

Twelve Corners

Three roads that date back to the settlement period intersect in central Brighton, forming the area known as the Twelve Corners. Monroe Avenue, once called the "State Road to Canandaigua" on an 1820 map, forms one leg of the triangle. Winton Road, formerly known as South Avenue, follows a lot line in a northeasterly direction until it ends north of Empire Boulevard. The third street, Elmwood Avenue, follows an east-west lot line as it crosses Brighton from Scottsville Road to East Avenue. Elmwood Avenue was dedicated in 1806 by the town of Northfield, predecessor town of Brighton.

Throughout most of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the Twelve Corners was a commercial area. Blacksmith shops, taverns, and hotels served the local farmers and brick makers. With the development of housing tracts on the north and south sides of Monroe Avenue in the early 1900s, small groceries, pharmacies, and restaurants opened for business.

On the northeast corner of Winton Road and Monroe Avenue was Henry Peck's fifty-acre farm that included a large apple orchard with a yearly yield of over 3,000 barrels. The Peck farm included the triangle of land in the center of the Twelve Corners. A landscaped park with gazebo occupies the triangle today but in 1900, a Brighton resident might have taken his horse for new shoes to the blacksmith shop that stood there.

In 1940, plans were made to build the first shopping center in Monroe County. Designed by prominent local architect C. Storrs Barrows and built by contractor Emil Muller, the thirteen store crescent-shaped building was constructed on Henry Peck's former apple orchard.

Wegmans opened its first suburban grocery store at Twelve Corners Plaza on December 18, 1941. The store operated in that location until December of 1965 when the Pittsford Plaza store opened. Longtime residents will also remember Neisner's 5 & 10 store, Altier's Shoes, Earl's Drugs, Reed's Candy store, the First Federal Bank, and Criticos' Crossroads Restaurant.

The photograph shows Twelve Corners Plaza circa 1950. A 1992 refurbishment clad the building with a unifying brick and aluminum facade. Over seventy years after its creation and dwarfed by its successor shopping centers, Twelve Corners Plaza still thrives, serving local residents and commuters with a combination of local shops and national franchises.

Mary Jo Lanphear
Town of Brighton Historian
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