross and to the War and Community Chests. Numerous other buildings in Rochester, notably Strong Memorial Hospital and Strong Auditorium at the University of Rochester were built thanks to his philanthropy.

—HB—



# Dr. Clarence Barbour: President of the Rochester Theological Seminary

By Lisa Kleman

In 1929, Rochester's Clarence A. Barbour was inaugurated as the President of Brown University. Rush Rhees, President of the University of Rochester, attended the inauguration, sitting in a special section alongside Rochester's orchestra conductor Hermann Dossenbach and his wife Daisy. The Dossenbachs were there because they were longtime friends of Clarence Barbour and his wife Florence.

Clarence Barbour had graduated from Brown in 1888, and from the Rochester Theological Seminary in 1891. From 1891 to 1909, he was Pastor of the Lake Avenue Baptist Church, where he tried a new experiment. Barbour felt that that music was key to the religious experience so he dispensed with the usual Chorale and hired the Dossenbach Quintette and organist George Fisher to provide the music throughout the service. It was perhaps the first time in an American church that instrumental music was totally substituted for vocal music. The congregation itself became the chorus, singing along with the stringed instruments. It was a great success deepening the spiritual feeling and bringing in more worshippers.

With the friendships of Clarence Barbour and Hermann Dossenbach, and Walter Hubbell, music and religion often aligned. In 1909 the Dossenbach Quintette played for a musicale at the Rochester Theological Seminary. In 1912 Barbour, at the invitation of Hubbell and the Hubbell Class, gave the address in the auditorium of the First Baptist Church to a patriotic meeting of all of the Rochester men's Bible Classes, with the Dossenbach Orchestra providing music.

Barbour and Dossenbach had much in common; they were fellow Masons, tennis partners, and avid bowlers. Barbour regularly compiled a 100-games bowling record, sharing it, and humor, with his friend Hermann: *"Here is a sheet which shows you how you beat me on the fourth hundred games. My only consolation is that it is not nearly so badly as you beat me on either the second hundred or third. There is no knowing what will be the outcome of the fifth."*

After a stint working and traveling for the International Committee of YMCA's Religious Works Department, Barbour became the President of the Rochester Theological Society in 1915, where he remained until 1929. In 1928, he was instrumental in the merger between Colgate Theological Seminary and the Rochester Theological Seminary to form Colgate Rochester Divinity School.

In 1928 he was offered the presidency of Brown. When he accepted, he wrote to the Rochester-Colgate Divinity School: *"I hoped to complete my life's work in Rochester. The call from Brown University was entirely unsolicited and I feel that a greater duty calls me."* He stayed at Brown until 1936 when he became seriously ill.

Rochesterians can be proud of the much-accomplished Clarence Barbour. His friend, Hermann Dossenbach, was certainly proud of him. At Barbour's farewell ceremony in 1929, held at the Lake Avenue Baptist Church, Dossenbach played music which had been popular at the time of their sojourn there, and all who remembered felt nostalgic for their pasts.



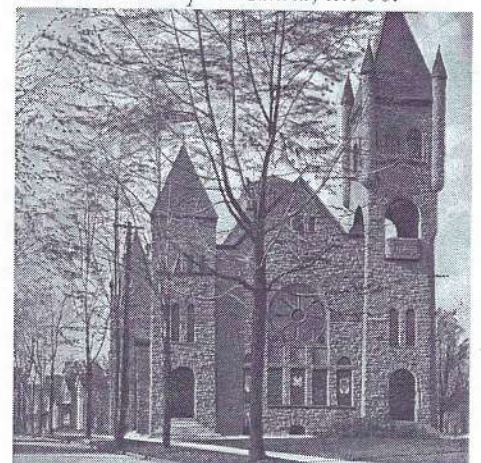
Dr. Clarence Barbour (at left) in 1909.

RECORD OF ONE HUNDRED GAMES FROM  
March 5 to May 3, 1913  
between  
Hermann Dossenbach and Clarence A. Barbour  
Bowled in Genesee and Elm Halls

Total pins		Average per game	
H.D.	C.A.B.	H.D.	C.A.B.
16,688	16,489	166.88	164.89
GAMES WON	H. D. C.A.B.	GAMES OVER 200	H. D. C.A.B.
Under 100	57 43	237	223
100 - 150	2 0	212	212
150 - 175	4 2	220	227
175 - 180	4 9	209	210
180 - 185	18 16	235	211
185 - 190	8 14	201	
190 - 195	21 13	203	
195 - 200	18 15	207	
200 - 205	10 15	211	
205 - 210	5 5	204	
Over 200	16 5		
	120 100		
Lowest Game - 113 (Apr. 23) H.D.			
Highest Game - 237 (Mar. 18) H.D.			
Highest totals -	H. D. 996 Mar. 15		
	H. D. 926 Apr. 2		
	C.A.B. 914 Mar. 28		
	C.A.B. 904 Mar. 5		
	C.A.B. 879 Mar. 26		
	H. D. 872 Apr. 2		
	C.A.B. 866 Apr. 23		
	H. D. 862 Mar. 12		
	H. D. 861 Mar. 26		
For 200 games:	H. D. C.A.B.		
Total pins -	135,222 135,263		
Average -	169.0275 169.07875		
GAMES WON -	104 396		

One of the many ongoing tallies of bowling scores between Dr. Barbour and Mr. Dossenbach

Lake Avenue Baptist Church, c.1900.





# An Introduction to Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School

Edited by Arlene A. Vanderlinde from the Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School website.

The roots of Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School trace back to 1817 when a small group of 13 Baptists concerned about the education of clergy, gathered in rural Hamilton, New York with \$13 and 13 prayers to form what would soon become the Hamilton Literary and Theological Institution. The vision and effort of this group also eventually led to the founding of Colgate University, with the seminary one of its schools. Thus, the seminary was soon renamed Colgate Theological Seminary.

An offshoot of Colgate Theological Seminary was planted in Rochester in 1850 by a group of Baptists, who wished to remove both Colgate University and its theological seminary to an urban setting. The initial removal controversy failed in a legal dispute; however, several faculty and students came to Rochester to help begin a new university and seminary in what was then a booming urban center. As a result, the Rochester Theological Seminary was founded concurrently with the University of Rochester.

The seminary soon distinguished itself for its combination of academic rigor and social witness, traits remarkably combined in its most famous faculty member, Walter Rauschenbusch (1861-1918), the founder of the Social Gospel movement of the late 19th century. For 40 years, Augustus Hopkins Strong (1836-1921) served as president of Rochester Theological Seminary. Like her sister school in Hamilton, Rochester Theological Seminary was ecumenical in its mission, enrolling seminarians from many denominations while remaining firmly rooted in its Baptist heritage.



*Etching of the United States Hotel on West Main Street where both the University of Rochester and the Rochester Theological Seminary, now CRCDS were founded in 1850.*

*The former Rochester Theological Seminary Campus at Alexander Street and East Avenue. From L to R: Library, Rockefeller Hall, Chapel, Trevor Hall, and Administrative Building*

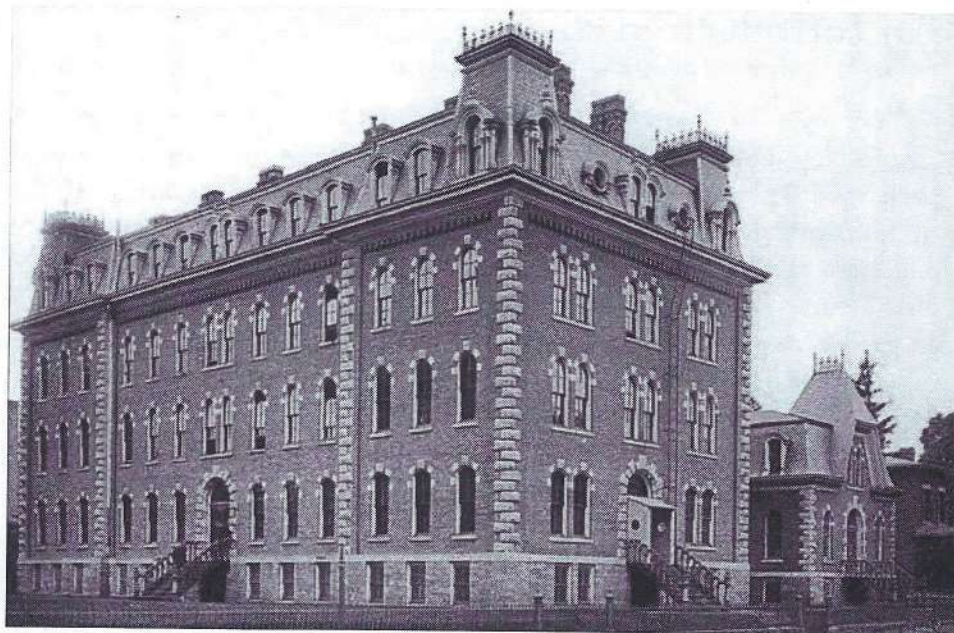




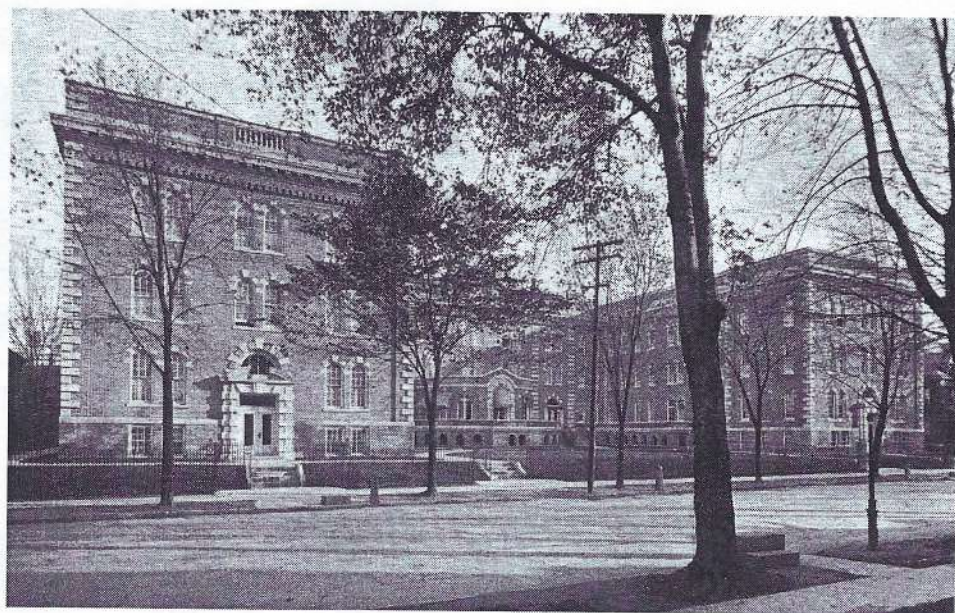
In 1928, the Colgate and Rochester seminaries merged to become Colgate Rochester Divinity School, and as part of that merger, the present campus was built on one of the highest hills in the southeastern corner of Rochester, New York, thanks to funding from John D. Rockefeller, Jr. The joining of these two schools represented a distinctive blending of roots and heritages. In time, it would serve as a precedent for other mergers by demonstrating that two distinctive institutions could strengthen their lives by becoming one.

In 1961, the Baptist Missionary Training School joined Colgate Rochester, adding another important branch to the school's lineage.

The 19th century was a period of great ferment and social change. While the Social Gospel movement concentrated on the widening gap between the rich and poor, the Baptist Missionary Training School, founded in Chicago in 1881, was created to address another issue: the role of women in the Church. Its founder, Mrs. Rumah Crouse, possessed a vision both local and global. She created a community for women who were "responding to God's call as revealed in Jesus Christ," even when the Church failed to recognize their call. Typical of its graduates was



*Trevor Hall, c.1880. Designed by John R. Thomas.*



*Trevor Hall renovated and expanded as Alvah Strong Hall, c.1908.  
Designed by J. Foster Warner.*

*The newly completed Colgate Rochester Divinity School as pictured in the 09/07/1932 Democrat and Chronicle. Designed by James Gamble Rogers  
From L to R: Garage, Trevor Hall, Jones Hall, Strong Hall (center), Swasey Library, and Montgomery House.*





Joanna P. Moore, a graduate of its first class in 1881, who worked with African-Americans for more than 40 years, instituting "fireside schools" to teach literacy skills to women and children. To prepare its graduates for such forms of service, the training school innovatively combined classroom work with field education to equip its students to minister wherever the need was greatest.

In 1970, Crozer Theological Seminary merged with Colgate Rochester Divinity School to form Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School (CRCDS), bringing Crozer's deep commitment to social justice and theological education oriented to the work of ministry. Crozer Theological Seminary was a result of the generosity of Baptist industrialist John P. Crozer. In 1867, he donated the building and land in Upland, Pennsylvania, that would eventually become Crozer Theological Seminary. His investment paid great dividends. In 1951, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. graduated from Crozer. A few years later, he would use the social ethics he had been taught at Crozer and lead the emerging Civil Rights Movement that would change forever the character of American society.

In 1893, St. Bernard's Seminary was founded to provide education for Roman Catholic diocesan priests. Following the Second Vatican Council, the seminary turned its attention to educating men and women for lay ministry. In 1981, St. Bernard's Seminary was closed, and St. Bernard's Institute was born and entered a covenant relationship with Colgate Rochester Crozer. It moved to the CRCDS campus, where it remained until 2003 when it moved to a new campus nearby, changing its name to St. Bernard's School of Theology and Ministry. St. Bernard's

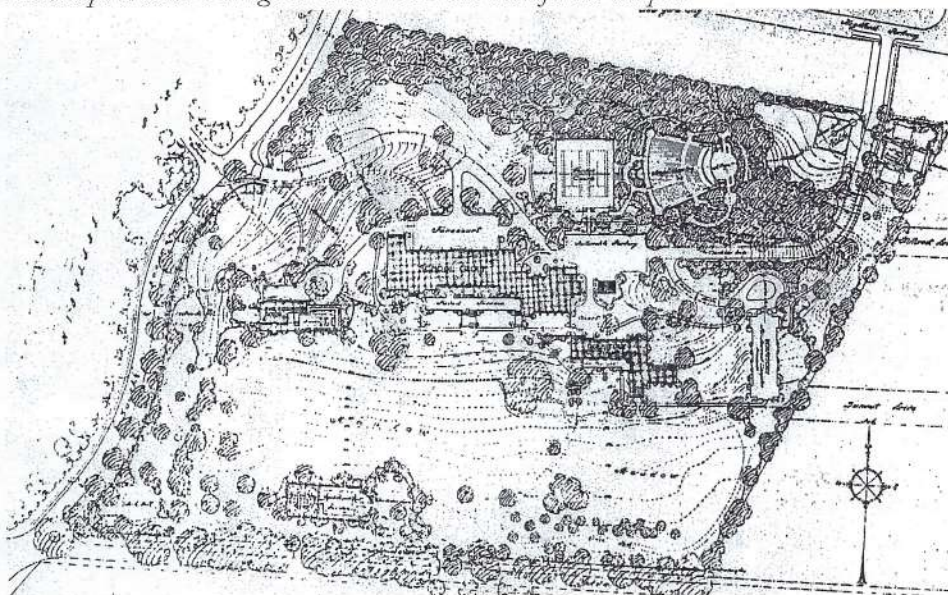
remains a vital covenant partner with Colgate Rochester Crozer to this day. Another educational institution more recently joined the ecumenical partnerships. In the fall of 2013, CRCDS, in collaboration with Bexley Seabury and the Episcopal Diocese of Rochester, initiated a program in Anglican Studies. This program provides a local and regional option for Episcopal students to prepare for ordination as students earn a Master of Divinity degree from

CRCDS while concurrently earning a Certificate in Anglican Studies from Bexley Seabury.

Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School serves as one of the world's leading progressive theological schools. Its name and its rich heritage speak to a series of unique unions and partnerships among several outstanding seminaries which go back more than 200 years.

HB

*Landscape architect Alling DeForest's 1932 Site Plan for the campus.*



#### **Sources & Credits for Photos and Historic Material:**

- *Autobiography of Augustus Hopkins Strong*, edited by Crerar Douglas
- College thesis of Elizabeth Strong
- Department of Rare Books, Special Collections and Preservation, University of Rochester River Campus Libraries.
- The First Baptist Church Archives
- "Henry A. Strong, Long Business Associate of George Eastman, Dead in His Eighty-first Year," *Democrat & Chronicle*, 27 July 1919
- Historical Sketch, 1818-1918 by Florence Kenyon (for The First Baptist Church)
- History of Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School from their website (used with permission)
- History of The First Baptist Church (1818-1952) - Notes for a talk given 18 May 1952 (no author indicated).
- The John Wenrich Memorial Library of the Landmark Society of Western New York
- Rochester Historical Society Archives
- *Strong Connections* by John L. Garrett

*Historic Brighton Newsletter and Journal is edited by Michael B. Lempert and Christopher M. Brandt*



# Remembering Betsy Brayer

By Lisa Kleman

I met Betsy Brayer in early 2014, shortly after I moved to Rochester to write about my ancestors, the Dossenbachs, who were also George Eastman's musicians. Margie Searl helped arrange our first meeting, for which I am grateful, and for the next three years, Betsy and I met regularly for coffee and local history talk. Then in January of 2017, she hired me to work for her, assisting with current writing projects and organizing her historical archives for eventual donation to the George Eastman Museum and UR's Rush Rhees Library's Department of Rare Books, Special Collections, and Preservation.

Betsy was a dedicated writer, even up to her final day of living. Every morning, after breakfast, she was in her office, writing; every afternoon, after lunch, she was in her office, writing. Every day.

Betsy was an excellent editor for the *Historic Brighton Newsletter and Journal*, giving the space and photos needed for the articles. "I'll find another page somewhere," she'd say when the article was longer than expected. Betsy was rightfully proud of this historical publication, and Historic Brighton was lucky to have her with her lifetime's experience editing and writing. She began her career in Rochester as editor of the Junior League Newsletters, followed by the Arts Council's Scene, which led to many years as the Arts Editor for Andrew Wolfe Publications, especially the Brighton-Pittsford Post. Many readers remember her series, "Mr. Eastman Builds a House," but, in fact, Betsy wrote well over 500 articles on arts and history in Rochester. Then, of course, many books and pamphlets and essays followed.

Betsy Brayer, local historian and writer, is gone now, and so is Betsy Brayer, good friend. She was funny, with a dry wit that would leave you chuckling long after the joke had passed. She was direct, sometimes brusque. She was smart, hardworking, creative, and determined. And today, as she lives in my memory, I surely miss her. But because of her lifetime of writing, Rochesterians will read her work for years to come, debating the facts and interpretations; benefiting from her documentation of buildings still here, buildings long gone, and the people who inhabited them; and always feeling thankful that Betsy Brayer moved to town and immersed herself.

Bravo, Betsy — well done!



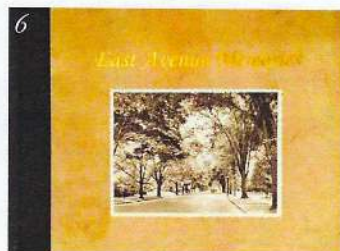
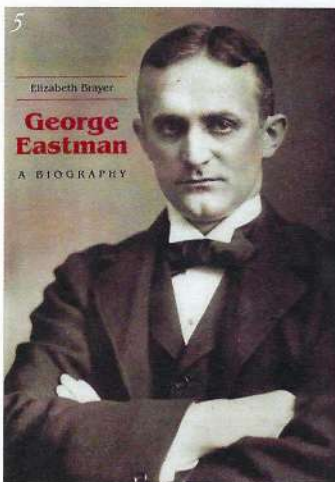
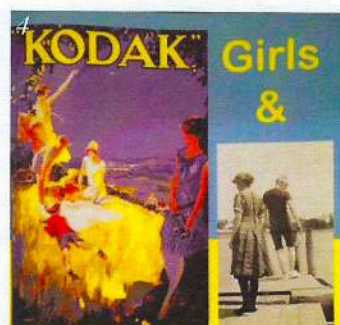
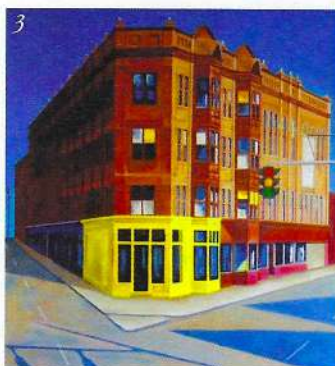
1. *The Eastman Theatre History*



2. *Betsy in Mr. Eastman's Library*

3. *One of Betsy's many paintings*

4. *Betsy's final completed book*



5. *George Eastman Biography*

6. *East Avenue Memories*

7. *Betsy being nominated as a George Eastman Honorary Scholar*



Photo by Frank Calandra