



HISTORIC BRIGHTON

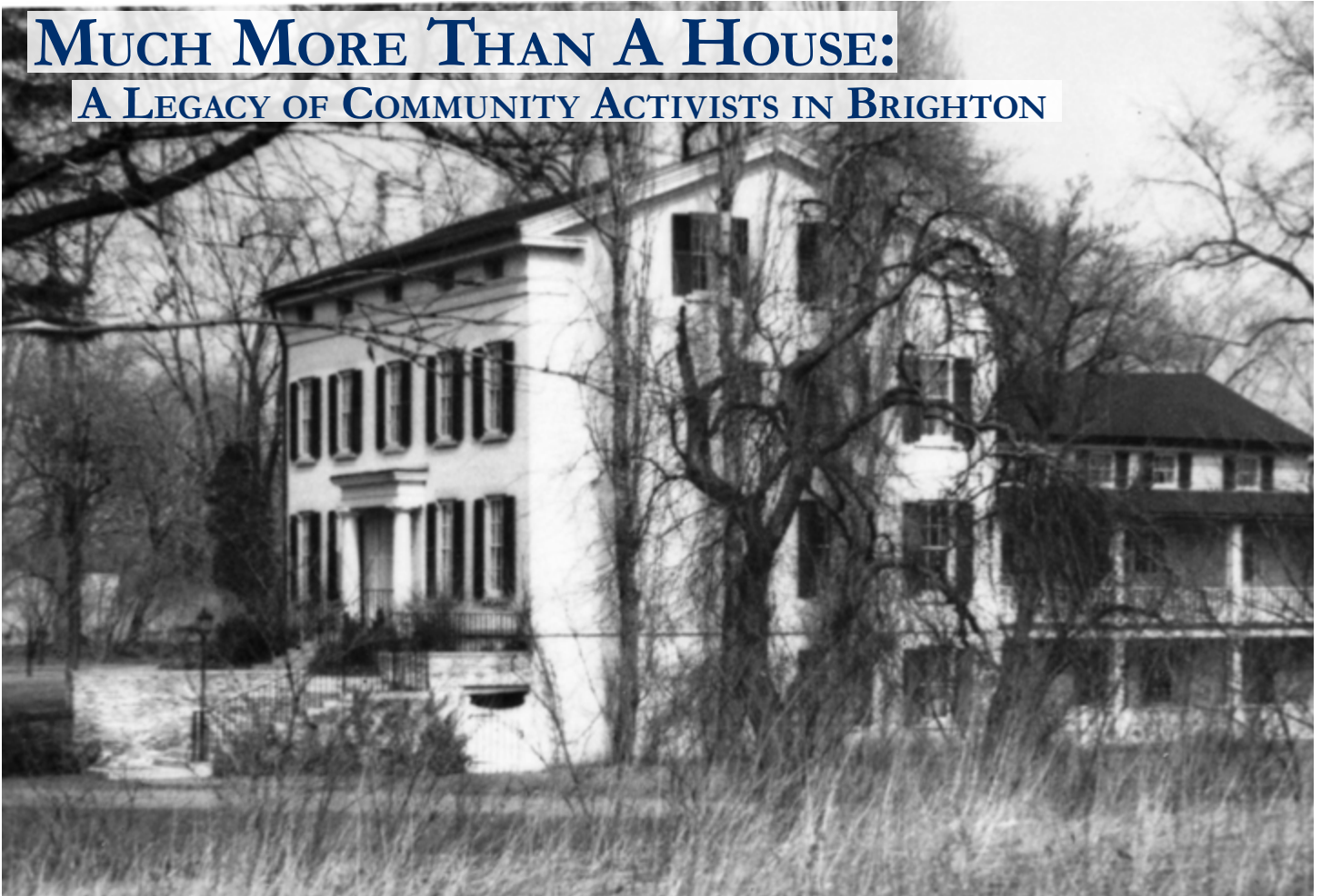
Newsletter and Journal

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

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www.historicbrighton.org

MUCH MORE THAN A HOUSE: A LEGACY OF COMMUNITY ACTIVISTS IN BRIGHTON



Clover Street Seminary at 1550 Clover Street, c. 1900, courtesy of Joseph C. Wilson Family

HISTORIC BRIGHTON SPRING PROGRAM:

TREES of BRIGHTON

presented by

George Smith and Brian Eshenaur

location to be determined

Sunday, April 27th, 2025 | 2:00-4:00 PM
followed by a guided tour of Edmunds Woods

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



Historical marker in front of 1550 Clover Street, photo by Michael Lempert

MUCH MORE THAN A HOUSE: 1550 CLOVER STREET THROUGH THE AGES

By Arlene Vanderlinde and Beth Doty, Historic Brighton Trustees

Outside the lovely Greek Revival home at 1550 Clover Street stands a heavily weathered historical marker:



But this inscription hardly reveals the impact of two centuries of progressive efforts by the two Brighton siblings and a world-renowned local business leader who lived within these walls.

William Bloss (1795-1863) was a social reformer who began his mission in 1826, when he emptied all the liquor in the tavern he owned into the Erie Canal in support of the Temperance Movement. William went on to promote his beliefs by establishing a temperance society in every town in Monroe County. He was one of the originators of the Anti-Slavery movement, and in 1834 published one of the first Abolitionist newspapers in the country, titled *The Rights of Man*. This paper presented horrifying incidents of the cruelty and torture of slavery. In 1838 William advocated for women's suffrage. He also believed that education should be free and supported by the government.

In 1845, while a representative in Albany, he left his seat among the white contemporaries at a communion service and seated himself with the segregated Blacks and partook of the sacrament with them. It was his personal rebuke of the caste prejudice of his day.

In the mid-1800s, William's sister Celestia started teaching the children of her sister Amy (Bloss) Moore and brother-in-law, Brighton brickmaker Isaac Moore.

In addition to teaching, Celestia wrote two textbooks for educators and students. The 1st edition of *Ancient History* (1845) was illustrated by colored maps and a chronological chart for the use of families and schools. The 2nd edition (1867) included a publisher's notice that related how this book was "used with great satisfaction in some of the best institutions in the state of New York."

The second textbook, *Heroines of the Crusades – Outstanding Women During the Eight Crusades* (1852) contains individual biographies of six remarkable women: Adela of Blois, Eleanor of Aquitaine, Berengaria of Navarre, Isabella of Angouleme, Violante of Jerusalem, and Eleanor of Castile. This book, written for a middle-school level audience, describes the influence and agency of these leaders, and could be considered a proto-feminist work. Interestingly, the preface on this work ends with the line "Clover Street Seminary, November 30th, 1852", indicating that her school had some status in the pedagogical community of the time.

In 1848, Celestia's brother-in-law Isaac, in his capacity as a brickmaker, constructed a three-story 16-room building to allow her to expand her teaching endeavors to a wider audience, and the Clover Street Seminary was formally incorporated by the state legislature. The school was called "one of the prominent coeducational academies of the state." The first boarding student enrolled

was the daughter of Thurlow Weed, a politician and newspaper publisher from Albany. The school evolved into the St. Mark's School for Boys after Celestia's passing in 1855. The property was later auctioned off as a private residence in 1878.

During the latter half of the twentieth century, 1550 Clover Street was the residence of Xerox president Joseph C. Wilson, who also made significant strides to build a more equitable society.

Wilson and his wife, Marie (Peggy) Curran Wilson, moved to 1550 Clover Street in 1947 from Chelmsford Road in Brighton, and raised their large family at the stately property. After many years of non-Wilson family owners, the house is (as of this writing) once again owned and occupied by members of the Wilson Family. Over the years they welcomed many visitors, including Eleanor Roosevelt in 1950, who was in Rochester at the University of Rochester for a Human Rights conference. Meeting with individuals like Roosevelt and Nobel Peace Prize winner Ralph Bunche (who also spoke at the conference), would reinforce the Wilsons' interest and actions regarding society's needs. The site was designated a Brighton town landmark in 1996.

According to an oral history interview with Horace Becker, Chief Engineer for the 914 copier, Vice-President and Head of Manufacturing, and Vice-President of Research and Development, Joseph C. Wilson was deeply committed to increasing meaningful employment at Xerox for Black workers.

In 1964, Xerox had only two Black employees. A union in Xerox required

all employees to have a high-school education, which prevented most Black Rochesterians, at that time, from applying for jobs.

After the riots in the summer of 1964 in downtown Rochester, according to Mr. Becker, “Joe Wilson, who is very, very, very community-minded, was really upset, because he didn’t understand what had happened to his town.” Wilson contacted the Reverend Franklin Florence, founder of the newly organized social justice group FIGHT, (Freedom, Integration, God, Honor, Today). The two leaders met together at FIGHT headquarters in a “rather difficult neighborhood for white people to be in at night,” according to Mr. Becker. “He went to visit him all by himself, at night, sat down across from Franklin, told Franklin who he was and said to Franklin, ‘What can we do?’” Reverend Florence told Wilson that the most critical need of Black citizens of Rochester at that time was employment, and that education was a barrier to that next step.

After this meeting, Mr. Wilson went back to meet with both leaders of Xerox’s HR personnel and those of the union to resolve this situation. The men agreed that if these new hires would have to pass the same qualifications as other people, that the union was willing to cooperate. They also came up with the idea that Xerox would hire these workers but would simultaneously send them to school internally. They would work part time, without really being members of the union, and they’d go to school part-time. In addition, Xerox received grant funding from the Department of Labor so that the costs of this endeavor were not solely borne by the company. Xerox called the program “Step Up.” The first student-employees were 25 men, chosen by Reverend Florence.

The success of this partnership between Xerox and FIGHT led to the creation of FIGHTON, the first community development corporation in America. FIGHTON made vacuums for Xerox and components for other companies, including Kodak. It would put as many as 300 people to work in the neighborhood that was an epicenter for the unrest of 1964.

In his 1845 autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, Written by Himself*, Douglass wrote of the rudimentary education given to him by his white mistress, and how it was stopped by his master. “It gave me the best assurance that I might rely with the utmost confidence on the results which, he said, would flow from teaching me to read. What he most dreaded, that I most desired. What he most loved, that I most hated. That which to him was a great evil, to be carefully shunned, was to me a great good, to be diligently sought; and the argument which he so warmly

urged, against my learning to read, only served to inspire me with a great desire and determination to learn. In learning to read, I owe almost as much to the bitter opposition of my master, as to the kindly aid of my mistress. I acknowledge the benefit of both.”

In 1847, Frederick Douglas moved to Rochester to establish his newspaper, *The North Star*. He knew of the city’s strong commitment to the abolitionist movement and of the progressive educational environment that would support his views. At the end of his life, although he had moved out of Rochester and had lived in Washington D.C. for a number of years, he chose to be buried back in Rochester, in Mount Hope Cemetery.

One house, at 1550 Clover Street, over two centuries, sheltered dedicated citizens who believed that education could change the lives of others for good.

—HB—

Clover Street Seminary sketch from a 1964 book, courtesy of Brighton Town Historian Mary Jo Lanpbear



From left to right: Eleanor Roosevelt, Peggy and Joseph C Wilson; The Wilsons hosted Roosevelt during her visit to Rochester for a conference during February of 1950, photo from Rochester Libraries/ Department of Rare Books, Special Collections and Preservation

For additional information on the Clover Street Seminary, visit our website at www.historicbrighton.com, and go to the Winter 2001 issue of our Newsletter & Journal, Page 6, article by Elizabeth Brayer



MEMORIES OF 1550 CLOVER STREET

By Deirdre Wilson Garton, Guest Author

When my brother, Dick Wilson, asked that I respond to the request from Historic Brighton to share some memories of living at 1550 Clover Street, I knew it would take us some time to pull those thoughts together, because there are so many. So what follows are stories and observations from all four of my siblings and myself.

Our home was a marvelous place to gather with family, extended family and friends. It was the center of our universe, cozy, safe, relaxing, warm, and welcoming. The house itself is beautiful and big, which was important for our family of six children. We each had our own rooms. Kathy had the fun of living in all but one of those rooms. Her favorite was her first room at the back of the house. It was small with a sloping roof that made it very cozy. Her favorite place to read was in the closet where she would curl up with a blanket and enjoy her quiet time.

As children, my sisters, Judy and Chris and I would explore 1550 Clover Street inside and out. I remember vividly an incident that put me in the emergency room when I was about six years old. I was riding my bike in the driveway, having just mastered the two-wheeler, and I was looking at the house to my left and thinking about how beautiful it was - tall, brick, welcoming. I was not paying attention, however, to my route, and rode my bike into Allen's Creek which flowed along the driveway. Luckily there wasn't any water in the creek, so I just flipped up in the air and landed face down on the rocks. My sister who was riding her bike, as well, started screaming and my Mom and Dad came running outside. I was conked out so my Dad picked me up and took me immediately to the ER where I got stitches in my knee and my neck. I guess this is a story about the danger of beauty.

We knew that Clover Street had been

a school in the 19th Century, and we felt the connection because it was a girls' school. We had a swing set in the backyard that we used daily in the spring, summer and fall. We loved the feeling of going up in the air and pausing for a moment before we came back down again. Usually, we sang songs to accompany the rhythm of our swings. One of our favorite games in winter was to make a winding trail in the snow all over the large yard and play tag with our neighbors using the trails. If you stepped outside the trail you lost. And of course, there was the joy of making snowmen and snowwomen.

In autumn the chestnuts would fall from a huge chestnut tree in the front yard, and we would all head out with our grocery bags to collect them. We did not eat them, but there was competition between my sisters and me for who collected the most.

Even in winter, every Sunday was "barbeque Sunday" - usually just for our immediate family, but occasionally with others as well. Barbecue and Welsh rarebit were the two things that our Dad cooked. Dick fondly remembers then sitting down with Dad to watch either Otto Graham or the Cleveland Browns.

Mom and Dad hosted wedding receptions for four of their daughters in the garden at Clover Street. All of them were beautiful in part because the gardens were so lovely.

Of course, one of my most tender memories was my wedding in 1970. Mom and Dad did such a special job to make it beautiful. But my happiest memory was how my Dad reacted to my having a nosebleed in our living room just before leaving for church so that I had to walk down the aisle with blood on my white, wedding dress. He laughed! And so, we all did.

Inside the house, each room sparks memories for us. The front stairs were iconic for all of us. Each of us has a story about it. Judy, Chris and I spent many hours sliding down those stairs. When I was little, I decided one day that I was going to run away. I stood at the top of the front stairs with a suitcase in hand and ordered my Mom and Dad who were at the bottom to call me a taxi. My Dad responded that if I was running away, I would have to do it by myself. I didn't run.

Kathy recalled our sister Joan standing at the top of the front stairs with her fiancée, Tom, at the bottom after an argument. Joan was furious and threw her engagement pin down the stairs at him. Luckily, they stayed together for 60 years and raised a wonderful family.

Thanksgiving and Christmas Eve were always splendid occasions. Mom's siblings and families were always invited for dinner. These were joyful and raucous celebrations. It was sad when the extended families grew so large that we could no longer fit in the dining room and the family room where the kids table was placed.

The house was divided into sections; the front section was the oldest, and the back section was newer. On the second floor, the door to the back section had two steps going down. At this intersection was the only phone on the second floor outside



Right: Wilson family at Christmas, December 1954, from University at Rochester website, Joseph C. Wilson Papers

of my parent's room. As teenagers, we would sit on that step for hours and talk to our friends. Indeed, it was a rite of passage.

Kathy recalled that our parents had what we thought to be a large, ensuite bathroom. When they were out, Kathy would take the three younger sisters, Judy, Chris and me, into that large bathroom and make us up with Mom's makeup and we would plan a show for our parents – a song, a dance. When Mom and Dad returned, we performed and always received a standing ovation. It felt so glamorous.

Our parents' bedroom was beautiful and most importantly a place of security. Mom and Dad always went to bed early, 7:30ish. You knew that's where they would be. Tucked into bed with books in hand. If you needed to talk, this was always a good time to chat with them. Kathy remembers other conversations in the library. Dad's answer to solving her problems was to go write down pros and cons and then make her decision.

Our Dad had his desk in the library. Kathy remembers the day they moved into Clover Street, and she helped Dad put his precious books in the shelves. She also fondly remembers as a teenager telling our Dad that she wanted permission to smoke. Dad advised her the Surgeon General had just announced that smoking was dangerous to your health. He said she had to make her own decision. Of course, like a "smart" teenager she decided to smoke.

For Judy, Chris and me, the most fun was exploring the basement because we also knew that Clover Street had been part of the Underground Railroad. To think that the people of Rochester worked so hard to provide a safe passage for fleeing slaves was an inspiration to all of us in the family. The basement was where the runaways were hidden, and we would look for some evidence. Our brother, Dick along with next door neighbor, Stirlin Harris, tried for a long

time to find the Underground Railroad between our houses. Of course, we never found any evidence because this all happened 100 years before we lived there but the fact that this was a place of refuge influenced each one of us deeply.

My dad was a believer in equality long before he and my Mom moved to Clover Street, but his world view was enhanced by the history of 1550 Clover Street. Dad was a devoted member of the community and a wonderful model for all of us, as the President of Xerox Corp. In 1950, for example, our dad was President of the City Club which hosted former First Lady, Eleanor Roosevelt, and civil rights leader, Ralph Bunche, for a dinner. Mom and Dad had them over for breakfast. Kathy used the word "awed" to be near such an iconic personality as Eleanor Roosevelt.

During the 1964 race riots, we were all afraid of what could happen, but we were impressed that our dad was front and center to help begin the difficult conversations in the community to heal and improve. One of the things that helped was that in our family we sat down to dinner every night at 6:15pm, and we talked about everything: history, economics, art, music, politics, morals and even some science. During that time, we talked a lot about what was going on in the community and what were some of the ways to help make things better.

When we think about the solutions that our dad put forward during that period, it was clear that they were brilliant but not always implemented. One of things we talked about was integrating folks of color into all the communities, not just in Rochester but in the suburbs as well. To do that we had to think about ways to make housing affordable, a topic that continues to be debated and discussed throughout the country. The other important solution was to help folks overcome poverty by providing a good education, job training, and equal opportunities for jobs.

Xerox helped to create the nation's first black owned business, FIGHTON, in the 1960's. That is an example of the determination our dad had to address the economic barriers that so many people of color faced and still face today. Dad led an effort to change zoning laws in Rochester suburbs to allow for integration of low-cost housing so that folks of color could benefit from those good schools and simply become a part of the community.

There is a lot to say about our dad but our mom was front and center for all of us and our friends. One night Kathy recalls having a friend for dinner. She accidentally let a beet slip off her plate with the red juice going all over the white tablecloth. It was embarrassing for her friend. A few minutes later, our mother did the same thing. Was it an accident? Kathy didn't think so.

As the oldest of eight children in an Irish family, our mom knew how to raise children and to make sure they thrived. But what was so dear about my parents' marriage was that mom adored dad, and he adored her. Their love was evident every single day. I remember as a teenager, sneaking through some old letters that my mom and dad shared during their courtship. It was truly inspirational to read their mutual love back and forth. But my mom caught me as I was flipping through the letters, and she was furious. She later threw the letters away, which always made me sad as their love was such a model for a happy marriage.

1550 Clover Street was an inspiration in our family and so were my parents. I couldn't be happier that my nephew, Joe, his beautiful wife, Jayne, and their darling daughter, Paige, live there now surrounded by the history, the beauty, the love, and the family lore.

—————HB—————

Thank you to Historic Brighton for highlighting our wonderful home.

JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN WILSON, 1909-1971

Edited by Arlene Vanderlinde, from Joseph C. Wilson Obituaries, *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*, *New York Times*, and *Washington Post*

Longtime Brighton resident Joseph C. Wilson was born in Rochester in 1909. He was the son of Joseph R. and Katherine Upton Wilson. He attended Rochester public schools and graduated Phi Beta Kappa from the University of Rochester in 1931. His father, Joseph R. Wilson, also an alumnus of UofR, was class of 1903.

Wilson focused his studies on English, Philosophy, and Economics, but he was interested in many subjects and activities. He took classes in History, Geology, French, German, and Biology. He also was the student manager of the football team, pledged Delta Kappa Epsilon, and was active in student government. Wilson was also named to the University's unique honor society, the Keidaeans. He earned a Master of Business Administration degree at Harvard in 1933, and returned to join Haloid, the family business co-founded by his grandfather; eventually becoming its chairman.

Wilson's grandfather, who was also named Joseph C. Wilson (JC), was a co-founder of Haloid in 1903, the predecessor company to Xerox, and had served as Mayor of Rochester (1928-30). His father, Joseph R. Wilson, became president of the company prior to the son taking on those responsibilities. At the age of 36, Wilson succeeded his father as president of the company in 1946 and went on to serve as chairman of the board in 1966. During his tenure, the company experienced enormous growth and, in 1960, completed its transformation from Haloid-Xerox to Xerox.

But Joseph C. Wilson, who died on

Nov. 22, 1971 at the age of 61, became a major figure in Rochester history in his own right, with a long record of accomplishments that reached well beyond the Xerox company.

Haloid Corporation was solidly established as a manufacturer of photograph supplies, doing a business of about \$7 million a year, when Mr. Wilson succeeded his father as president. He was interested in expansion and took a long look, aided by a lawyer named Sol Linowitz (also a Brighton resident), who shared his interest in civic issues, at the xerography dry-copying process invented by Chester Carlson.

Years later, recalling his gamble with Haloid's future in undertaking xerography, Mr. Wilson said: "I would have to be psychoanalyzed to tell you if I would take the same risk again. It's when you're very young and naive that you have the courage to make right decisions."

In 1947, Haloid acquired the rights and spent 12 years developing the process while Mr. Linowitz headed the legal staff, supervising a whole series of patent rights. The Xerox 914 office copier finally emerged in 1960, and the little Rochester company swiftly became the center of an industrial empire.

During Wilson's tenure, the company became a multinational company with offices in 115 countries. In addition to copiers, the company became involved in such ventures as communication devices, display equipment, and graphics. The company's research budget increased almost 400 times between 1949 and



Portrait of Joseph C. Wilson

1969, with the research team growing from 15 to 3,000 people.

Blake McKelvey, who was Rochester's city historian from 1948 to 2000, described the importance of Wilson in his book, *A Panoramic History of Rochester and Monroe County*. Noting the industrial advances that renewed Rochester's self-confidence in the 1950s, McKelvey wrote: "None, however, expanded as dramatically as Haloid which, under the leadership of Joseph C. Wilson, developed a new electrophotographic process and placed its first Xerox machines on the market in 1950."

The introduction of the Xerox copying machine created a minor revolution in office work, virtually eliminating the time taken by typists to pound out papers a second time if original carbon copies were insufficient, or as mimeograph stencils. Documents were reproduced almost as clearly and much less expensively than by older photographic or photostatic

processes. The word entered the language as a verb, "to xerox."

Wilson, chairman of the Xerox Corporation and of the Presidential Committee on Health Education, died in New York City of an apparent heart attack while lunching with Governor Rockefeller.

He and his family had lived at 1550 Clover Street (the former Clover Street Seminary) in Brighton from 1947. His prior home was at 175 Chelmsford Road, in the McFarlan Farm neighborhood in Brighton.

He left Xerox in 1966 in order to give more of his time to the broad range of social issues that were of great importance to him. He chose C. Peter McCollough to succeed him as CEO.

Joseph Wilson ensured that the company's success aided the causes he believed in, and he encouraged his employees to be involved in their community as well. Before the Xerox stock captured the public imagination, the University of Rochester invested \$196,000 in it; only a few years later the stock

was valued at close to \$100 million. Mr. Wilson was Chairman of the University of Rochester Board of Trustees. At his death, he gave some \$20 million to the university himself and left it further Xerox stock in trust valued at several millions. "Joseph C. Wilson exemplified, to an exceptional degree, the ideal of a business leader with a public conscience," President Nixon said in a statement issued by the White House.

Mr. Wilson was appointed by Governor Nelson Rockefeller to be chairman of a group investigating the financing and delivery of medical care. An associate in that task said the staff nicknamed him "The Gentle Giant" because of his jovial and considerate leadership, firmness in taking decisions and persistence in following through. A vice-chairman of the Committee for Economic

Development, Mr. Wilson was also a trustee of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the Sidney Hillman Health Center and the George Eastman House. He served as chairman of two state committees - one on social welfare, the other on investigating the financing and delivery of medical care - under New York State Governor Nelson Rockefeller.

Although Xerox had moved its corporate headquarters to Stamford, Connecticut in 1969, Wilson continued to live in the town of Brighton in a Greek Revival former school where he and his wife, Marie raised their large family.

—HB—

Miss Peggy Curran Becomes Bride of Joseph C. Wilson

By the Social Secretary

With the many, many weddings that occur Spring, Winter and Fall, one might easily lose enthusiasm in reporting them, but such is not the case. Especially when the bride is as attractive as petite Peggy Curran, who yesterday morning became Mrs. Joseph Chamberlain Wilson, to love, honor and obey. Peggy is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Raymond J. Curran of Park Avenue, and Joe's family are Mr. and Mrs. Joseph R. Wilson of Rugby Avenue.

The ceremony was performed by the Rev. John B. Sullivan, in St. John the Evangelist Church, where the sanctuary was banked with palms and white chrysanthemums and seven-branched candlesticks.

Peggy was given in marriage by her father, and was too, too chic, in an unquestionably smart fall costume suit of sapphire blue, trimmed with lynx, and matching hat and shoes. Her corsage was of orchids. Her sister, Miss Janet Curran was maid of honor, attired in a rust wool suit, trimmed with beaver, and a corsage of yellow sweetheart roses.

Mr. Wilson's best man was his brother, Richard Upton Wilson, and Raymond D. Curran, brother of the bride, and Charles T. Crandall, cousin of the groom, were the ushers.

Mrs. Curran, mother of the bride, chose a black suit trimmed with caracul, and a corsage of gardenias, while Mrs. Wilson wore a dubonnet suit trimmed with blue fox and a corsage of talisman roses.

After the 1st of November, the newlyweds will reside at No. 138 Plymouth Avenue, but only until their attractive, brand new house is completed on Chalinsford Road.

Wedding announcement of Joseph C. Wilson and Peggy Curran



Undated photograph of Joseph C. and Peggy Wilson, from University of Rochester website, Joseph C. Wilson Papers

MARIE (PEGGY) CURRAN WILSON, 1912-1995

Edited by Arlene Vanderlinde, from Marie (Peggy) Wilson Obituary

Mrs. Wilson was a dedicated mom of six, grandmother of 18 and great-grandmother of six at the time of her death January 30th, 1995, at the age of 83. She also was extraordinarily dedicated to her community and church. Marie (Peggy) and Joseph were true partners in all their philanthropic and community endeavors.

Mrs. Wilson proudly chaired the board of the family foundation that she and Joe created through the Rochester Area Community Foundation from 1971-1979. One of the projects she particularly favored was the Wilson Commencement Park, a housing complex on Joseph Avenue for low-income, single-parent families that opened in 1991. The Wilson Commons

at the University of Rochester was also funded by the family and serves as a symbol of the commitment of support by the Wilson family.

She served on the boards of St. John Fisher College (now University), Highland Hospital, the Crippled Children's Society, George Eastman House, Memorial Art Gallery,

Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra and was a life trustee of the University of Rochester.

The Marie C. and Joseph C. Wilson Foundation continues to support community projects.

HB



Peggy Curran Wilson with architect I.M. Pei, who designed the Wilson Commons at the University of Rochester, from University of Rochester website

CELESTIA ANGENETTE BLOSS

By Mary Jo Lanphear, Town of Brighton Historian

In 1838, Celestia A. Bloss began teaching the children of her sister and brother-in-law in an unoccupied room in their home at 1496 Clover Street in Brighton. Isaac Moore felt that the nearby district school had few facilities and offered an inferior education. A self-educated man with an unusual amount of natural ability, he operated a brickworks in addition to a nursery business. His wife, Amy Kennedy Bloss Moore, and Celestia were members of a large family with progressive ideas. One of Amy and Celestia's seven siblings was William Clough Bloss, a friend of Frederick Douglass and a prominent abolitionist.

Celestia is said to have received an especially fine education for the time having attended Monroe Academy (established in Henrietta in 1827) and the old Rochester High School. She acquired teaching experience in Miss Atkinson's select school and with Mary B. Allen at the Rochester Seminary.

Still, she was only twenty-three when she began the private school on Clover Street.

Realizing that the Moore children would benefit from the presence of others, she opened the school to neighborhood children. The co-educational school soon outgrew its one room space in the main house, so Isaac Moore erected a white frame building in the rear of the garden. The school's fine reputation spread beyond the Rochester area, bringing boarding students who lived in the Moore house. The youngest daughter of Whig and Republican politician Thurlow Weed of Albany was such a pupil. Others came from Syracuse, Oswego, Elmira, and Auburn, in addition to the states of Michigan, Tennessee, Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, Virginia, and provinces of Canada.

A staff of twenty-two offered education in such subjects as Latin,

French, Italian, astronomy, botany, bookkeeping, penmanship, piano, painting, and music. The money for prize books awarded for student proficiency came from prominent Rochesterians. These included Henry O'Reilly (editor of the Rochester Daily Advertiser) Henry E. Rochester, Samuel G. Andrews, and Frederick Whittlesey, many of whom often visited the school and served as trustees.

The increased enrollment required several enlargements of the garden building and the addition of staff members. By 1845, the "Little White Schoolhouse" could no longer accommodate its students. Isaac and Amy Moore deeded five acres at the corner of Clover Street and Elmwood Avenue to Celestia Bloss. A brick, three-story, sixteen-room building replaced the small frame garden school. Three years later, the Clover Street Seminary was incorporated by

the New York State Legislature and became the property of Celestia Bloss.

In 1849, at the age of thirty-seven, Celestia married widower Isaac W. Brewster. Apparently she retained her maiden name, however, as she is called Miss Bloss in references published after 1849. Described as diminutive and barely five feet in height, she is also said to have had a commanding presence but was much admired and loved by her students. In addition to her responsibilities with the Seminary, she authored at least two textbooks: *Bloss's Ancient History* and *Heroines of the Crusades*. The former was published in 1847 and its subject is said to have been the specialty of the school.

The school ledgers indicated that Celestia Bloss admitted many students on scholarship, giving to the children that which she had found difficult to obtain for herself - a good education. It is said that she believed that knowledge was happiness and ignorance was want, and that both sexes were entitled to a liberal education. Graduating from the Seminary, young men were well-

prepared for college.

Celestia Bloss died in 1855 at the age of forty-three. A monument erected by her pupils was first placed in Mount Hope cemetery, but later her remains and that of her husband were moved to the Bloss section of Brighton cemetery. On top of her large marble marker, funded by the contributions of about five hundred students, is a carved scroll, a book representing *Bloss's Ancient History*, and a Bible opened to Matthew, chapter 6. The marker says in part, "... This monument was erected by her pupils, an enduring testimony of their affection and respect. Her life was devoted to the cause of education...She was an earnest woman, and eminent teacher, and a cheerful Christian. In her death she has consummated the teachings of her life. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

Celestia Angenette Bloss followed a traditional, nineteenth century lifestyle at the same time she maintained a progressive public life. Although her profession as teacher was an acceptable

one for women of her social status, she went beyond the established gender boundaries to found an educational facility with wide repute, to author textbooks, and to advocate education for both young men and women. For her era, she accomplished more than any other woman in her community.

—HB—



Portrait of Celestia Bloss

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REMEMBERING SOL MYRON LINOWITZ, 1913-2005

By Arlene Vanderlinde (Updated and Edited from *Historic Brighton Newsletter & Journal Volume 13, Issue II - Spring 2012*)

In 1948, a close friend of Sol Linowitz, Joseph C. Wilson, was looking into something called electrophotography, which had been recently invented by a man named Chester Carlson. Wilson, president of a small company called Haloid that sold silver paper for photographic purposes, was interested in acquiring option rights under the patents and needed a lawyer.

Wilson called upon Mr. Linowitz to draw up an agreement by which Haloid would acquire a short-term license, with renewal options. In an interview with *Bar Report*, Linowitz recalled: "Joe understood the potential implications a lot more than I did ... This may surprise you, but had Joe and I been more scientifically trained – had we had a better sense of what was required to tame this process of electrophotography so it could be put into a useful machine – I don't think we would have persevered. The scientists at Haloid were all skeptical. Joe and I both had liberal arts educations, and we didn't have enough knowledge to get in the way of our blind confidence that this technology had the potential to make a fine product."

More than 20 years of Linowitz's life were spent as a resident of Brighton. He first lived at 147 Westland Avenue in Home Acres (1951-1954), next at 135 Monterey Road (1954-1958), and finally at 2563 East Avenue (1958-1966). The East Avenue residence is a designated Brighton town landmark.

It was in Brighton that Sol and his wife, Evelyn, raised his four daughters, all educated in Brighton

schools. In 1966, he moved to Washington, D.C. after his appointment by President Lyndon Johnson to the post of Ambassador to the Organization of American States, thus beginning a life of public service that would last the rest of his 91 years.

Born in Trenton, N.J. on December 7, 1913, he was the son of Jewish immigrants from Russian-occupied Poland. He grew up in Trenton, in a multicultural neighborhood, where his father was a successful fruit importer. The family's life was comfortable until the Depression destroyed the family business. Mr. Linowitz graduated from high school in 1931 with an academic record strong enough to earn him a \$250 scholarship to Hamilton

College. As part of his scholarship agreement, he worked at various jobs: waiting on tables in the Commons, selling newspapers, giving violin lessons (he played in the Utica Symphony Orchestra and with a dance band during the summers), tutoring other students, and reading to one of Hamilton's most distinguished alumni, Elihu Root. Root had served as Secretary of State under Theodore Roosevelt and had come back to spend time on campus in the last years of his life. At that time, students were assigned to read every day to Root, as he had lost his eyesight. Linowitz recalled, "One afternoon he stopped me and asked what I was going to do after graduation. I said that I couldn't decide between being a lawyer or being a rabbi. He said,



Sol Linowitz at his desk, from the Hamilton College Newsletter, photo circa 1980

‘Be a lawyer. A lawyer needs twice as much religion as a minister or rabbi.’ The point he was making was that if you really believe in your principles you ought to put them to use in the real world ... I thought that was a profound truth,” he said in the interview. Sol Linowitz lived that truth.

The Hamilton College newspaper decried Linowitz as an “extraordinary combination of musician, scholar, and actor.” Sol Linowitz graduated Phi Beta Kappa and with honors in public speaking, political science, and German. As Salutatorian of the Class of 1935, he delivered the commencement address in Latin.

After Hamilton, Mr. Linowitz graduated from Cornell Law School, where he served as editor-in-chief of the Law Quarterly and earned his LLB in 1938, graduating first in his class. He married Evelyn “Toni” Zimmerman in 1939, and they moved to Rochester, where Linowitz joined the small family law firm of Sutherland and Sutherland. At that firm, he learned that the law is a human profession and that helping people was the way to personal fulfillment.

A soccer injury suffered at Hamilton kept him out of the military at the beginning of World War II. He then found a job in Washington, D.C. at the Office of Price Administration where he was in charge of appellate cases in the rent control program. In this program, he worked with another young lawyer named Richard Nixon.

In 1944, he received a naval commission and served until 1946, after which he and his wife returned

to Rochester. They had friends here and felt it was a good place to raise a family. He went back to Sutherland and Sutherland, but the firm had changed and was in financial trouble. Linowitz and a colleague labored to save the firm, but to no avail. Consequently, he joined the Harris Beach law firm where he practiced law until 1966.

While practicing law in Rochester, he met Joseph C. Wilson, who had just succeeded his father as the president of the Haloid Company. Joe Wilson’s electrophotography had been in development for eleven years. In 1949, Haloid produced the first copy machine, the Xerox Model A, which turned out to be an unimaginable success! In a very short time Haloid-Xerox became a major international corporation with annual revenue in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

Linowitz became vice-president of Xerox in 1953 after Joe Wilson suffered a heart attack. At this time, he was still practicing law at Harris Beach. He soon became Chairman of the Board, and remained so until his appointment to the Organization of American States (OAS) in 1966. He was quoted as saying, “Xerox was a case where the invention was the mother of necessity – until it was invented, people didn’t realize how much they needed it.”

During his years as head of Xerox, Mr. Linowitz was a regular invitee to the Johnson White House to discuss education and foreign policy. President Johnson first appointed Mr. Linowitz to a commission to study foreign aid, then offered him many positions in his administration, including Secretary of Commerce and head of the

Peace Corps. All were turned down because he thought he could make a better contribution elsewhere. He shocked President Johnson when he accepted the ambassadorship of the Organization of American States in 1966. Mr. Linowitz thought Johnson to be a good man who aspired to be a great president but was very insecure about himself and could be “irascible and irritating” as well as very kind. His autobiography, *The Making of a Public Man – A Memoir* (Little Brown, 1985) recounted several anecdotes of President Johnson at his best and worst. He recalled when Johnson criticized him in front of several cabinet members early in his administration, he sought a private conversation in which he told the president that he would resign if that happened again. Johnson generally treated him well



Above: Sol Linowitz with President Bill Clinton, when Linowitz was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1998



Sol Linowitz with Anwar Sadat, President of Egypt, circa 1980

following that incident, except for one occasion when Mr. Linowitz told him that he thought the Vietnam War was going badly and Johnson snapped, “I don’t want you to talk to me about that subject!”

When Richard Nixon became president, Linowitz was dismayed by the changes he saw in his old friend once he began his political career. When Nixon had run for the Senate in 1950, he conducted a smear campaign against his opponent. Mr. Linowitz had no desire to be part of his administration. He stayed with the OAS only until his replacement could be found. Following that, he became a senior partner in the international law firm of Coudert Brothers LLP – 1969-1983 (he was senior council until 1994). He worked with subsequent administrations, both Republican and Democratic, as a roving ambassador, troubleshooter, and a member of commissions.

Linowitz chaired a commission that reported that the Panama Canal could become the greatest problem that United States would face in the years ahead. As a result, he became chief negotiator of the Panama Canal treaties during Carter’s presidency. The 1903 treaty, which gave the US sovereign power over the Canal Zone, was a source of conflict in Panama and civil unrest was escalating. Linowitz felt that negotiating a “generous, fair, and appropriate” treaty on behalf of the US was the greatest challenge of his life. During the domestic battle to ratify the treaty, his family was threatened by then-governor of California Ronald Reagan, who led the opposition to the treaty. Ultimately, the treaties were ratified in 1979, but by a narrow margin.

Linowitz believed that if the treaties hadn’t been ratified, guerrilla groups would have blown up the locks and it would have required 100,000 men to protect the Canal.

In 1979, President Carter named Sol Linowitz as his special representative in the Middle East to mediate between Egypt and Israel over Palestinian autonomy. His negotiating efforts ended in 1981 with the Reagan presidency. He felt that the foundations that were so carefully laid for peace in this region were ignored and lost during Reagan’s presidency.

Throughout his career, Mr. Linowitz devoted much of his time and energy in worthy causes. He chaired the the National Urban League; he was founder and co-chair of Inter-American Dialogue, and became the chairman of the 1978 presidential commission on world hunger. He also served on numerous boards of trustees, including the University of Rochester, Cornell University, Johns Hopkins University, and Hamilton College. He received

many honors for his work, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Clinton in 1998. At the awards ceremony, Clinton said, “Receiving advice from Sol Linowitz on international diplomacy is like getting trumpet lessons from the angel Gabriel.” In spite of the honors and recognition, he remained a modest man, gifted with a sense of humor, and always a gentleman.

Linowitz was a man of great integrity who publicly deplored the materialism and moral decline within his beloved legal profession. In 1994, he wrote *The Betrayed Profession: Lawyering at the End of the Twentieth Century*. In this book he called for more ethics courses in law school, as well as more attention to the philosophical, social and literary structure of the western legal system. He had faith that lawyers could restore ethical values to the profession and regain its dignity.

Sol M. Linowitz died on March 18, 2005, at his home in Washington. He was 91.

—————HB—————



Historic photo from the Museo del Canal featuring the parties responsible for negotiating the Torrijos Treaties, left to right: Ellsworth Bunker, Aristides Royo, Sol Linowitz, Romulo Escobar Bethancourt

MERCHANTS OF MONROE - LEO LYONS AND THE ROCHESTER JEFFERSONS

By Raymond Tierney III, Historic Brighton Member

People might wonder how I decide upon the subjects in this series. My motivation for this particular article is very personal. While watching a NFL game with my grandson, I mentioned to him that my hometown and more specifically where his great-grandfather opened a supermarket played a part in the founding of the National Football League. As I began to tell the story, I noticed that classic 9-year-old expression signaling that he wasn't interested. So I write this hoping that Jack will someday enjoy reading this remarkable story.



Historic map showing the location of Sheehan's Field, now the site of Brighton Commons Plaza

To think that I bagged groceries, trimmed lettuce, and shagged grocery carts on the playing site of one of the eventual original National Football League (NFL) teams seems quite extraordinary. This chapter of the Merchants of Monroe celebrates one of the founders of the current day NFL. Leo Lyons certainly fits the definition of entrepreneur and his connection to Twelve Corners and Monroe Avenue merits his inclusion into this series.

It began with a youthful Leo Lyons' interest in football despite the fact that his parents were against him playing. It's no wonder as in those days equipment provided little or no protection from what was truly an aggressive physical contact sport. He progressed from playing, to coaching, to owning the Rochester Jeffersons. To pay the bills while following his dream, he worked at the Rochester Telephone Company. As Sheehan's Field (Brighton Commons Plaza) was used primarily as a baseball field, he would spend his Saturdays working at the field busily transitioning it to accommodate football. By Sunday morning, the goalposts crafted from

two by fours and a boundary fence intended to protect the 25 cent admission revenue greeted players and fans. Amateur and semi-pro football was in its infancy and he was determined to grow the sport to an eventual professional level. That may sound extraordinary considering the dominance of college football in the early twentieth century but that is what made Leo both a visionary and an entrepreneur.

Why a field in Brighton? There were a few things at play that brought Leo and his Jeffersons to Sheehan's Field at Twelve Corners where they played from 1908 until 1918, after which they moved to Baseball Park on Bay Street. Amateur and Semi-Pro football was played on Sunday as collegiate football occupied fans interest on Saturdays. Since the City of Rochester had an ordinance prohibiting sporting events on Sunday, Brighton became a convenient destination for teams and fans from the city. Just as important was the trolley line that stopped at Twelve Corners in front of Sheehan's Field.

Next to the field was Daniel Sheehan's homestead that was to later become the site of Howard Johnson's. Completing the compound was Sheehan's Hotel and Tavern that was located across the street and was to later become the Chateau Restaurant. In the *Historic Brighton Journal* (Vol 20 No. 03) Matt Bashore's article aptly describes the game-day atmosphere. "Many teams met up before the game, celebrated their victories and tried to forget their defeats at Daniel Sheehan's Hotel and Tavern just across the street from where the Rochester and Eastern Trolley stopped."

Leo's business plan was simple: assemble the best athletes, play the hardest schedule and promote the idea that professional football was not only feasible but also highly entertaining.

His Rochester Jeffersons began as a quasi sandlot team that progressed from the best semi-pro local team to eventual New York State champions in 1916 while playing at Sheehan's Field. As a result of the Jeffersons success, Leo caught the attention of the legendary Jim Thorpe when he took

his team to play the Canton Bulldogs in 1917. Although the Jeffs lost 41-0, Leo made a big enough impression to be one of the invitees that assembled in the Hupmobile showroom in Canton Ohio when the American Professional Football Association (APFA), later to become the National Football League (NFL), was formed in 1920. The original franchise agreement and an illustration (seen at the top right of this page) depicting that day when the 10 team league was formed are now cornerstones of John Steffenhagen's collection of early NFL memorabilia.

John is the great-grandson of Leo Lyons and an enthusiastic curator of memorabilia from the beginnings of the largest sports enterprise in the world. He shared with me the mix of discovery and serendipity that started with five "banana" boxes that he found some time ago. The boxes were loaded with photos, documents, and artifacts. The latter was a phone call from his aunt who was wondering if a certificate (the original Jeffersons franchise agreement from 1920) that she was about to discard was of any interest to him. Little did she know that she was responsible for helping save one of the rarest documents of NFL history. He fondly shared with me his discovery of a *Democrat and Chronicle* (D&C) article that referred to his great-grandfather as "Leo the Dreamer." The reference surely fit as he recalled that Leo had reached out to William Wrigley about football trading cards, contacted Parker Brothers about developing a board game, and even suggested that Cracker Jacks might be a great promotional vehicle for the league.

However, the foray into big time football wasn't kind to Leo and his Jeffs during their six years in the league as Rochester was still in love with semi-



Artistic rendering of the founding fathers of the NFL in Canton, Ohio (from John Steffenhagen)

pro teams stocked with local talent. Compounding that was the fact that the organization was undercapitalized and Leo was unable to get civic leaders like George Eastman to invest in the team. Of course, it didn't help that the team, after some initial success, was winless in their last four years in the league. In Allan Morrelle's *D&C* article from 2019, John Steffenhagen summed it up best: "People say, why do you care they weren't any good. But, they were an original NFL team and it's important to keep their (Jeffersons) memory alive. As for Leo, I don't want him to be forgotten."

It is very important to note: he wasn't forgotten when he was invited to

Canton, Ohio. He wasn't forgotten when George Halas of the Chicago Bears mentioned him in his Football Hall of Fame induction speech. He wasn't forgotten when Art Rooney of Pittsburgh Steelers fame penned him a note that included \$100 and then called him after his 1975 Super Bowl victory. Additionally, I'm sure that he will not be forgotten as his great-grandson has developed a website (rochesterjeffersons.org) and is in the process of launching a book. Incidentally, *Leo Lyons, the Rochester Jeffersons and the birth of the NFL* is now available by pre-order.

When I asked John if he had a special memory of his great-grandfather, he



Original Franchise Agreement of Rochester Jeffersons (from John Steffenhagen)

shared the following: “When I was 8 years old I remember two old guys that came to visit Leo. They stood out because they both had long dark coats, big hats, and smoked cigars. Little did I know that the visitors were Art Rooney and George Halas paying a visit to their old friend.”

The NFL didn’t know how important Leo was going to be to their legacy when they made him an “unofficial” historian of the nascent league after the Rochester Jeffersons folded in 1925. Leo would go on to collect artifacts and memorabilia for the next 35 years culminating in successfully convincing N.F.L. Commissioner Pete Rozelle to build the National Football Hall of Fame. His smile was very apparent at the ribbon cutting as shown in a 1963 photo from the *D&C*. Some of the contents from the boxes of the aforementioned newly found memorabilia are now on display at the Hall of Fame in Canton Ohio. Finally, Leo Lyons won’t be forgotten in Brighton either as he proudly takes his place as a Merchant of Monroe.

So, as I conclude this article I’m hoping that someday Jack appreciates this story! And, I can’t wait to tell him about the Rochester Royals and their inclusion as an original franchise in the National Basketball Association. Original franchises in two of the major sports leagues makes our

community pretty unique among small market professional sports towns and Monroe Ave proudly played a part in that history.

—HB—



Author Ray Tierney with grandson Jack, who inspired Ray to tell this story

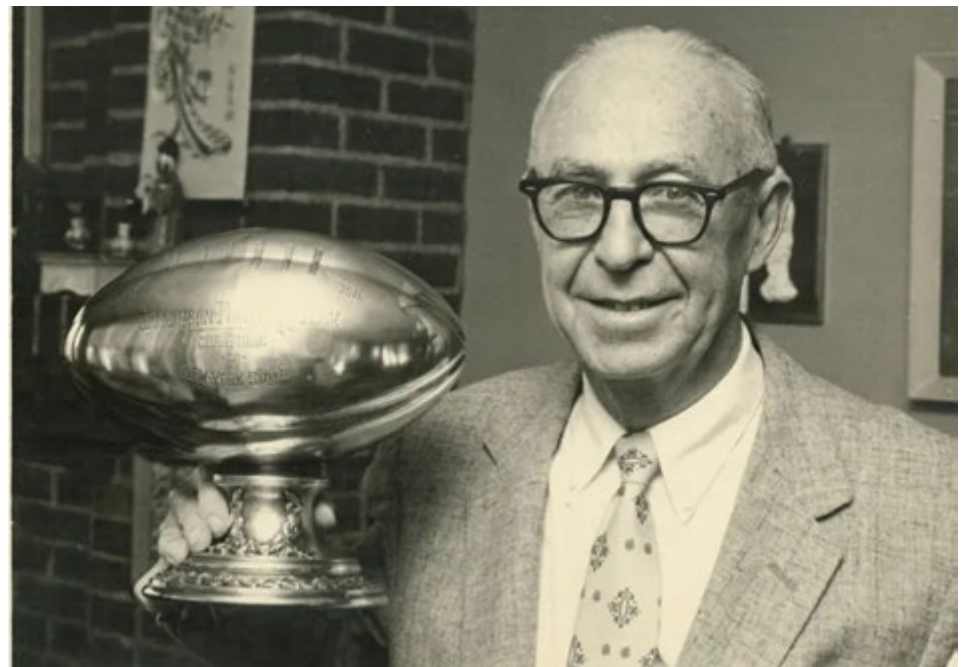


**LEO LYONS,
the Rochester
Jeffersons and the
Birth of the NFL**

**JEFFREY J. MILLER and
JOHN D. STEFFENHAGEN**



Book cover of the soon-to-be-released book by Leo Lyons’ great-grandson



Leo Lyons with 1916 New York State Football Championship trophy (from John Steffenbagen)

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NFL League Hall of Fame curator Joe Horrigan gathering memorabilia for the hall of fame display following the passing of Leo Lyons, from the 14 August 1977 Democrat and Chronicle (D&C Photographer Steve Groer, USA TODAY NETWORK via IMAGN Images)



Leo Lyons in 1968 with his brand new Cadillac, featuring a custom license plate "NFL-1", (USA TODAY NETWORK via IMAGN Images)



NFL coin-toss ceremony, featuring (left to right): Honorary NFL Historian Leo Lyons, Governor Rhodes, Bobby Lane of the Steelers, Art Donovan and Buddy Young of the Colts, and John Blood McNalty of the Steelers, (USA TODAY NETWORK via IMAGN Images)



NFL Commissioner Pete Roselle (left), Honorary Historian Leo Lyons (right), and Lyons life-long friend George Halas (center), (USA TODAY NETWORK via IMAGN Images)



Leo Lyons (right) with the legendary Vince Lombardi of the Green Bay Packers (image from John Steffenbagen)

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