

## HISTORIC BRIGHTON

## Newsletter and Journal

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

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www.historicbrighton.org

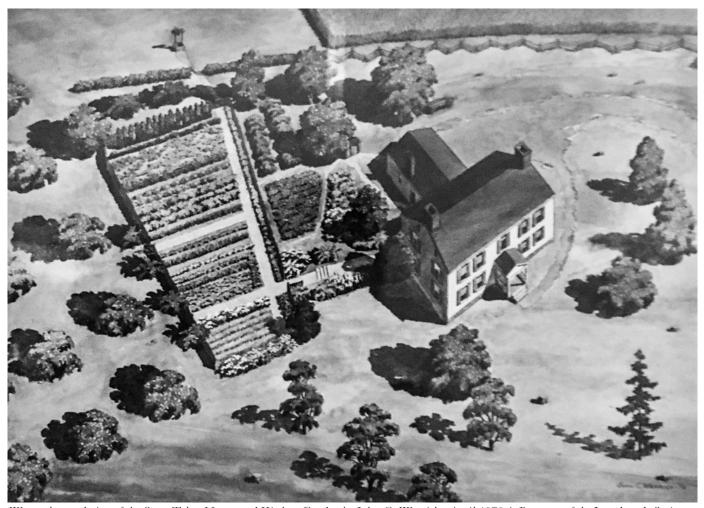
Spring 2019



## A LEGACY OF BEAUTIFYING BRIGHTON



90 YEARS OF THE ALLYN'S CREEK GARDEN CLUB



Watercolor rendering of the Stone-Tolan House and Kitchen Garden by John C. Wenrich, April 1970 | Property of the Landmark Society



#### HISTORIC BRIGHTON SPRING PROGRAM:

#### **CHRISTOPHER BRANDT PRESENTS:**

"The Brighton Work of Master Builder Fred P. Tosch" Sunday, May 5th, 2019 | 2:00 pm

The Friendly Home Auditorium | 3156 East Avenue, Rochester, NY 14618

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

## ALLYN'S CREEK GARDEN CLUB: CELEBRATION OF A 90 YEAR LEGACY By Arlene Vanderlinde

Many garden clubs in America found their roots in the waves of social activism of the early 19th century. At this time women had virtually no political rights, were not able to own property when married, enter into contracts, or vote. Despite these limitations, they were outspoken leaders in many of the 19th century social reforms; especially abolition, temperance and suffrage.

Educated American women began to look beyond their homes for ways to make life better in their communities. They formed sewing circles, organized fundraisers to help the disadvantaged, and volunteered to work directly with worthy causes. After the Civil War, women seeking social intellectual and outlets founded women's clubs around many different issues including literary and musical societies, social reforms and beautification. These clubs became a major vehicle in helping American women develop talents and shape the world. These clubs also helped to develop leadership skills of their members. As clubs grew, and counted locally influential women in their membership, clubs could affect change both locally and nationally. They became part of the fast-growing Progressive Movement (1890-1920). Progressivism was the term applied to a variety of responses to the economic and social problems rapid industrialization introduced to America.

The formation of garden clubs was an expression of interest in beauty and nature, hallmarks of the Victorian era in America. Botanical and horticultural groups had barred women from membership, dating back to the colonial era. In response women formed their own clubs within their communities. The first known garden club in America was the Ladies Garden Club of Athens, Georgia, founded in 1891. The Garden Club of America was founded in 1913 as a volunteer, nonprofit organization. Today, it has 200 member clubs and approximately 18,000 members. The Rochester Garden Club was founded in 1915 and is the largest local garden club.

In 1929, leaders of thirteen garden clubs traveled to Washington,

DC and voted to become charter members of the National Garden Clubs organization. Many of these local clubs started with the goal of exchanging information and sharing cuttings, but soon adopted larger missions, which indelibly shaped America's landscape.

The end of the Civil War and Reconstruction, the waves immigration and the growing women's movement found America struggling to reaffirm its values and culture. During the 1876 Centennial of the United States, cities and towns held elaborate celebrations around historic themes. Groups formed to preserve historic homes and buildings associated with our Founding Fathers. Many historical societies were formed across America. The garden club movement became closely associated with the historic preservation movement by adopting projects to restore the gardens and grounds of historic landmarks such as Monticello, the home of Thomas Jefferson.







#### ALLYN'S CREEK GARDEN CLUB Founded in 1928

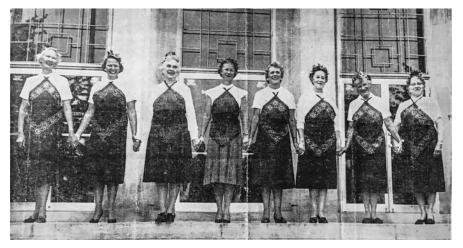
At left, from left to right: Mrs. Edwin S. Ingersoll; Mrs. John W. Force; Mrs. Adrian G. Devine; Mrs. Edwin H. Cumpston; Mrs. Gordon C. Baird





Above: portrait of Mrs. John W. Force, founding member and first president (1929-1931) of the Allyn's Creek Garden Club

Left: Mrs. Frank E. Gannett poses with her prize-winning gladioli in her garden at 195 Sandringham Road. In 1934 these gladioli were named the "Caroline Werner Gannett Gladioli" in her honor



1960: "All dressed up and someplace to go - The women [at left]...who you will note wear same hats and matching aprons, will go to Brighton Town Hall Saturday and be "salesmen," lunch packers, cashiers, and ticket sellers, among other duties, when Allyn's Creek Garden Club stages its Country Fair...to raise funds towards restoring grounds of Orringh Stone House, oldest place in the county. From left...: Mrs. Thomas J. Hargrave; Mrs Lucius R. Gordon; Mrs. David C. Naramore; Mrs. Donald R. Clark; Mrs. Arthur M.R. Hughes; Mrs. Edwin S. Ingersoll; Mrs. Kendall B. Castle; Mrs. Charles W. Smith

## MOVE TO SAVE SHADE TREES GAINS FORCE

Allyn's Creek Club Joins Fight To Preserve East Ave. Landmarks—Historic Connection Cited.

## PLEA TO SAVE TREES MADE BY GARDEN CLUB

Magnificent Trees in East Ave., Some Century Old, Endangered by Widening Plans, They Say. Left: local newspaper headlines announcing the efforts of the Allyn's Creek Garden Club to protect century-old trees threatened by plans to widen the East Avenue artery into the city; note the wordplay in the left-most headline: "Move to Save Shade Trees Gains Force" - the "Force" is Mrs. John W. Force (portrait above, right), founding member of the ACGC

## Founding of the Allyn's Creek Garden Club

By Arlene Vanderlinde

n November 7, 1928, Brighton resident Mrs. John W. Force (Josephine), a member of the Rochester Garden Club (founded in 1915), invited friends to her home at 2755 East Avenue to discuss the possible formation of a garden club to serve the residents of Brighton. The club was soon established with Mrs. Force as chair. The Charter Members consisted of the following women: Mrs. John W. Force, Miss Jessie Bacon, Mrs. A. Emerson Babcock, Mrs. Walter Will, Mrs. Edward Cumpston, Mrs. George Scoville, Mrs. Howard Converse, Mrs. Leon Stern, Mrs. Richard A. Worrell, Mrs. James B. Arnold, Mrs. Kendall B. Castle, Jr., Mrs. Edward P. Curtis, Mrs. Adrian G. Devine, Mrs. B. Emmett Finucane, Mrs. T. Raymond Finucane, Mrs. Frank E. Gannett, Mrs. James Gillis, Mrs. William R. Hill, Mrs. R. Bruce Lindsay, Mrs. George Merritt Ward.

The Club's mission would be "to stimulate the knowledge and love of

gardening among amateurs, to aid in the protection of native plants and birds and to study, in all its aspects, the fine art of gardening."

The name came from Captain Timothy Allyn who had settled (c. 1790) in what was to become Brighton. The creek that flowed through his 500acre tract also bears his name, as well as the street located nearby. Because the spelling had evolved to be Allens Creek and Allens Creek Road, the Club originally used that spelling. A. Emerson Babcock, Brighton Town Supervisor (1898-1901, 1904-1907, 1910-1911, 1928-1931) and husband of Blanche, a charter member of the Club, convinced the leaders to change the spelling of its name to Allyn, thus honoring the Captain and the history of the area.

Dues were to be two dollars, "payable at once," with meetings on the second Tuesday of each month at three o'clock. The location was subject to change and additional meetings

called when deemed advisable. The membership was initially limited to 25. In 1928, the Allyn's Creek Garden Club joined the Federated Garden Clubs of New York State, and in 1937 was elected to the Garden Club of America.

From this beginning grew an organization which has greatly influenced the beauty of the Brighton community through its projects and advocacy. When the State proposed the widening of East Avenue in Brighton and Pittsford, endangering the many historic trees lining the Avenue, the ACGC joined the Rochester Garden Club in protest of the State's plan to cut them down, identifying the many specimens that would be lost. They also were at the forefront of a campaign to allow the New York Thruway Authority to limit the use of billboards along the New York State Thruway. They joined with the Rochester Garden Club to help fund the Reforest Rochester Project after the ice storm in 1991.



The twin pin oak trees, donated and planted by ACGC in 1950, still stand proud today. The entry landscaping was also a fundraising and planting effort by ACGC later in 1981



ACGC Member Lucia Shaw exercising her green thumb

When they were celebrating their 75th Anniversary, they donated \$25,000 towards the planting of 75 trees along East Avenue from the 490 Overpass to Clover Street as their gift to the community. Another Town project was the planting of the pin oak trees at the front entrance of Brighton Town Hall in 1950 and the extensive landscaping in front of the building in 1981.

The Club was also a major sponsor of the rehabilitation of the Buckland Farmstead, a Townowned designated historic landmark on Westfall Road. They donated thousands of dollars for the design and planting of the historically-correct landscape and devoted five years of maintaining those gardens with hundreds of donated hours by the members.

Since its founding, the Allyn's Creek Garden Club (ACGC) has raised and donated hundreds of thousands

Each holiday season the ACGC lights the evergreen tree in front of the Brighton Firehouse

of dollars to community landscape projects. The Club's members have donated thousands of hours of their time to both raising the funds and in implementing the projects.

Projects also include several outside of Brighton, such as the Japanese Garden at Sonnenberg Gardens in Canandaigua, plantings for the Wilson Commencement Park, the Al Sigl Center, and the Ronald McDonald House. Club members have designed and planted gardens and conducted floral workshops and projects in the community.

The ACGC has organized fund raising events and financed important exhibits at the Memorial Art Gallery and elsewhere. They have sought to educate the public about their environment while continuing their own education about the vast subject of horticulture and its importance to the soul of their community.

The Allyn's Creek Garden Club's generosity and commitment to the Landmark Society's historic Stone-Tolan House and Museum is extraordinary. Beginning in 1958 and continuing today, ACGC has been a great force in the success of this designated Brighton Town Landmark and oldest house in Monroe County. They have been devoted in their work to create historically inspired gardens and an apple orchard on the grounds, but also to facilitate the return of the Council Rock on the grounds of the Museum, even planting an Elm tree beside it to recreate the original setting.

Historic Brighton congratulates and thanks the Allyn's Creek Garden Club for their 90-years of exemplary service to our community.

-HB-



13 April 1967: From left, Mrs. Walter Wells, Mrs. Robert D. Taylor and Mrs. Marion C. Barry holding items to be sold as they prepare for an upcoming "Spring Mart" sponsored by the Society for the Preservation of Landmarks in Western New York designed to raise funds for the restoration of the Stone-Tolan House

## THE PERFECT PARTNERSHIP: RESTORING THE STONE-TOLAN HOUSE By Arlene Vanderlinde

Since 1958, the ACGC has donated time and finances to create and nurture the gardens and landscape at Stone-Tolan, owned and operated by the Landmark Society of Western NY.

The ACGC was responsible for the creation of the 50-tree apple orchard, which boasts a variety of carefully-researched heirloom apple specimens and for the moving of the historic Council Rock (1974) to its current location in front of the property.

Heritage garden specialist, the late Jessie Woodward, a member of both ACGC and the Landmark Society Board of Trustees, was at the core of this vast project. Her knowledge of appropriate native plant specimens and a keen aesthetic is reflected in several areas surrounding the house, especially within the circle of the parking lot.

Each Spring, Club members spend a day raking, weeding and generally maintaining the gardens and grounds.

-HB









Above: The Stone-Tolan Pollinator Garden is located in front of the Stone-Tolan Barn behind the Museum. The planting of pollinator gardens was encouraged by the Garden Club of America to increase habitat for important pollinating insects

Right: An advertisement for one of the many fundraising events (antique shows, country fairs, and spring marts) held by the Allyn's Creek Garden Club designed to raise money for the restoration of the Stone-Tolan House, among other local community-oriented projects



SPRING MART



Jessie Woodward, Chairman of the Stone-Tolan House Restoration and a member of the Allyn's Creek Garden Club, with Project Director Stuart Bolger and Archaeologist Daniel Barber on the grounds of the in-progress restoration of the oldest house in Monroe County



The Stone-Tolan House Kitchen Garden, a major effort of the ACGC members, adjacent to the restored historic home





## Old-Style Fence Built To Enclose Old-Style Orchard on East Ave.



ACGC members work together painting the old-style fence



The completed fence proudly guarding the restored property

The Landmark Society and the ACGC worked together to construct and then paint a historically accurate fence to surround the Stone-Tolan property, even taking steps to replicate the antiquated painting mixtures and methods. The nail holes were first filled with a lead paste as they would have been if the fence were constructed over 150 years ago, and the paint was applied in two coats of a special mixture, the first coat a combination of white lead, linseed oil and turpentine, and the second coat half white lead and half linseed oil, per a 4 October 1962 Times-Union article praising the work on the fence.



Above: A sketch rendering featuring the restored home, adjacent gardens and heirloom apple orchards, and the relocated Council Rock in front of the property

Right: 1984 Times-Union article praising the ACGC for their funding efforts, time, skills, and knowledge contributed to the Stone-Tolan restoration project



#### MOVING THE COUNCIL ROCK

By Arlene Vanderlinde

Excerpted from an article in the Democrat & Chronicle - July 3, 1964:

"Few traces of Brighton's early years are as permanently preserved as the formidable Council Rock at 2351 East Ave. What once was a rolling hill dotted with tall trees and dense underbrush are now well-manicured lawns, stately homes and ribbons of sidewalk and street pavement.

But then, as now, stands Council Rock around which Brighton's early inhabitants, the Seneca Indians, conducted tribal meetings. To commemorate the significance of this historic spot, a bronze plaque was imbedded in the crown of the multi-ton rock on Oct. 9, 1919."

The Senecas, because of their habit of building upon hills, called themselves the NUN-DA-WA-O-NO, meaning hill top people. But their Algonquin enemies called them OTSINNIKA,

meaning stone people, a name that should have been used for the Oneida, according to the Rochester Historical Society, but for the error of the early explorers who transferred it to the westmost Iroquois, fumbling the Algonquin term and pronouncing it SINNIKARS, whence came SENECA."

#### Inscription on Council Rock:

"To the memory of the Nunda-wa-o-no, the great Senecas, Keepers of the Western Door, this rock around which according to tradition they gathered for councils is dedicated by the Seneca Indian Council Rock Commission of Brighton, N. Y., and the Rochester Historical Society. Oct. 9, 1919.

At the coming of the first white settlers to the Town of Brighton the rock stood under a great elm tree beside the old Indian trail leading from Canandaigua Lake to the present site of Rochester. Fifty yards to the northeast stands the Orringh Stone tavern, frequented by visitors to view the Falls of the Genesee."

# To Move!! Rock of Ages Takes Ages



Workmen struggling to lift the fifty-ton Council Rock with an eighty-ton crane on their second attempt (the first attempt with a smaller crane failed when the cable snapped and the crane proved insufficient)



From left: Mrs. Richard Turner (ACGC President), Mrs. John Woodward (Co-Chairman of Stone-Tolan House) and Mrs. George Williams, one of the initiators of the relocation of the Council Rock

Allyn's Creek Garden Club Council Rock Timeline:

1904: Brighton Town Board passed a resolution authorizing funds to enclose the rock with an iron fence and to attach a metal plaque: Seneca Indian Council Rock Commission of Brighton, New York. Law signed by Governor Higgins 17 March 1905.

**1919**: New York State Historical Association met in Rochester. Two hundred people attended the dedication of the metal tablet attached to the Rock.

1931: East Avenue was to undergo widening and the Council Rock and the elm tree were in the path of the new road. The Rock was moved from southeast corner of Council Rock Avenue and East Avenue to the southwest corner, about twenty feet. Land to which it was moved was owned by Raye-Namrof Inc., a New York State corporation, which purchased it from Mary C. Finucane...3 February 1930. Raye-Namrof gave permission to the Seneca Indian Council Rock Commission to place rock on property 17 June 1931. (Raye-Namrof - B. Forman Namrof is Forman spelled backwards)

1974: Because of another planned widening of East Avenue, the Allyn's Creek Garden Club financed and facilitated the moving of the Rock to the Stone-Tolan property. The Rock weighs fifty tons, is seven feet tall and nine feet wide. The forty-ton crane originally selected to move the Rock was too small - the cable snapped. An eighty-ton crane was successful Friday, 6 December 1974. Commission members in 1974: Thomas C. Taylor, Mrs. Francis ("May") Remington, Henry Kingston, Mrs. C. Burnett Howard, daughter of Edwin C. Smith

**1992**: The Allyn's Creek Garden Club financed the planting of a disease-resistant American Elm beside the Council Rock to replicate its original home.

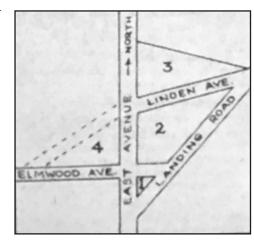
## A GIFT TO THE TOWN OF BRIGHTON: EAST AVENUE LANDSCAPING By Arlene Vanderlinde

In 1930 the Brighton Town Board approved the Club's plan for the planting of the "Triangle" at East Avenue and Clover Street. In 1933, the ACGC began a beautification project at the triangles at East and Elmwood Avenues, near Landing Road South. In 1984, the Club refurbished the landscaping for Brighton's Sesquicentennial.

When the intersection was redesigned by the State in 1994, many of the plantings were relocated to the Friendly Home and Linden Knolls.

Right: At the time this map of the site was drawn, plots 1,2, and 3 had already been landscaped, but plot 4 remained a future plan once the Linden Avenue extension to Elmwood was completed at a later date

Below: a 1984 newspaper photograph showing the landscaped triangle at Linden Avenue







East Avenue & Landing Road, 1933



East Avenue & Allens Creek Road, 1933



East Avenue & Elmwood Avenue, 1933

#### Known Sources and Credits for Photos and Historical Materials:

- 1. Archives of The Allyn's Creek Garden Club, ACGC 25th Anniversary book and 75th Anniversary Program
- 2. Bernie Todd Smith (Member ACGC)
- 3. Beverly Gibson (Horticulturist for The Landmark Society of Western New York)
- 4. Mary Jo Lanphear (Brighton Town Historian)
- 5. Janet Hopkin (Historic Brighton Trustee)
- 6. The Landmark Society of Western New York
- 7. Rochester Democrat & Chronicle (archives, various articles)
- 8. http://mcnygenealogy.com/ (various images)
- 9. Elizabeth L. Maurer (Director of Programs, National Women's History Museum, April 2017)

## Mr. & Mrs. James B. Arnold: Architect and Gardener

By Arlene Vanderlinde

Architect James Burns Arnold was born in Rochester in 1881. He graduated from the Rochester Free Academy in 1899. He immediately entered the architectural office of Claude F. Bragdon where he received his architectural training.

Arnold was employed there from 1900 to 1915, when he left to form a partnership with Herbert Stern which lasted until about 1932. He continued in practice until his death in 1957. He was a charter member of the Rochester Society of Architects and a member of

American Institute of Architects (AIA).

Arnold & Stern designed houses for both upper and middle income families, including three residences for the Woodward family of LeRoy, the Hornbeck-Gannett House, a Brighton Landmark, and a number of public buildings in Rochester and Monroe county, including churches, libraries, and office buildings. Their commissions included St. Augustine's Church in Rochester, St. Patrick's Church in Victor, libraries in Canandaigua,

Avon, Victor and LeRoy; two country clubs; a Seneca Park Zoo building; Sacred Heart Academy; and the remodeling of the Rochester Hotel.

Arnold and his wife, Helen, an active member of ACGC, lived in a Colonial Revival style home of his own design located at 2607 Highland Avenue a few doors away from the Linda and Michael Riordan home. They lived there from 1926 until his death in 1957.

## THE LEGACY OF A HOME AND GARDEN By Arlene Vanderlinde

inda and Michael Riordan Lahave lived in their Brighton home at 2525 Highland Avenue for more than 30 years. Designed by Rochester Architect, James B. Arnold, this home is an outstanding example of the French Normandy style. Built in 1927 for Joseph Michaels, the home's exterior remains much the same today. The gardens surrounding the Riordan home have evolved over the years, as gardens naturally do. The original landscape designer is not known, but in 1945, prominent Rochester landscape architect William Pitkin created a landscape plan for then-owners Mr. and Mrs. Waldo G. Wildes. The Riordans have several hand-colored drawings of the proposed plans. It is not known which plan was selected or how much was left of these gardens when the Riordans purchased the home.

Linda has designed and overseen the creation of her home's present landscape. She has planted at least 12 native trees and numerous shrubs over the years creating exquisite areas of beauty and privacy. There is always something blooming throughout the growing season. She credits much of her knowledge to her memberships in the Allyn's Creek Garden Club and Garden Club of America. Here she learned the importance of native shrubs in the home landscape for the benefit of wildlife.

Linda has been an active member of ACGC since 1995, serving as club president from 2003 to 2005, which was during the club's 75th Anniversary. As a gift to the Town of Brighton and in partnership with them, ACGC made a 75th Anniversary gift of 75 trees, which were planted on East

Avenue in the Town. Linda has worked on numerous fundraisers and chaired several committees, including the Conservation Committee. She is most proud of the project that enabled the Allyn's Creek Garden Club to provide funds in 2005 to help the Braddock Bay Bird Observatory purchase land. The Conservation Committee also organized the planting of over 100 trees at Braddock Bay Bird Observatory as part of the Garden Club of America's (GCA's) Centennial Celebration Tree Project in 2013. These trees provide food and shelter for migrating and nesting birds.

——НВ-----

Photographs of Riordan home and garden on back cover.



Mrs. Arnold's 1934 National Flower Show exhibit



Mrs. James Arnold's Victorian dinner table flower arrangement

Poem by James B. Arnold to the members of the Allyn's Creek Garden Club, 26 June 1934, after his display brought no prize to the club:

"Tis true, I helped you at the show, Fell prostrate on my knees; But gladly I would bear the blow To bring you prizes, if you please.

Instead, the Judges' condescension Made me feel more shaken; For scarcely did we get a mention Much less, bring home the bacon.

Of your gift I'm now the proud owner, You've sent me my "just deserts"; Though I'm guilty of pulling a boner, I think you're a swell bunch of skirts!"



This sketch accompanied the poem at left in James Arnolds letter to the ACGC



Portrait of James B. Arnold



ACGC booth, photo and watercolor rendering

#### Historic Brighton acknowledges with gratitude:



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

## Home and Garden of Linda & Michael Riordan

Photos Provided by Linda Riordan

