



# HISTORIC BRIGHTON NEWS

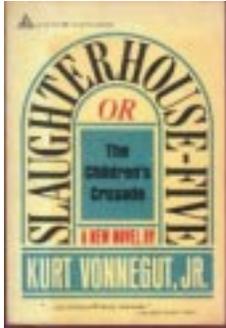
VOLUME 9

WINTER 2008

NUMBER 1

## ‘THEY CALL ME BILLY PILGRIM:

### ROCHESTER’S CONNECTION TO KURT VONNEGUT’S *SLAUGHTERHOUSE-FIVE*’



Edward “Joe” Crone

*Slaughterhouse-Five; or, The Children’s Crusade: A Duty-Dance With Death* is a 1969 novel by Kurt Vonnegut. One of his most popular works and widely regarded as a classic, it combines science fiction elements with an analysis of the human condition from an uncommon perspective, using time travel as a plot device and the bombing of Dresden in World War II, the aftermath of which Vonnegut witnessed, as a starting point.

Billy Pilgrim is the novel’s chief protagonist. Vonnegut portrays Billy as an optometrist residing in ‘Ilium’, a fictional depiction of Troy, NY. Vonnegut himself worked as a publicist for General Electric in nearby Schenectady; several of his other novels are set in Schenectady.

Billy Pilgrim randomly travels through time and is abducted by the “four-dimensional” aliens known as the Tralfamadorians. He is also a prisoner of war in Dresden during World War II, and his later life is greatly influenced by what he saw during the war. He travels between parts of his life repeatedly and randomly, meaning that he’s literally lived through the events more than once. He travels back and forth in time so often that he develops a sense of fatalism about his life because he knows how he is going to die and how his life is going to work out. Vonnegut identified the inspiration for this character as fellow infantryman and prisoner-of-war Edward Crone. Brightonian Crone graduated from Brighton High School and Hobart College; he died in German custody a month before the end of the war in Europe. After the war, the Germans helped Crone’s parents locate his grave, enabling them to rebury him in Mount Hope Cemetery.

### Grant Holcomb

director of the Memorial Art Gallery  
will talk about

“They Call me Billy Pilgrim ...”

at Historic Brighton’s  
Annual Meeting

2 p.m.

Sunday, January 27

Brighton Town Hall

2300 Elmwood Ave

He will examine the life of **Brighton native Edward R. Crone Jr.**, who was the inspiration for the character of Billy Pilgrim in Vonnegut’s famous novel

**G**RANT HOLCOMB is the Mary W. and Donald R. Clark Director of the Memorial Art Gallery. Born and raised in California, he received his bachelor of arts degree in American history from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) and his masters and doctoral degrees in Art History from the University of Delaware. He taught at Mount Holyoke College (1972-1979) before returning to California to begin his museum career at the San Diego Museum of Art where he served as curator and later Assistant Director. He assumed the directorship of the Memorial Art Gallery in 1985.

Holcomb was a Kress Fellow at the National Gallery of Art, has been the recipient of fellowships and grants from the American Council of Learned Societies, the National Endowment for the Arts, Henry Francis DuPont Winterthur Museum and the New York State Council on the Arts, among others. He has written a number of articles, essays and exhibition catalogs on 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century American art.

# NOMINATING REPORT FOR THE JANUARY 27<sup>TH</sup> 2008 ANNUAL MEETING:

## Our deepest gratitude to the following retiring Trustees: 1999-2008

**LEO DODD** – Founding President of Historic Brighton. Leo will continue as website chair

**DEE DEE TEEGARDEN** – Co-chair of Hospitality Committee with her daughter, Josie Leyens.

**MONICA GILLIGAN** – Past-President of Historic Brighton. Monica will continue to serve as Chair of the Communications Committee

**JANET HOPKIN** – Long-time Secretary of the Board. Janet will continue to serve the Board as its Treasurer

**JOSIE LEYENS** – Co-chair of Hospitality Committee – responsible for the gracious refreshment tables at all of our events.

The Board is being downsized from sixteen members to thirteen, plus Mary Jo Lanphear, Brighton Town Historian, ex-officio.

## Nominated for a three-year term as Trustee:

**PETER PARKER**

**ANDREW WHEATCRAFT**

## BY-LAWS TO BE VOTED ON AT THE JANUARY 27<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING:

**BY-LAW CHANGES** – The following are presented as changes to by-laws to be voted on at the January 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting:

Article II section 2 now reads:

*Annual dues for active members shall be \$20.00.*

Proposed change: *Annual membership dues shall be no less than \$5.00. Various membership categories and the dues amount associated with each category may be determined by a majority of the board of directors. Any changes in the dues structure or dues amount will take effect in the following calendar year.*

Article VII section 4 now reads: Financial reports such as are required to be furnished, and the membership records of the Corporation shall be available at the principal office of the Corporation for inspection at reasonable times by any member.

Proposed change: *A current copy of the organization's membership list, a summary financial report; and bylaws shall be held by one or more officers of the board as directed by a majority of the board of directors. A written or electronic copy of this information shall be made available upon request by any member with reasonable advance notice as determined by the officer holding the information. Members' personal contact information shall be considered private and may not be disclosed for any reason without the permission of the member(s).*

Article VII section 4 regarding the meaning of member's personal contact info. It was agreed to take out the last sentence and put in its place the following statement: *The board shall consider the member's personal contact information confidential.*

The proposed change for Article VII section 4 now reads: *A current copy of the organization's membership list, a summary financial report; and bylaws shall be held by one or more officers of the board as directed by a majority of the board of directors. A written or electronic copy of this information shall be made available upon request by any member with reasonable advance notice as determined by the officer holding the information. The board shall consider the member's personal contact information confidential.*

### HISTORIC BRIGHTON OFFICERS AND BOARD

Founded 1999 by Arlene Wright

*Sheldon Brayer, President  
Janet Hopkin, Secretary  
Rome Celli, Treasurer  
Arlene A. Wright, Nominating chair*

*Elizabeth Brayer  
Leo Dodd  
Richard Dollinger  
Suzanne Donahue  
Monica Gilligan  
Sally Harper  
Hannelore Heyer  
Beth Keigher  
Josie Leyens  
Ron Richardson  
Dee Dee Teegarden*

*Call Betsy Brayer at 244-0402 to contribute articles or letters*

*Mary Jo Lanphear, Town of Brighton Historian*

# WHEN THE BUCKLAND HISTORY CENTER WAS HILLSIDE CHILDREN'S CENTER FARM, 1911-1939

BY BETSY BRAYER

**H**ILLSIDE CHILDREN'S CENTER originated in 1837 when concerned women from the Rochester Female Charitable Society<sup>1</sup> and others met in the home of Elizabeth (Mrs. William) Atkinson.<sup>2</sup> The women were alarmed at the rising number of orphans due to the malaria that accompanied the digging of the Erie Canal through Montezuma Swamp, the transients that arrived from Canada or Europe via canal or lake and left without their children, and the cholera epidemics of the 1830s. Orphans had no options except being housed with adult vagrants and criminals in the various poorhouses of the city and outlying towns.



The women named their rescue organization "The Rochester Female Association for the Relief of Orphan and Destitute Children." Forty-six children were served that year in a small, rented two-story cottage with garden on South Sophia Street—so named for Nathaniel Rochester's wife but later called Plymouth Avenue—in the Third Ward on the west bank of the Genesee River.

Renamed and incorporated as the Rochester Orphan Asylum (ROA) in 1839, the organization grew rapidly and in 1844 constructed a large, four-story facility with connecting wings and auxiliary structures (but only two fire escapes) at Hubbell Park—a small passageway between Exchange and Grieg streets. Throughout the rest of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this facility and the organization's efforts grew in response to the needs of area children. Orphans were still admitted, but also children in crisis whose families struggled to provide for them. About 100 children could be housed at Hubbell Park.



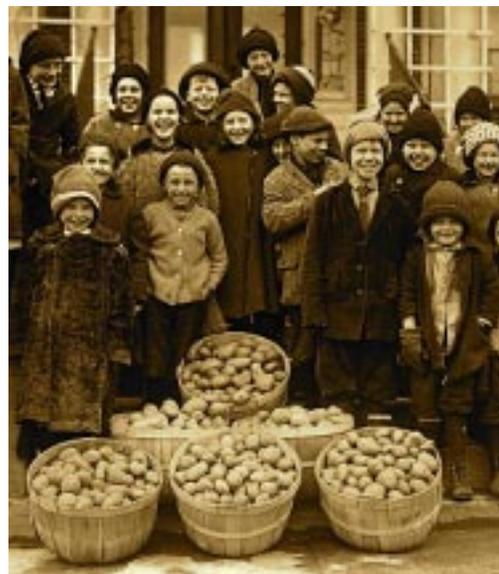
*Buckland farmhouse, drawing by Leo Dodd*

The usual daily diet at the orphanage was listed in the minutes as bread and milk, mush and milk, and molasses and mush. Occasionally the children had baked potatoes and once a week there was butter on them. Dinner was at noon; soup was served once a week, and cod and mutton were often on the menu. No fresh fruit or vegetables are mentioned.

## ENTER GE

GEORGE EASTMAN BECAME A TRUSTEE of the orphanage about 1890, two years after he introduced the Kodak camera and the same year as he began to build Kodak Park. By the turn of the century he was president of the board. As with his other projects, from Kodak Park to the Eastman Theatre to the dental clinics he founded, Eastman was a hands-on micromanager. He ordered the coal (off season for better rates), insect screens, and gas fixtures ("absolutely plain black, simple fixtures, like those in the [Rochester] Country Club" in Brighton). He served on the building, finance, loan and subscriptions committees, and ordered the fireworks for the Fourth of July. He approved adoptions and employees. He took the job seriously.

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## HILLSIDE CHILDREN'S CENTER FARM, 1911-1939

### FIRE!

**E**ARLY IN THE MORNING of 8 January 1901 a fire broke out in the main building of the orphanage and 29 youngsters, most under the age of ten, and two adults lost their lives. The inquest revealed the lack of safety devices: an attendant made nightly rounds with lighted candle in hand, there was no night watchman, and one fire escape led escapees directly into the flames.

The fire destroyed more than half of the Hubbell Park building, so immediately the trustees had to decide whether to rebuild or move to a new location with more up-to-date and fire resistant buildings.



new campus with one- and two-story cottages and halls surrounding a central flower-bedecked green. In concept, such a cluster arrangement for orphanages was ahead of its time.

Eastman accompanied Warner and other trustees to similar institutions for planning pointers. Confiding to friends that he was sorry to have his big house finished, he decided to build a small one to see if he could make it “just as perfect.” He soon found, as he told his niece Ellen Dryden, that he could “get just as much fun out of masterminding all the details—playroom, porch, storm encloses, wood finishes—of the Eastman Cottage for Boys for \$11,414 as he did out building his own house for thirty times as much.”

In 1905, the asylum moved to its innovative new cottage system on a 30-acre location in the Pinnacle Hills, reflecting changing theories in the caring of children. Cottages created a home-like environment within the boundaries of the institution.

In 1911, the 92-acre Wooster (now Buckland) Farm was purchased by or given to the ROA. The board and superintendents wanted the children “to learn about nature and how to farm” but indications are that the children (about 185) continued to live on Monroe Ave. A pamphlet, *Hillside the Beautiful*, noted that the farm produced milk, butter, eggs, fruits and vegetable. “The training of the boys includes courses in gardening, agriculture, manual training, chair caning, and the care of horses and cows.” Mary Jo Lanphear, Brighton Town Historian, notes: “In the years before food banks and wholesale grocers, the farm produce was obviously important to the fiscal health of the institution.”

In 1918, the home bought a tractor for \$1,500



### MOVE TO THE PINNACLE HILLS

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES abandoned plans to rebuild on the grim old site. Between 1902 and 1905, a gift of high land in the suburban Pinnacle Hills was received by the ROA and the decision made to leave the Third Ward. According to a brief history written in 1992 by board member Richard Eisenhart, Mr. and Mrs. Beckley, superintendents of the orphanage, visited England to observe the “cottage plan” employed there. That, according to Eisenhart was “the origin of the decision to have individual buildings which we call cottages. They are pretty big cottages, but that is how the various buildings, Bausch, Ely, Sunnyside, etc. were all originally conceived.”

The trustees retained architect J. Foster Warner, himself a trustee, who was also designing the George Eastman House, 1902-1905, to plan a whole

## HILLSIDE CHILDREN'S CENTER FARM, 1911-1939

that “plows, drags, rolls, saws wood and fills silos.” The farm had 16 cows, mostly Holsteins and six horses, a piggery for bacon and fats. Farmers operated a corn cutter and sheller and a grinder of oats to get meal for the cows.<sup>3</sup>

The farmhouse was described in a 1918 newspaper article as “commodious, beautifully clean, heated by a furnace but without gas or electric light. There are six boys there who go to school and learn farming between times. The stables have asphalt floors with cork on brick in the stalls. The grain barns are well built with high roofs. When the farm was bought, we dug out 300 loads of manure that had been lying in the stable for years.” Milk and fruit were sent to the cottages and wheat was sold, then the flour bought back. Apples, pears, plums and prunes (a special kind of plum) were grown. “The cottages are supplied with products that could not be given to the children under any other system.”<sup>4</sup>

### MUTTON FATIGUE

“THE INSTITUTION HAS TOO SMALL A FARM to meet its commissary requirements. For 5 years, it has rented 53 additional acres—42 acres for raising grain and 11 acres of orchard. The purchase of extra acreage to supplement its farm would be a sound financial move. Hillside dining rooms consume one sheep every other week.” (Mary Jo Lanphear suggests that this might lead to mutton fatigue.) This extension of farming acreage permitted the profitable raising of sheep. Continual addition to the orchards were made through the generosity of Charles J. Brown.<sup>5</sup> “Enough hen houses should be built to allow the doubling of the present poultry output, for fresh eggs are valuable food for growing children,” the newspaper article concluded.



### GROWING THEIR OWN FOOD

THE 1915 ADDITION of a full second floor to the Buckland farmhouse meant that five boys could live<sup>6</sup> at the farmhouse and learn vocational skills from the resident farm couple. Additional acreage across Westfall Road was purchased to provide additional food for the ROA and to sell. By 1939, managing the farm was no longer economically feasible and so the land and farm buildings were sold.

### NUTRITION CLASSES AT HILLSIDE

GEORGE EASTMAN BECAME ACUTELY INTERESTED in the nutrition classes for sickly or underweight children conducted by Dr. William R. P. Emerson of Boston. Emerson originally approached Eastman for a financial contribution, casually sending him some books on nutrition. Eastman read them at breakfast, then invited Emerson to come and stay for a while so that he could set up classes at Hillside. Emerson assigned one of his people to Hillside to oversee the feeding as Eastman sent personalized reports of the program's progress to Boston. “One of the girls, Eleanor King, has since come up to full weight and was I understand in the graduating class.” When Emerson's program was written up in the bulletin of the Tuberculosis Association, Eastman dispatched those bulletins to friends and acquaintances.

To reflect the shift from providing a home for orphans to caring for “dependent and neglected children,” the asylum changed its name in 1921 to Hillside Home for Children.

By 1930 financial losses deficits indicated that the farmhouse was becoming inhabitable and the farm was operating at a loss. The Depression or economic reasons appear to have led to the sale of the property in 1939.

## WHEN THE BUCKLAND HISTORY CENTER WAS HILLSIDE CHILDREN'S CENTER FARM, 1911-1939



*Postcard view of the Rochester Orphan Asylum in the Pinnacle Hills*



*Looking from the ROA to Cobbs Hill  
Charles C. Zoller photo courtesy of  
George Eastman House*



*Eastman Cottage as built in 1906, photo at Rare Books and  
Special Collections, University of Rochester Library*



*Eastman Cottage ca. 1990, photo by Betsy Brayer.*

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*Photos on pages 3-5 were scanned from a 1917 Hillside brochure archived at the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, University of Rochester Library. They appear to have been originally printed from the Albert R. Stone Negative Collection, Rochester Museum and Science Center, Rochester, NY*

### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Formed in 1822 twelve years before Rochester was a city, the Rochester Female Charitable Society was the area's first philanthropic organization and is probably the oldest philanthropic organization in the United States still serving its original purpose—to serve the sick poor in their own homes and later in institutions. The Society was the outgrowth of a charity school run by the same young women. The RFSC founded many other institutions—among them Hillside, the Friendly Home, Rochester General Hospital, Rochester Children's Nursery, and Visiting Nurse Association. It continues in existence today working quietly behind the scene.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Atkinson was the mother of Hobart Atkinson, prominent banker and first president (1885) of the Genesee Valley Club and the second wife of the Rev. Charles Grandison Finney, a leader of the Second Great Awakening.

<sup>3</sup> Research for this section was done by Dee Dee Teegarden at the University of Rochester Department of Rare Books and Special Collections.

<sup>4</sup> Democrat & Chronicle 10 November 1918.

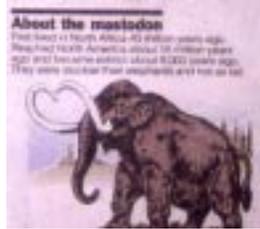
<sup>5</sup> Charles J. Brown was the nurseryman who used his land to build a subdivision named Browncroft. Mary Jo Lanphear speculates that he may have contributed pear trees to the Buckland property.

<sup>6</sup> Accounts vary as to whether the boys lived at the farm or just worked there.

Some information for this article came from a 10/27/04 e-mail exchange between Tami Root, marketing coordinator for Hillside Family of Agencies and Mary Jo Lanphear, Brighton historian.

## SAVE THE DATES JUNE 27 - 28 FOR THE ANNUAL HISTORIC BRIGHTON PRESENTATION DAYS ABOUT TRYON/ELLISON PARK

This year Historic Brighton will feature the cradle of Brighton civilization—that area known as the Indian Landing, the Lost City of Tryon, and Ellison Park. In the earliest mists of time, after the glacier had receded and the mastodons disappeared, moccasined feet landed at the head of Irondequoit Bay and portaged their ca-



noes up what is today Landing Road North then along the edge of the Pinnacle Hills via Highland Avenue so they could put their canoes back into Red Creek and continue their journey by the Genesee, Allegheny, Ohio, and Mississippi rivers to the Gulf of Mexico.



As the land between Niagara Falls and Manhattan Island became the territory for which England and France fought for 200 years, the landing developed into the useful center of portage.

In 1663, a tremendous earthquake rattled western New York and parts of Canada.

In 1669, La Salle came to the Indian Landing seeking, of all things, a water route to China. Headquartered in the Brighton area, he brought shipbuilding materials and sought to persuade the Senecas to provide him with a guide to the western waterways. The Senecas wine and dined La Salle, yet never told him how to get to the gulf. Nineteen years later, In 1688, Father Pierre Raffex, Jesuit missionary, drew the first map showing the Genesee River as part of the famous Ohio Trail.



In 1720, William Burnett, English governor of New York, commissioned Peter Schuyler Jr. to establish a fort and trading post at the strategic Indian Landing. Its purpose was to keep tabs on the French, to intercept Senecas before they could reach the French trading post at the mouth of the bay, and to influence the Senecas to trade with the English. But difficulty in supplying the fort from Albany led to Capt. Schuyler and his band being recalled. A replica of the “fort” was built in Ellison Park in 1938 and that eventually became the logo of the Town of Brighton.

In 1779, General George Washington ordered an expedition against the Iroquois under General Sullivan. The rationale was retaliation for Native American massacres. Sullivan broke the strength of the Iroquois and the Treaty of Paris, 1783, included lands of the Iroquois in those ceded by the English. In 1788 Phelps and Gorham purchased the western end of the state. Families of English stock, many the second and third sons, began to migrate here from New England.

Brighton’s first settlers were John Lusk and his son Stephen from Schenectady in 1789.

Soon French explorers, traders, and missionaries wanted to reach the Gulf too.

Ten years before the Pilgrims landed in Massachusetts, the French arrived in Brighton. Champlain’s map of 1612, the first to be drawn of Lake Ontario, shows Irondequoit Bay; and its importance as a gateway to the south is obvious.



## SAVE THE DATES JUNE 27 - 28 FOR THE ANNUAL HISTORIC BRIGHTON PRESENTATION DAYS ABOUT TRYON/ELLISON PARK

The Gideon Cobb luncheon for amateur and professional historians and the general public, will be held this year Friday, June 27 at the Gatherings **Daisy Flour Mill**. Jim Quinn will talk about Oliver Culver and the Lost City of Tryon. Watch future communications for details.

Ron Richardson is looking for more vintage photos of the area encompassing the Indian Landing, the Lost City of Tryon, and Ellison Park. If you have such memorabilia contact Betsy Brayer at 244-0402 or [elizbrayer@msn.com](mailto:elizbrayer@msn.com).

**BEFORE** the Town of Brighton came into being there was the “City” of Tryon at the eastern terminus of the portage. It was not an accidental community as most frontier towns were, but a planned one. (Today we might call it a PUD). Its founders were John and Salmon Tryon from Saratogo County. The location at the head of navigation of Irondequoit Bay seemed ideal. Besides, the Lusks had already cleared 12 acres which they sowed to wheat. The Tryons thought they had all the ingredients for the ideal “city.”



Unlike the usual haphazard pioneer outpost, the land was carefully subdivided. Forty lots, most half-acre, were laid out on two new streets. Main St. ran parallel to the rough trail to Canandaigua (now Landing Rd). Court St. (later Blossom Rd.) intersected Main St. at Tryon Square. Late in 1798 a storehouse for grain was built near Irondequoit Creek, followed by a distillery and an ashery . At a



new shipping dock Oliver Culver launched a 47-ton vessel in 1813, the largest ever on the bay. A store soon stocked luxury items such as lace, dimity, silk, and satin as well as the staples of flannel, calico, and homespun. The Senecas exchanged furs and skins for trading goods. The forests surrounding Tryon teamed with raccoon and bear, regularly hunted for food, but also with panther.

Although everything seemed to be coming up roses for the well-planned community of Tryon, several factors, including the War of 1812 which cut commercial traffic on Lake Ontario to zero, contributed to its becoming a “lost city.” The most important was that the Erie Canal was planned not to go through Tryon but Rochesterville. The canal would eliminate forever the risks of high winds and storms on Lake Ontario and the need to portage goods to avoid the High Falls. In 1822 Tryon was abandoned.

**TWO** houses from the original Tryon village (it never became a city) still stand. At 319 Landing Rd. North, on a rise north of Blossom Rd., is the “old” Tryon house, built in 1799 for Augustus Griswold, new partner of the Tryons.



The “new” Tryon house at 421 Landing Rd., south of Blossom Rd., was occupied for a time by Oliver Culver (who later built a larger home which still stands at 70 East Blvd.).

After the Stone-Tolan house, these two Tryon houses remain the oldest structures in Brighton.



Since 1928, when Frank Ellison of East Avenue in Brighton donated many acres to Monroe County, the “lost city” has been reborn as Ellison Park.