



HISTORIC BRIGHTON

Newsletter and Journal

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

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MERCHANTS OF MONROE CONTINUED: HISTORIC TALES OF THE TWELVE CORNERS BUSINESS DISTRICT



*Photograph of Twelve Corners Plaza featuring Wegmans at the plaza center, August 1949
Image from Brighton Municipal Historical Collection*

HISTORIC BRIGHTON 21st ANNUAL MEETING AND UPCOMING PROGRAM:

JIM MEMMOTT PRESENTS:

“Remarkable Rochesterians”

with many notable Brighton residents!

Sunday, January 26th, 2020 | 2:30 pm

Brickstone Wintergarden | 1325 Elmwood Avenue, Rochester NY 14620

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

MAY RILEY SMITH: BRIGHTON'S POET LAUREATE (1842-1927)

By Mary Jo Lanphear

When thinking of nineteenth century American poets, doesn't Emily Dickenson almost always come to mind? There is another though, and much closer to home: Brighton's own Mary Louise Riley Smith. Publishing under the name May Riley Smith, she began writing in verse as a young girl, sometimes dismaying her readers with her penchant for lugubrious themes.

Mary Louise Riley, the daughter of Justin Riley and Abigail Jane Hagaman, was born in 1842 in Brighton Centre. Her father was the son of Lovina Wells Riley, the third wife of Orringh Stone. Her mother was the only daughter of John Hagaman who brought his family to Brighton in the 1820s, building a large brick house that still stands on Highland Avenue. Mary Louise's aunt by marriage was Harriet Stone Hagaman, daughter of Orringh Stone and Elizabeth Mabie and the only one of the Stone children to remain in Brighton.

Mary Louise attended the local public school then went to the Brockport Collegiate Institute. The Institute (1835-1866) was the forerunner of Brockport Normal School which later became SUNY Brockport. Academies such as this offered a mix of high school and college classes to those who wanted more than the typical eighth-grade education.

In 1869 Mary Louise married mining engineer Albert Smith of Springfield, Illinois, where they made their home for a few years after their marriage. In 1874 their son, Clarence, was born and shortly after that they moved to New York City where they lived out their lives.

May Riley Smith's poetry began to appear in magazines and literary journals in the 1880s. As her popularity

grew, she was in great demand as a speaker at women's societies and social gatherings. In her time her fame was the equivalent of the popular writers of the 21st century. Because her work was readily available to readers, her name became a household word, so to speak.

May Riley Smith's poetry found a niche in the sentimental literature that was so popular in her time. Her poem, "Sometime," published in 1893, retains its popularity today. Indeed, an online bookseller has made it available in a reprinted book of her poems, saying "...we believe this work is culturally important, we have made it available as part of our commitment for protecting, preserving, and promoting the world's literature in affordable...editions."¹ The first of the five stanzas of "Sometime" goes as follows:

*"Sometime, when all life's lessons have
been learned,
And sun and star forevermore have set,
The things which our weak judgment
here have spurned,
Will flash before us, out of life's dark
night,
As stars shine most in deeper tints of
blue;
And we shall see how all God's plans
are right,
And how what seemed reproof was love
most true."*

Alphonso Alvah Hopkins, literary editor of the American Rural Home (a weekly journal published in Rochester), found May Riley Smith's poetry a perfect fit for his magazine, saying that "she was truer to the purest instincts of the soul..." and that her poems were "not cold, icy bits of intellectuality... but come welling up warmly from her heart and sink tremulously into yours." A critic fifty years later was less

magnanimous. She said "We shall agree that there was nothing cerebral about Mrs. Smith's compositions, and we shall even grant that her lines rhymed and scanned; but we cannot say that they show the imagination, conception, or technique essential to true poetry."²

Mary Riley Smith enjoyed the social life of New York City. She joined several women's groups, the most notable "Sorosis," the first professional women's club in the United States. Founded in 1868, the organization provided a space for women to gather, educate themselves, and network. Mary Riley Smith was president of the organization beginning in 1913 and continuing for several years.

Smith was in demand as the entertainment for other women's groups as well. The National Society of New England Women sponsored a literary meeting in March of 1920, including May Riley Smith on a program with a cellist, a vocalist, and an address about Mexico. In 1923 she read aloud her poetry at a benefit for the Mary Fisher Home for Brain-damaged Workers in New Jersey.

Albert Smith died in New York City in 1919, leaving Mary without immediate family. Their son, Clarence, had died at the age of 22 in 1896. Mary lived on and continued writing poetry until shortly before her death on January 13, 1927 at the age of 84. She was buried in Woodlawn Cemetery in New York with Albert and Clarence.

—————HB—————

Historic Sources:

1. Abebooks
2. Literature in Rochester, 1865-1905, Rochester History, Volume X, No. 1, January 1948

CAPLE'S TAVERN AT TWELVE CORNERS

By Mary Jo Lanphear

Caple's Tavern at 1832 Monroe Avenue occupies a unique position in the collection of Brighton's extant nineteenth century brick buildings: it is the only one that was designed for commercial purposes. All of the other surviving brick structures were designed as residences. This origin adds a different dimension to the evaluation of the building as a historic structure. Because it was a public building, it was the site of town meetings and social events not associated with the neighboring residential buildings in Brighton.

Edward Caple typified the mid-nineteenth century settler of Brighton. He emigrated from England, opened a butcher shop in Rochester's Central Market, then moved to Brighton in 1848 to buy and operate a tavern on the main road from Rochester to Pittsford (present-day Monroe Avenue, Route 31). Located near the Twelve Corners, Edward Caple catered to travelers, land speculators, brick buyers, workers, and nearby residents. The tavern was a hub of activity that continued until his death in 1889.

Edward Caple obtained a tavern license from the Brighton Board of Excise in May of 1849 for \$25.00 (approximately \$760 in 2018). In October of that year, the Brighton Town Board met at Caple's Tavern. It was the habit of the board to hold meetings in taverns in east, west, and central Brighton on an alternate basis.

A nineteenth century tavern was more than a place to obtain liquid refreshment; it more closely resembled a bed-and-breakfast of the modern era. In addition to public rooms for meeting and dining, it offered

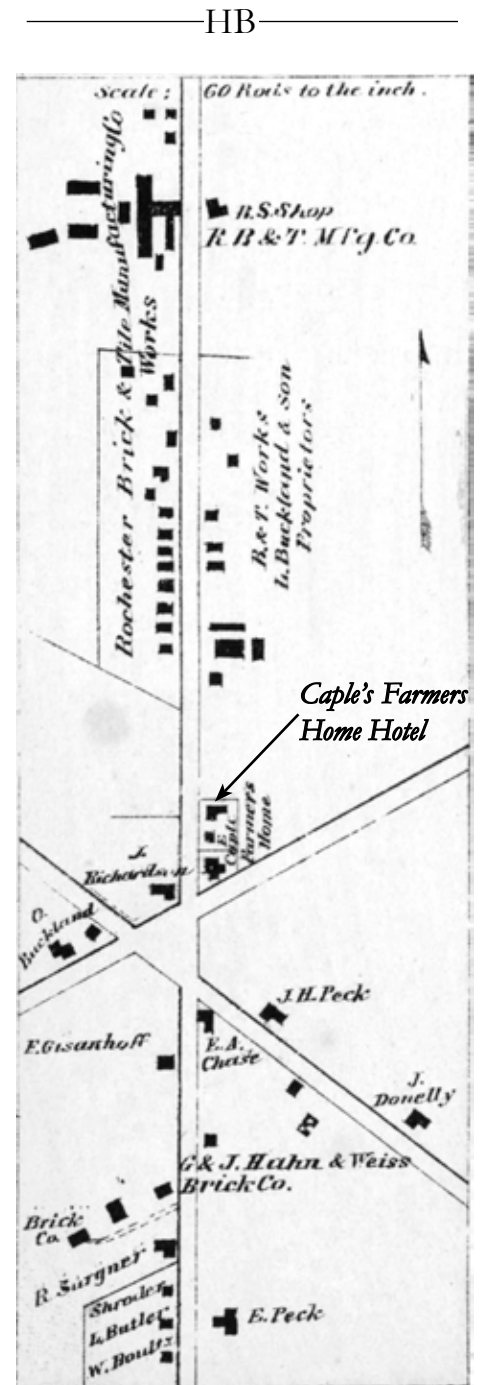
overnight accommodations for travelers and even long-term stays when necessary. According to an account of the Caleb Martin family of Pittsford, his daughter, Annis Martin, went to live at Caple's tavern after her father's death in 1866. The settlement of the Caleb Martin estate by an out-of-town sister excluded Annis from the family home in Pittsford.

By the time that the Monroe County Business Directory was published in 1869, Edward Caple had prospered to the point of sponsoring the publication. Not only is his name printed in bold type as the proprietor of the Farmers' Home Hotel, but the hotel had its own separate listing, also in bold type. The 1860 U.S. census indicates that Caple held real estate valued at \$3,000; in the 1870 U.S. census the figure given is \$6,000.

Edward Caple's daughters, Ann and Sarah, both married local men. Ann married Daniel MacFarlan who owned land on the north side of Elmwood Avenue now known as the MacFarlan Farm neighborhood. Sarah married John Irving whose land included what is now Irving Road on the south side of Elmwood Avenue.

Not only is Caple's Tavern the single surviving brick building in the area between Cobb's Hill and the Twelve Corners, an area that for over seventy-five years was totally devoted to brick making, but it is also the last remnant of that industry that was so important to the development and prosperity of the Town of Brighton. It is an "anchor building" in that it links Brighton's main commercial corridor of the twenty-first century to the town's manufacturing era in the nineteenth century.

Edward Caple's Farmers' Home Hotel merited designation as a Brighton town landmark because of its long-standing connection to the cultural, political, economic, architectural, and social history of Brighton. Over 160 years after its construction, it is still a contributing structure to the streetscape of the Twelve Corners.



A cropped section of an 1872 Atlas of Monroe County showing notable Twelve Corners sites

THE BEGINNING OF TWELVE CORNERS PLAZA

By Raymond Tierney III

The stage was set in the early twentieth century when Brighton Village was annexed by the City of Rochester. When this happened, the town lost its commercial base and government infrastructure at the Winton Rd/East Ave area. However these critical town sectors were firmly replanted at Twelve Corners by the 1940's.

On two corners were the Brighton Fire Department and the Brighton Schools while the Brighton Town Hall could be found just a block to the west. The north section of the crossroads is the subject of this article. The year 1941 would prove to be a watershed moment as the Twelve Corners Plaza would open to much fanfare and completely cement the commercial base of the Town of Brighton.

What unfolded was an unprecedented "perfect storm" - not only was Twelve Corners Plaza the first suburban plaza in Monroe County, but also the first expansion out of the City of Rochester for grocer Wegmans, and variety retailer Neisner Brothers.

Neisner's eventually grew to 192 stores, while Wegmans has recently opened its 100th location. Those two stores anchored a 13 store complex complete with 55,000 sq.ft of parking to meet the ever expanding use of automobiles.

Other original tenants of Twelve Corners Plaza included: Beck Cleaners, Cy's Restaurant, Endicott Johnson Shoes (Altiers Shoes would not open in the plaza until 1950), Perry Flower Shop, Park Lane Beauty Shop, Ray's Barber Shop, Reed's Candy Store, Sen Hardware, Whitney's Dress Shop and E.J. Schlitzer Stores. Schlitzer's grand opening ad from the Rochester Times Union gives you an idea of the bargains of the day. This plaza along with the

Howard Johnson's restaurant across the street that had opened the previous year had exponentially increased the shopping and dining options within central Brighton.

The plaza was developed by Emil Muller, owned by Dreyfus Properties of Boston, and designed by C. Storrs Barrows. Muller was an integral part in this "retail explosion" at Twelve Corners as this was his first attempt at major plaza development.

Muller had a fantastic business lifeline from immigrant to a nationally known shopping plaza developer. He was a true visionary and entrepreneur. When referring to his pioneering effort in suburban housing and shopping plaza development, his friend and attorney Robert Neilon said, "He seemed to be doing what other fellas weren't doing, his vision was that big."

Muller went on to build Northgate, Panorama, Westgate and Irondequoit plazas in Monroe County to go along with plazas in Chicago, Cincinnati and Atlanta. C. Storrs Barrows was also instrumental in designing many historic homes in Monroe County.

Many examples can be found throughout Brighton and the eastern part of the City of Rochester.

Of course, Wegmans was the focal point of the grand opening with its modern and innovative store. According to a Rochester Times Union article on 12/18/41, the store included such supermarket innovations as: air conditioning, fluorescent lighting

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E. J. SCHLITZER STORES, INC.
1922 MONROE AVE. PHONE MONROE 7102
AT THE TWELVE CORNERS

An early ad for E.J. Schlitzer Stores, c. 1940



Twelve Corners Plaza featuring the time-temperature clock donated by First Federal Bank, c. 1985



*Aerial photograph of freshly constructed Twelve Corners Plaza featuring Wegmans at the plaza center circa 1953
Image from Brighton Municipal Historical Collection*

that created a daylight atmosphere, abundant self-service groceries and a complete checkout service at both ends of the store. Lawrence Mooney who was the store manager and who later became the Town Clerk of Brighton used his outgoing and genial personality to great advantage.

Through the years many notable Brighton mainstays inhabited this venerable plaza. Those stores included: Altiers Shoes, Crossroads Restaurant, First Federal Bank (who built the iconic time-temperature clock), Fanny Farmer Candies, Earl's Drugs, Len David's, Bagel Land and many more.

The plaza underwent a major remodeling in 2006 that brought in many of the current occupants such as Starbucks and Panera.

—HB—



Historic Brighton thanks Wegmans

*for their continuing support
throughout our first 20 years*

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EDUCATION AT THE TWELVE CORNERS

By Mary Jo Lanphear

One of the prominent buildings at the Twelve Corners is the Middle School that fronts on Monroe Avenue. It's a relative new-comer to the educational history of Brighton.

At the turn of the twentieth century, Brighton had ten public school buildings. Most were one-room schools where children from five to fifteen progressed through the grades all together in the same room. Each of these schools had a board of trustees that hired the teacher, maintained the building, and directed the curriculum. A typical school year ran from November through March at which point the young people were released to help their parents on the family farm. Upon completion of eighth grade, one's education was considered finished. It was the rare rural student who went on to high school. These conventions did not apply to students at private schools, academies, or seminaries where the school year was longer and education continued after grade school.

District #1 school faced Clover Street at the intersection of Elmwood Avenue and Clover. Originally constructed in 1815 from brick made by Isaac Moore on Clover Street, it was replaced by a larger frame building in 1884. After Districts #1 and #8 consolidated to form the Brighton Union Free School District in 1925, the frame school house was torn down. The site remained vacant until the construction of the Alcoa Aluminum house in 1957.

There were other school districts in the town of Brighton that served the needs of both village and rural pupils. District #2 school house was on Winton Road near East Avenue in Brighton Village. This district had a four-room annex

on Marion Street near Atlantic Avenue to accommodate children from the Holland settlement. District #3 held classes in a brick building on the south side of Westfall Road where medical offices are now. School #4 was built in 1837 for a district that began with a log school in 1814 on the south side of Crittenden Road. District #5 also began in 1814 and evolved from a log building into a one-room brick school at the corner of Mount Hope Avenue and Crittenden Blvd. District #6, formed in 1815, became Allens Creek School on East Avenue near Elmwood Avenue. District #7 lost part of its area when Irondequoit was taken off in 1839. In 1844 it moved from Merchants and Culver Roads to Waring Road. Later it moved to the Kelly farm at Landing Road and Cloverland Drive. Several District #7 school buildings were constructed on Landing Road near Penfield Road only to succumb to fire, probably due to the school's proximity to coal-fired train engines.

District #8 was a brick school on Monroe Avenue near Highland Avenue and across from Cobb's Hill. District #9 School was on Edgewood Avenue near French Road and is now a private residence. School #10 was a four-room school located on the corner of Cedarwood Terrace and Jersey Street in a part of Brighton that was annexed by the city of Rochester in 1914. Districts #11 through #24 were for the most part begun in the early nineteenth century and subsumed soon after by the larger districts nearby. Those in the northern part of Brighton became school districts in Irondequoit in 1839.

Brighton's housing boom began with the establishment of Home Acres in 1912, Rose Lawn in 1919, and

Meadowbrook in 1926. For families that didn't purchase single houses, new apartment buildings and commercial buildings with apartments on the second floor along Monroe Avenue offered housing accessible to the city by public transportation.

New housing in town meant more families and school-age children. In 1926 Brighton District #1 built a school at the Twelve Corners to relieve crowding in schools #1 and #8 but only two years later added a wing to that building. Brighton then opened its own high school in the same elementary building but later added another wing to house the high school only and opened it to pupils from all the school districts in town, from #1 to #9, from west Brighton to east Brighton.

Because the Twelve Corners building was overcrowded with 400 high school students occupying the elementary school wing, the Brighton School district purchased land south of the elementary/high school complex and completed in 1938 a junior-senior high school facing Winton Road.

In 1952 Brighton Central School District added a wing to the high school and made the decision to accept only those students from the former districts #3 and #9 into Brighton High School, leaving the rest of the school districts in Brighton to find other ways to educate their high school-age children. Unable to build high schools, District #6, Allens Creek School, annexed itself to the Pittsford Central School District and District #7, Indian Landing School, joined the Penfield Central School District. Later district #9 was also eliminated from the eligible districts.

THE HISTORIANS' LAW CENTENNIAL, 1919-2019

By Mary Jo Lanphear

Also known as the Historians' Law, Governor Alfred E. Smith signed into law on April 11, 1919, a bill that said "A local historian shall be appointed, as provided in this section, for each city, town, or village...and a county historian may be appointed for each county." This made New York State the first state to have a network of officially appointed local historians. The law was initially intended to collect information about New York State's participation in World War I that ended in November 1918 but the law came just a few years after the March 1911 fire in Albany that destroyed over 800,000 books and manuscripts in the State library so the secondary impetus of the new law was the preservation of local history.

If all the municipal historians' positions are filled, New York State would have 938 town historians, 567 village historians, 61 city historians, 57 county historians, five borough historians in the greater New York City area, and 12 community historians (borough

of Manhattan) for a grand total of 1640 persons. In reality however, a full complement of historians has never been accomplished due to the death of historians in office, changes in political affiliation, or disregard for the law.

By the end of 1920, less than half of the available positions were filled, with 735 appointed historians out of about 1550 jurisdictions. Rochester's first city historian, Edward R. Foreman, compiled a list that included names for all the towns and villages in Monroe County. Some of the towns with villages within their boundaries elected to appoint one person for both the town and village. For example, Miss Edith A. Wright served both Webster town and village as did Charles D. Cooper in the village of Brockport in the town of Sweden. Mrs. Theodore W. Benedict appears on Edward Foreman's list as the historian for the town of Brighton. A search through the town meeting minutes of the period turns up no information on her appointment.

in 1897. Commuting from her aunt's home in Holley, Laura graduated from Brockport Normal School (now the College at Brockport) earning teaching credentials that she used in her position as a music teacher at Columbia School for Girls. Noted for her contralto voice, Laura was the soloist for First Presbyterian Church and later Brighton Presbyterian Church.

In 1908 Laura Holton married Theodore Whipple Benedict. They had one son, Theodore Holton Benedict.

When the Seneca Council Rock faced destruction in the early years of the 20th century, New York State passed a law in 1905 that mandated a commission to preserve and care for the rock. The first commission members were A.

Laura Benedict held the position until her death in 1929.

In 1944 the Brighton town board decided to allocate \$25.00 in the 1945 budget to cover the costs of appointing a town historian "in compliance with Education Law Section 1198." A. Emerson Babcock is listed as Brighton historian in the records of the Monroe County history department for the years 1944 through 1949 with Frances Coleman as the deputy historian from 1948 through 1954. Dorothy Cumpston was appointed on December 28, 1950 and resigned on September 10, 1952. Raymond C. Keople served as historian from his appointment on January 29, 1953 until his death on April 25, 1958. Margaret Schmitt MacNab was appointed to the position on May 14, 1958 and served until her retirement in August of 1986. Mary Jo Lanphear followed, appointed on December 1, 1986. Individual biographies of the above historians follow this overview.

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Emerson Babcock, Edwin C. Smith, John T. Caley, Maria Hagaman, and T. Franklin Crittenden. After the deaths of Caley, Hagaman and Crittenden, in 1916 and 1922, Laura Holton Benedict was appointed to fill a vacant position on the commission.

No official record exists of Laura's service as town historian except for a circa 1919 one-page list compiled by Rochester City Historian, Edward R. Foreman that lists the town and village historians for Monroe County. Laura's name and address appear first on the list: Mrs. Theodore W. Benedict, Brighton Station, Landing Road, Rochester, N.Y.

Laura's service as historian ended with her death in 1929. She is buried in Brighton Cemetery in the Dyer plot.

Laura Holton Benedict, Brighton's first town historian, had deep roots in the town. The daughter of Selma and Effie Dryer Holton, her great grandfather was Matthew Dryer who came to Brighton from Rehoboth, Massachusetts, in 1817 and established a fifty-acre farm on what is now Landing Road South. Descendants of Mathew and Mary Dryer lived in the house until it was sold after Laura Holton's death in 1929. The house, a designated Brighton landmark, still stands on Landing Road South.

Laura, whose original name was Adelia after Selma's mother, was born in 1880 in Brighton. Orphaned at an early age, she went to live with relatives in Holley, New York, and became the first graduate of Holley High school

Augustus Emerson Babcock followed Laura Holton Benedict but not immediately after her death. Apparently the town joined many other communities in not complying with the 1919 New York State law. It wasn't until 1944 that Supervisor Roy Draper appointed Emerson Babcock and added a line for the historian to the 1945 budget.

Emerson Babcock was born in Charlotte in 1863. His mother died shortly after his birth. His father purchased the Isaac Moore house on Clover Street in Brighton where he developed a large fruit farm. Emerson was educated locally and at out-of-town boarding schools. In 1889 he married Blanche Sias. They raised their family in the old brick house.

Elected Justice of the Peace in 1891, in the following year Emerson Babcock

In 1939, Frances Coleman began a temporary assignment for the town of Brighton and wound up as secretary to the town supervisor for nineteen years. In addition to her regular duties, she took on the role of deputy town

Born on January 8, 1896, in Washington, D.C., Dorothy Copenhaver graduated from Vassar College in 1917. Two years later she married patent attorney Edward Henry Cumpston and went to live on Council Rock Avenue in Brighton. After the birth of their son and daughter in 1921 and 1928 respectively, Dorothy participated in the social life of the community, acting in the Rochester Community Players and joining the Allyn's Creek Garden Club.

In 1942 she became the New York State chairman for the sale of war bonds and the upstate New York vice chairman for the Women's Division of the War Savings Committee. When the three-sided memorial at the Twelve Corners was dedicated in 1943 to the service men and women of World War II, it was Dorothy Cumpston who gave the address at the ceremony. Her son, Edward, was serving

ran for town supervisor and was elected for the first of several terms in that position, serving eighteen years during the period 1893 to 1931. His interest in politics included an unsuccessful run for the United States Congress on the Bull Moose Party ticket in 1912, urged on by his friend, Theodore Roosevelt.

Emerson Babcock carried on his father's work as a fruit farmer and became proficient in dealing with horticultural diseases, even serving as a consultant to other fruit growers, most notably New York State Senator Hendrick Holden of Syracuse. History was his avocation, however, and for many years Emerson Babcock researched and wrote about genealogy and local history for the Rochester Historical Society's Publication Fund series. In 1938 he worked with J. Sheldon Fisher of Ontario County

historian for A. Emerson Babcock. This included taking dictation from Mr. Babcock to produce his History of Brighton, seven loose leaf notebooks filled with single-space, margin to margin text. In 1946 she organized the

in the military at that time. In 1950 Town Supervisor appointed a reluctant Dorothy Cumpston to the position of town historian. Mrs. Cumpston really wanted to start a town library, which she eventually did, and had been pressing Supervisor Draper for that for many months. Draper was under pressure from New York State to appoint a town historian so he asked Mrs. Cumpston for a list of qualified people to consider for the position. When all of her suggestions refused the appointment, Mr. Draper informed Mrs. Cumpston that he had submitted her name for the appointment and to do whatever she felt was commensurate with the salary. As she said at the time, "Of course, there was no salary." (Brighton-Pittsford Post, 8 November 1973) Nonetheless, as questions came to her from school children she wrote

to develop the Schuyler Trading post replica in Ellison Park, marking the 1721 sojourn of Capt. Peter Schuyler and his fellow Colonial soldiers.

On October 8, 1944, the Brighton town board appointed Emerson Babcock the second official town historian for Brighton. After his appointment, Mr. Babcock produced a seven volume loose-leaf history of the town.

On August 13, 1946, Emerson Babcock was host to the town and village historians of Monroe County, taking them by bus to visit sites in Brighton followed by lunch at Howard Johnson's.

A. Emerson Babcock died on May 29, 1949, and is buried next to Blanche Sias Babcock in Mount Hope Cemetery.

first tour of landmarks in Brighton for visiting municipal historians.

Frances Coleman left town service in 1958, retiring with her husband to Margate, Florida.

a paper about the history of Brighton that she deemed at the time to be dull. This "dull" work became The Building of Brighton, a thirty-page booklet published in 1952 and updated by a successor in 1973.

On September 10, 1952, Dorothy Cumpston resigned as town historian. She continued to advocate for local libraries, appointed by Chairman of the Monroe County Board of Supervisors to the Citizens Committee on Libraries. In 1960, as chairman of the Brighton Memorial Library board, she spearheaded the effort for expansion of that library.

Dorothy Copenhaver Cumpston died in 1979 and is buried with her husband and her ancestors in Rock Creek Cemetery, Washington, D.C.

Raymond Keople was born on September 11, 1882 in Cuba, New York. After his education in the local school system, he matriculated at the University of Rochester, graduating in 1905 with a B.A. in English, History, and Pedagogy. His credits toward a Master's degree were earned at the University of Rochester and Columbia University. After a three-year stint teaching in Mattoon, Illinois, he returned to Rochester to work, eventually becoming principal of the Rochester Shop School (later Edison Tech). From 1924 through 1953 he worked for the Rochester City School District and as its attendance director from 1930.

Margaret Cornely was born on November 13, 1910, in Madera, Pennsylvania, to country doctor James Cornely and his wife, Blanche. Educated at Dickinson Seminary in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, she earned her bachelor's degree at Bucknell University and her master's degree from Pennsylvania State in 1935.

In 1938 she married Dr. Claude G. Schmitt, a Kodak chemist, and moved with him to South Goodman Street in Rochester. For a while Margaret taught at Columbia School for Girls nearby on North Goodman Street. After children Claude and Carolyn were born, the Schmitts moved in 1940 to 769 Penfield Road in Brighton. Subsequent moves found them at 59 Dale Road and 177 Inwood Dr.

Margaret was active in the Indian Landing School PTA (Brighton #7 District) and participated in the ILS United Nations committee.

Claude Schmitt died on January 15, 1955, and Margaret returned to teaching at Columbia School.

After the sudden death of Raymond Keople, Margaret C. Schmitt was appointed the town historian for Brighton on May 14, 1958. She continued

Mr. Keople's interest in education extended to his Brighton school district, #7 on Landing Road North, serving as the superintendent of the district and a member of the board of trustees throughout the 1930s and 1950s. Indian Landing School pupils will recall his presenting the eighth grade graduates their diplomas.

Raymond Keople and his wife lived on Penfield Road where they enjoyed reading and collecting books. During World War II rationing, when new children's books could not be published, Mr. Keople invited parents to his house to purchase books from his library for

to teach at Columbia School in addition to her duties as town historian.

In 1964 Margaret served as historical consultant to the Brighton Sesquicentennial planning group headed by Andrew Wolfe. Later that year, on September 6th, she married widower Donald MacNab in Third Presbyterian Church

When Margaret Schmitt MacNab, she was very active in AMHNYS, the Association of Municipal Historians of New York State, becoming president in 1971 at a meeting at Eisenhower College in Seneca Falls, and presenting a paper, Ethics for a Town Historian, that was reprinted and sent to every municipal historian at the time of his/her appointment.

In 1973, Margaret edited and added to Dorothy Cumpston's work, *The Building of Brighton*. In 1975 she completed *Tryon in Brighton*, a forty-page booklet about the early settlement on the Irondequoit Landing in what is now Ellison Park in Brighton. In 1978 Margaret wrote *West Brighton Folk & Lore* and at the same time, she worked with Monroe County Historian, Shirley Husted, and Penfield Town Historian Katherine Thompson to publish in 1981 *Northfield...on the Genesee*, a history

birthday and holiday gifts.

On January 1, 1953, Raymond Keople was appointed the town of Brighton historian. Later that year, he retired from the Rochester City School District. Using the town meeting minutes from 1814 to 1956, he compiled a history of Brighton that includes the major decisions of the town board as well as historical anecdotes. In 1956 he also produced *The Schools of Brighton* that included information about public and private schools in the town.

Raymond Keople died on April 25, 1958.

of the predecessor town of the eastern Monroe County area, 1796 to 1814.

By 1986, Margaret and Don MacNab were spending six months in Venice, Florida and it became difficult for Margaret to continue her work as town historian so she resigned in August of that year. In retirement she taught genealogy for the Sarasota County Genealogical Society. Margaret died in Kingsport, TN, on September 19, 2006 at age 95.

—HB—



Margaret Cornely Schmitt MacNab

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Phyllis Bentley
Barbara Billingsley
Sharon & Jack Bloemendaal
Ed & Ann Michele Bouwmeester
Carol Bradshaw
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Brighton Volunteer
Ambulance
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Willard G. Brown
Joanne Bernardi & Dale Buralli
Linda Buttrill
Peggy Weston Byrd
Edward Carey
Margaret Carnall
Rome Celli & Elizabeth Forbes
Gwen Cheney
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Natalie & Richard Ciccone
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Susan Johnson
Wallace Johnson & Karen Duguid
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John Keenan III
Vivian Kennehy

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Jessica Lacher-Feldman
Marlowe Laiacona
Edith Lank
Mary Jo Lanpbear
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Michael Lempert
James Lesch & Richard LeRoy
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Leigh Little
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Susan MacDougal
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Greg & Connie Messner
Suzanne Meyerowitz
Dan Meyers
Betty Middlebrook
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Marion Morse
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Pike Stained Glass Studio
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Diana Robinson
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Judy Schwartz
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James H. Sloan
Elane Spencer
St. John's Home
Frederick Stabl
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Bob & Gayle Stiles
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Laura & Al Swett
Charlie and Maggie Symington
The Friendly Home
William Thomas
Raymond Tierney III
Tuthill Lighting & Design
Janet & John Tyler
Nancy Uffindell
James & Linda Underwood
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David Urban
Derek & Arlene Vanderlinde
Jeff Vincent & Debbie Bower
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Nicholas & Robin Wilt
Carla Yanni
Carol Yost
Terrance Yount
Nancy Zimmer

Thank you to all of our members for your continued interest and support!

SIGNS OF CHANGE

By Arlene Vanderlinde

During the mid-twentieth century, as if in a frenzied competition, businesses along the Monroe Avenue corridor began steadily increasing the size and quantity of their signage in an effort to attract customers. Monroe Avenue's unique combination of adapted residences and commercial structures began to take on the look of a "mini Las Vegas" with signs that many felt destroyed the ambiance of the town.

In 1970, the Town of Brighton took a first step to enhance the look of its main business corridors, namely Monroe Avenue, West Henrietta Road and Elmwood Avenue. The Town Board passed an ordinance designed to help the town's business areas better fit with the residential quality of Brighton by creating guidelines for business signage and banning free-standing signs. The new law prohibited signs taking up more than 10% of a building's outside area. Also, signs could only be on one side of a building and no roof-top signs would be allowed.

Businesses would have three years to make alternate arrangements. As of January 1, 1973, merchants who refused to comply with the new law would be receive a notice of violation. Once they receive the notice, they would be given 10 additional days to comply. After that it would become a matter to be settled in court, punishable by a fine.

"Brighton can be beautiful if people want it to be"

~Stephen Parker (letter to the editor, Brighton-Pittsford Post)

Some merchants applauded the new law saying that it would be beneficial to all businesses to enhance the beauty of the area. People had choices of where to shop with the growth of new shopping plazas. Enhancing the physical beauty of the area would be good for all.

Mrs. Esther Bellwood, owner of Tuthill Lamp and Shade, removed her free-standing sign soon after the law was passed. She changed the remaining pole that held her sign into an interesting old-fashioned street-light. She felt that she could set a good example and then perhaps others would remove their signs. Mrs. Bellwood said that her free-standing sign had little impact on her business. "My customers know us and know where we are so in this respect, I am lucky."

Other merchants feared that removing the signs would ruin their businesses. One owner said that the removals would cause traffic accidents as customers tried to find them. Another asked, "What happens if businesses start painting their places in distinctive colors, and we get an area of Scotch plaid and other ugly-colored stores?"

Brighton residents, however, were solidly behind the town's measures. Many residents voiced their approval

through letters published in the Times-Union and the Brighton-Pittsford Post. They hoped that, in the words of Brighton Environmental Advisory Council member Richard L. Warner, perhaps "reluctant sign removers would take another look at the improvements made by the majority of their neighbors and support the town's positive efforts to beautify the community."

—HB—



Brighton Motel sign would be illegal when new sign law takes effect Monday.

Image from 28 December 1972 Times-Union article reviewing business owner reactions to the pending signage ordinance

HISTORIC BRIGHTON RECEIVES GRANT



The Rochester Area Community Foundation has granted Historic Brighton a \$5000 Historic Preservation Grant. HB will use the grant to increase circulation of its Historic Brighton Newsletter and Journal and maintain its website at www.historicbrighton.org.

We are grateful to RACF for their acknowledgement of the importance of our mission and of our ability to bring our community's history to the public in a scholarly manner.

—HB—

TUTHILL LIGHTING: CELEBRATING 95 YEARS ON MONROE AVENUE

By Arlene Vanderlinde

A family business since 1924, Tuthill Lighting has always sought to be the best specialty lighting store in the Rochester area. Tuthill's enjoys the distinction of being the oldest continuously operating business on Monroe Avenue. The late owner Esther Tuthill Bellwood's mantra was "Wait on customers one at a time, make them happy and there'll always be a tomorrow."

G.B. Tuthill opened his first store Tuthill Lamp and Shade at 905 Monroe Avenue in 1924. The store moved to 1689 Monroe Avenue in 1962 under the leadership of G.B.'s daughter, Esther Mae Tuthill Bellwood. The current owner and President is Esther's son, Bruce Bellwood.

Bruce was a recent recipient of the Pillar of the Industry Award by

the American Lighting Association (ALA). This award is given to one lighting store owner per year from the United States and Canada, for their contributions to the lighting industry.

Through the years the store has brought quality lighting and service to the region.

—————HB—————



Tuthill Lamp and Shade's original location at 905 Monroe Avenue, which was originally a Crosman Seed Company store, and is currently the New York State Division of Youth.



G.B. Tuthill, founder of Tuthill Lamp and Shade, repairing lamps in the original store at 905 Monroe Avenue



Esther Tuthill Bellwood with employee Myrtle Young in the store at 905 Monroe Avenue



Current Tuthill Lighting location at 1689 Monroe Avenue

—————HB—————

The Historic Brighton Newsletter & Journal is edited and formatted by Michael B. Lempert