

A SELF-GUIDED HISTORICAL WALK OF DOWNTOWN ROCHESTER

The tour begins at City Hall on Wakefield Street. Two hour free parking is available at the City of Rochester Municipal Complex behind city hall or on the street. The entire walk of around three miles is best for experienced walkers, but it may be done in shorter sections.

To split it into two parts begin at city hall and follow the route to Central Square and end there. The second half would then begin at Central Square, follow the route to the Rochester Commons, and then return up South Main Street to Hanson Street.

You may also walk one street or section at a time. Parking is available on most of the streets. The route travels on level ground mainly on sidewalks. For safety's sake walk on the sidewalks and cross at crosswalks. Always be alert for traffic and aware of your surroundings.

Rochester City Hall is a fine Neoclassical/Georgian Revival style red brick building trimmed with granite completed in 1908. It was built behind a white house purchased from the estate of John McDuffee in 1896. After City Hall was completed that house was sold and moved to Portland Street where it is today. Inside city hall is the Rochester Opera House with a stage, auditorium, and balcony. The main floor can be raised to an angle for a better view of the stage and lowered to be flat for dances and sports by a system of pulleys and leather belts. It is the only such floor known to still be in existence. In front of City Hall are Rochester's World War I and World War II monuments refurbished by the Rochester Veteran's Council in 2005 and 2002.

Behind City Hall to the right is Rochester Police Headquarters. This is Rochester's newest municipal building completed in 2004.

John Shaw Park was authorized by a city council resolution passed on December 12, 1975 which designated this area "as John Shaw Park in appreciation for his services to all mankind." Mayor Shaw, a fiscal conservative who was elected eight times and served 1953-55, 1968-69, and 1972-1979, was controversial. When he died in April 1982 Foster's Daily Democrat described him as "colorful and combative," "a lightning rod for controversy," and "a Rochester political institution since 1952."

The park is located in front of the Rochester Central Fire Station constructed in 1904 and remodeled in 1975 to become the police station. As early as 1897 the fire chief was expressing the need for a centrally located 2 story fire house with room for five horse stalls and space for hay and grain on the second floor. When this building was completed in 1904 it was "commodious and modern, equipped with stabling for 8 horses."

Next door is Rochester Fire Department Station 1 built in 1975 and the Rochester Firefighters Monument.

Across the street are houses of several styles that remain from the days when both sides of Wakefield Street were residential. Most prominent is the Bernier Insurance Building built c. 1905 by Albert Linscott as a Colonial Revival style residence. When

development of the square became commercial Wakefield Street became the new residential area favored by mill owners.

Cross Summer Street at the Light.

Profile Bank building was built in 1977-78. Profile Bank was founded in 1907 as Peoples Building and Loan. A large 9 room house that had been the home of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Chase, and later Mr. and Mrs. Willis McDuffee, was moved one and half miles from this site to the end of Eastern Avenue in 1972.

Marturia Presbyterian Church and the Episcopal Center was built in 1958-9 as the Episcopal Church of the Redeemer. This was the site of Rochester High School, a three story brick building built in 1901 with two doors – one for boys and one for girls. When it was built the Rochester Courier called it a "splendid high school structure," but by the late 1930s it was severely overcrowded and run down. It was torn down as soon as Spaulding High School opened in 1939.

Cross Wakefield Street at the crosswalk and turn right. Walk along Wakefield Street which is historically noted for its gracious and stately homes, including a pair of Georgian Revival homes:

The Café was the home of former Governor Rolland H. Spaulding who had this home built in the mid 1920s. He was NH Governor from 1915-17.

The Governor's Inn was the home of his brother former Governor Huntley M. Spaulding who had this home built around 1920. He was NH Governor from 1927-29. It opened as an inn in 1993.

Visible between the houses on the right side of the street is the **Encore Shoe Building**, downtown Rochester's only remaining shoe manufacturing building. It was built in 1895 by Perkins and Jones with Albert Linscott, who became a partner two years later, as superintendent. This modern 4 story plant could produce 2000-3000 pairs of shoes a day. It was operated by several owners including Hubbard, Encore, and Bennett Shoe.

Studley's Flower Gardens was founded by Joshua Studley in 1928.

Gafney Home, a Romanesque Revival style characterized by masonry construction and strongly rounded features, was built as a private residence in 1896 by prominent Rochester attorney Judge Charles B. Gafney. He died at age 54 in 1898 and his invalid wife died in 1900. The trustees of his estate turned it into a home for the aged which opened September 12, 1904.

Continue on the sidewalk and bear left on Yeagley Way by Hanson Park. Yeagley Way was formerly part of Chestnut Hill Road which began here. In 1923 Charles Hanson gave land between Chestnut Hill Road and the railroad tracks to the city for a playground in honor of his grandfather. He named it the Joseph Hanson Carnival Grounds.

On the right the small triangle with a cast iron fountain is **Torr Park** built in 1934 in memory of Charles C. and George H. Torr. These brothers were both prominent Rochester citizens and active in politics. George, who died in 1931, was a Director of Rochester Trust Company and a city councilor for eleven years serving 1920-31.

Charles, who died in 1934, was a city council member for 12 years and a selectman for 11 years. Members of the Torr family have lived on Chestnut Hill Road since 1775.

Spaulding High School was built in 1939 and named for Leon C. Spaulding whose family's generosity contributed to its construction on 33.3 acres at a cost of nearly \$1 million. Mr. and Mrs. Huntley N. Spaulding, Mr. and Mrs. Rolland H. Spaulding, Mrs. Marion Spaulding Potter, and Mrs. Leon Spaulding contributed \$360,000, a grant was received from the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works amounting to 45% of the cost not to exceed \$326,919, and the remainder came from the city. It is still one of New Hampshire's most attractive school buildings. The Richard W. Creteau Vocational Center was added in 1991.

Follow the sidewalk by the playground and turn left after the swimming pool to follow the paved foot path through

Dominicus Hanson Park commonly called **Hanson Pines**. Land between the railroad tracks, which have been removed, and the Cocheco River was deeded to the city of Rochester on October 4, 1915 by Charles Hanson as a memorial to his father Dominicus Hanson. The deed stipulates it is to be, "for the benefit of the public as a wooded and timbered park, and a place of recreation for the people not only of Rochester and surrounding towns and cities, but of the world at large." It is to remain a wooded park, and should the city not fulfill the stipulations in the deed the land passes to the Protestant Churches of Nashua.

Use the steel foot bridge which opened in August 1957 to cross the Cocheco River to Dewey Street, a residential neighborhood of the 20th century. Continue straight until you reach the end and then turn left onto

North Main Street, formerly called Elm Street, one of Rochester's earliest roads being an early route to Farmington. Around 1900 part of this road would be closed on Saturday afternoon for local men to race their horses. Seven term mayor William Bradley was often one of the racers. Here are a variety of house styles including **The Snow House** (189 No. Main) which was converted to the Holy Rosary Rectory in 1962.

Holy Rosary Catholic Church was established on Bridge Street in Rochester in 1883. This building was erected in 1963.

Grondin Funeral Home has served the local area since 1922. Three generations of the Grondin family have operated it.

Strafford Square This triangle at the intersection of North Main, Walnut, (Rt. 202A) and Washington (Rt.202) Streets was once called Belknap Square. Here was a granite watering trough where horse drawn wagons coming into town from the outlying areas would stop so the horses could drink. The trough is now at the RHS Museum.

Cross North Main Street at the crosswalk by Maple Street and turn left to continue on North Main Street to

The Stone Arch Bridge over the Cocheco River. Built by local stone mason Silas Hussey in 1881-83 this 133 foot long bridge is built of granite blocks and has three parabolic arches each with a span of 36 feet, 8 inches.

Crossing the bridge you enter what the early settlers called Norway Plains, the level land from the foot of Rochester Hill to the river that was thickly covered by Norway Pine trees. Turn right to walk along the river.

The upper building of the Wyandotte Mill was located here until it was destroyed by fire in 1976. Visible in the river are the Upper Dam built of poured concrete around 1926 and remnants of a 19th century stone dam and vestiges of headgates and machinery. A fulling mill was a cloth processing mill. Around 1788 a fulling mill near here processed cloth produced in households throughout the area.

At Bridge Street turn left to cross the street at the lights at the intersection with North Main Street. After crossing Bridge Street you see Rochester District Courthouse, formerly Rochester's first federally owned Post Office built in 1913-15. Earlier post offices had been located in privately owned buildings. This is Rochester's finest example of a neoclassical building. In 1985 the post office moved to a new building on Allen Street.

Turn right and walk back along Bridge Street to the river. On the other side of the river is the site of the first Holy Rosary Church and School. Turn left at the driveway to the Wyandotte Falls Apartment Complex. In the 1700s there were grist mills, saw mills, and fulling mills here. The Norway Plains Woolen Company was chartered in 1846 and made woolen blankets here in wooden buildings which were replaced by brick buildings within 20 years. Heavy wool blankets were produced here for the government during the Civil War. In 1926 the business was bought by the Wyandotte Worsted Company who kept the mills going until 1970 when they were abandoned. Housing for the elderly opened in 1986.

Visible in the river is Lower Dam and a few pieces of wooden boardwalk and headgate machinery at the eastern end.

Across the driveway is the Roberge Community Center, a brick industrial building typical of mid-late 19th century utilitarian architecture. Built around 1890 as part of Norway Plains Manufacturing it was probably used to store wool. Later the Rochester Courier printing office was here. It was renovated by the Rochester Housing Authority as a Community Center and was dedicated to the late Mayor Roland Roberge and his wife Lorraine in 1996.

Cross at the crosswalk and take the stairway or handicapped accessible walkway to return to North Main Street. Commercial structures across the street include:

The Hartigan Block and the adjacent Elm Block. These 3 story commercial buildings were built during the late 1800/early 1900 expansion of the North Main Street commercial area. In the 1901 Hartigan building notice the paired, round arch windows and corbelling typical of the Romanesque Revival style. In the Elm Block the rectangular windows framed by limestone sills and lintels are characteristic of the Queen Anne style.

On the corner of Factory Court is the Grange Block built c. 1887 by local Grange members who had meeting rooms on the third floor which was removed during remodeling in 1967. City offices were on the second floor here before they moved to the

McDuffee House in 1896. Long time stores in this building were Lothrop and Farnums and J C Penney.

The single story Art Deco building at 55 North Main was built around 1930 with a sculptured concrete façade, buff brick above the storefronts, and bas relief ornamentation along the roofline. Palmer's Hardware was located here.

Slim's is located in the Italianate style Chesley Building built c. 1870 with wooden cornices.

In the area of Adams Appliance was a white Colonial house where John Parker Hale, Jr. was born on March 31, 1806. He became a lawyer and a strong abolitionist. He served in the US House of Representatives and in the Senate where his refusal to compromise on slavery was unpopular. He said, "They may read on my tombstone, He who lies beneath surrendered office, place, and power rather than bow down and worship slavery." He is buried at Pine Hill Cemetery in Dover.

The Greek Revival Brick House c. 1825 is a two and a half story commercial block built gable end to the street. One of the oldest surviving buildings in downtown, it has had many different stores and businesses in it. It was known as Dodge's Brick Building and later as People's Market.

Around 1910-1920 this side of the street (the even numbered side) was redeveloped for greater commercial use and several one and two story commercial blocks were built. In 1960 this side of North Main Street had 20 stores, as well as beauty and barber shops, taxi stands, lawyers, and apartments upstairs.

The long block which includes Vathally's/Big Heads was built around 1920 and in the 1940s remodeled in a modern design with maroon carrara glass and curved display windows used for many years by Harvey's Bakery.

The Busy Bean Café is in a storefront added by Leslie Snow in 1916 to one of the oldest surviving houses built around 1840 when this was a residential neighborhood. Leslie Snow, a well known lawyer and New Hampshire State Supreme Court justice from 1921-32, owned several buildings from 26 to 56 North Main Street.

At 26 North Main Street a 3 story brick façade was applied in 1917 to a Second Empire style house. The old rooflines are visible on these two buildings.

The one story Carney building built c. 1920 was remodeled with a new commercial façade around 1960.

The former home of Miltner's Shoe is a two story commercial building built around 1920. A hardware store had been on this site as early as 1890.

Cross North Main Street at the crosswalk and turn right to walk to Central Square where five streets meet.

When you reach Central Square and the statue honoring Parson Main it is time to rest on one of the benches. Beginning in 1825 stage coach lines stopped here. In 1834 the Dodge Hotel on this spot was a major regional hostelry for stage coach lines that transferred passengers here for points in northern New Hampshire and Vermont. By the mid 1800s Rochester was a major railroad junction and a distribution center for the region's agricultural and industrial products. Tracks for the Boston and Maine, Portland and Rochester, and Worcester and Nashua Railroads all converged in Rochester. By the

late 1800s Rochester saw an average of 40 trains a day. This led to much commercial development in the downtown, including stores, restaurants, and hotels. Residences that had been here were largely displaced from Central Square by the late 19th century. In the center of Central Square is the **Parson Main Monument**. This 21 foot tall bronze figure in honor of "Rev. Amos Main, Rochester's well loved minister, teacher, physician, and friend from May 9, 1737 until his death April 5, 1760" was dedicated on July 3, 1896. It was reported the ceremony was attended by most of the 8000 residents of Rochester along with visitors from neighboring communities, and the Square was a solid mass of humanity with every available store and office window and flat roof used by spectators.

Around the Square are:

The **Dodge Block**, now the home of Citizens Bank. It was built as a three story building in 1902 and rebuilt as a two story building after a fire in 1908. Woolworth's five and dime store with its wooden floors, lunch counter, and most of what anyone needed was located here from 1912 to 1981. The F. W. Woolworth chain sold discounted general merchandise at fixed prices, originally five and ten cents.

The three story **Scenic Theater** with its third floor circular windows was built in 1912 as both a theater, used for movies and vaudeville shows, and a store. As one of the area's earliest movie theaters it is a sign of Rochester's importance as a cultural center and its economic vitality in the early 1900s.

The four story white brick **Michael's Block**, also known as the **Salinger**, is a late 19th /early 20th century neoclassical commercial block notable for its glazed white brick and terra cotta ornamentation. JJ Newbury's Store was in this building for many years.

The **P of H, Hayes Block**, on the corner of Congress Street was built around 1878. The Hayes Opera House occupied the third and fourth stories of this Victorian Commercial Building.

The parking lot on the other side of Congress Street is the site of the **McDuffee Block** which was built c. 1868 as the largest and most prestigious building in Rochester.

Feineman's Store was located here for over 120 years. The building burned in 1992.

Ainslie's Drugstore, now the home of Ellis and Mr. Ed's Real Estate, is the only federal style, bow front brick building in southeastern New Hampshire.

The **Henderson Block** which burned in 1960 was located on the parking lot on the corner of Hanson Street. From 1901-1926 an electric trolley line ran by here. A waiting room for the trolley was located in Rumazza's Store in the Henderson Block in the 1920s.

The Georgian Revival **Realty Block**, now One Wakefield Center, occupies the site of Dominicus Hanson's house. It was built in 1926 by the Realty Company – a syndicate of 10 local businessmen.

For more than one hundred years downtown Rochester was a busy commercial center with many stores on North and South Main and Hanson Streets. In 1950 the Chamber of Commerce said Rochester is the "hub of a prosperous area extending north to the White Mountains. It has about 2 miles of stores and over 177 retail establishments, 7 wholesale dealers and about 75 professional offices." The population of Rochester was 13,768 with a trading population of over 50,000. It was a popular shopping center for the surrounding area. Shoppers had a choice of stores in every category, including five and dimes,

department stores, hardware, clothing, shoe, drug, grocery, and specialty stores. Some names from those days are Woolworth, Newburys, Grants, Fishman, The Canteen, Ayers and Jenkins, Rochester Hardware, Richards, Feinemans, Roseannes, Pluff, Puritans, Penney, Miltner, Allains, Ainslie, Carney, Cate's Rexall, Lightbodys, Regis, Rigazio, Capodestria, and Sanborn-McDuffee. The decline of the railroads and the completion of the Spaulding Turnpike changed the region's traffic patterns and drew business and industry away from the downtown.

Cross North Main Street and turn left. Turn right to walk along Congress Street. Congress Street was originally called Bow Street due to its shape, and a short street running from South Main Street was named Arrow Street. Jacob Hart Ela who served in the United States Congress from 1867 to 1871 lived on this street and on Ela Court. He was a strong advocate of Abolition. It is said his house and barn were used by the Underground Railroad during the Civil War.

Cross at the crosswalk just beyond the intersection of Charles Street. Follow the brick sidewalk along Congress Street and turn left to Myrtle Street, another residential street built largely between 1880 and 1920.

Around 1900 many sidewalks were built in Rochester. Plank sidewalks were removed in favor of brick, crushed stone, cinders, and concrete. In 1901 Mayor William G. Bradley recommended using brick because it was cheaper and easier to repair than concrete. In 1914 the Street Commissioner on Sidewalks reported, "We have used as re-surfacing material all the cinders that were available at the round house, also Gonic and East Rochester Mills."

At Woodman Street look to the right to see the one story William Allen School at the end of Granite Street. This building opened in 1964 on the site of the two story Allen School which had opened as a high school with a grammar school on the first floor in 1884. On the riverbank beyond the school was the Intervale, a popular park and swimming hole in the early 1900s.

Straight ahead is Woodman Square which was beautified around 1903-10 with a fountain and flower beds.

Beyond that you can see the former St. Mary's Catholic Church built in 1885-86 and sold in 2002 after a new building was erected on Lowell Street.

Turn left on Woodman Street to Charles Street. Turn left on Charles Street.

The Grange Hall was the Unitarian Church of the Unity. The brick building next door was the Episcopal Church which built the Church of the Redeemer on Wakefield Street. Across the street on the corner of Liberty and Charles was the True Memorial Baptist Church dedicated in 1884. It burned in 1961 and a new building was erected on Ten Rod Road.

Continue on Charles Street to cross at the crosswalk by the intersection with Portland Street.

The long white office building on the corner of Charles and Portland Street was probably moved here from South Main Street to make way for the McDuffee Block in 1868.

Turn left onto Liberty Street and walk to South Main Street.

On the corner is the **First Church Congregational**. Rochester's first meeting house was built on top of Rochester Hill in 1731. In 1780 it was torn down and rebuilt on the Rochester Commons. That building was moved here in 1842, when the church voted to move it "nearer the centre of the village." Over the years it has been enlarged and remodeled several times. Its octagonal spire was added in 1867. It still contains materials from the first meeting house.

Turn right and walk on South Main Street, formerly Main Street, which was lined by trees and was the most important street in town before the development of Central Square. Many trees, including gigantic elms, were lost to disease in the early part of the 20th century.

The **Rochester Public Library** was established in 1893 as one of the first three public libraries in New Hampshire. This building was opened in 1905 as a Carnegie Library financed in part by a \$20,000 grant from the Carnegie Institute. With its cut-faced brick with contrasting white brick and granite ornamentation this is a fine example of Georgian Revival Architecture. An addition was built on the back in 1996.

The **Main Street School** was built on this site in 1856. By 1899 it was crowded and in a deteriorated condition needing better heat, sanitation, and ventilation. It was closed as soon as the new high school opened in 1901, and the students could be moved into the former high school at Allen School.

The **Emily Cross House** was built by Richard and Emily Cross in 1876 as a Second Empire Style Residence. This is an ornate, formal style characterized by the Mansard Roof and many fine details. Often referred to as the Smith House it was the office and residence of Dr. Alexander Smith from 1956-97.

Friendly's Restaurant is on the site of what some considered two of Rochester's finest old homes. There was controversy about their being sold and taken down in 1976 to make way for a restaurant. One was a colonial built in 1813 and the other, a Victorian built in 1872 by Ebenezer Wallace, was one of four fine Wallace homes that were located on South Main Street.

D'Angelo's Sandwich Shop building is on the site of a second Wallace Home built by Sumner Wallace in 1901. It had 20 rooms plus a ballroom which filled the top floor. For two years in the 1920s the Ku Klux Klan had state headquarters in it. Then it was turned into a theater. It was torn down in 1932 and replaced with a gas station.

Academy Street was named for the Rochester Academy which was in the brick building at 6-8 Academy Street beginning in 1828. In 1872 it was remodeled into a two family home. In 1877 the Rochester Courier noted this beautiful tree lined street attracted many prominent businessmen to build their homes on it.

The Odd Fellows Building was built in 1874-75 as a late Victorian commercial building with three floors. The upper floor was the lodge room, the second floor contained offices and a spacious banquet hall, and the first floor held stores. It was built with three cast iron store fronts with plate glass windows, transoms, and recessed central entries. About 1978 the Kendall Insurance Company remodeled and added on to it. It is now Frisbie Hospital's South Main Street Campus housing Rehab 3.

Cross Columbus Avenue at the lights.

The city of Rochester obtained land owned by the B & M Railroad where railroad tracks had run and built Columbus Avenue in sections beginning in 1959. Near where KFC is now there was a railroad roundhouse.

In 1806 Moses Furber bought land here and opened a tavern. An old wooden sign from his tavern is on display at the RHS Museum.

The China Palace was built around 1899 as a store with apartments on the second floor. In the 1900s the Nationwide Superette, the South End Market, and the Jiffy Diner were located here. In 1790 Hatevil Knight had a house and store near here. He owned a large tract of land, and Knight Street which met South Main Street by the railroad tracks was named for his family.

From the early 1900s until 1969 Phillips Garage occupied the site where Dunkin Donuts is now. In 1921 they were advertised to be, "The largest and best garage in town – fireproof - cement walls." In 1924 they sold and serviced Oaklands.

In 1815 a house and blacksmith shop were on the site of the Mobil gas station.

On the corner of South Main and Grant Streets was the elegant John Legro house built before 1871. Former Mayor Frank Preston lived in it. In 1915 a priest bought it and gave it to the St. Charles Orphanage. It was razed in 1972 and a gas station was built in its place.

Now that you have reached the Rochester Commons it is time to rest on a bench. The current Commons is only a small part of the 250+ acres set aside as "Norway Plain Mille Comon" in 1730. The early settlers reserved this land for public use and horses, cows, oxen, and swine grazed here. On the west end of the Commons was a pound where stray animals were kept behind high stone walls and a wooden gate until their owners claimed them. Upham Street was formerly called Pound Street. In 1780 the meeting house, used both as a house of worship and as a town meeting hall, was built here using what lumber could be salvaged from the first meeting house built on top of Rochester Hill in 1731. During the Revolutionary War soldiers trained here. Today the common is a playground, popular walking spot, home to several monuments, and the site of summer concerts.

The Bandstand was first erected in 1914 by Miles Duston and his sons at a cost of \$500. It was restored in 2001. The Rochester City Band organized by Alcide Bilodeau in 1896 held summer band concerts here for many years.

The original Soldier's Monument was dedicated in 1872 in memory of those who served in the Civil War. It had a 4 sided large granite base and a pillar on top. It soon stained and was found to be unsatisfactory. It was remodeled, and a bronze statue of a Soldier was added, and the names of Civil War soldiers were engraved on a granite block. This monument was rededicated in 1885. Civil war cannons that were around it were melted down in World War II for use in that war. A stone at the base commemorates Charles Melville, also known as James Ramsbottom, Rochester's only Medal of Honor recipient. He was honored for heroism on the USS Hartford at a battle in Mobile Bay on August 5, 1864. Although he was severely wounded he returned to his gun and continued to man his post.

In 1917 J. Frank Place presented the people of Rochester with a Flag and Liberty Pole which was erected here and dedicated in honor of Rochester's Revolutionary War Soldiers. Also on the Commons are The Veteran's Monument and the POW/MIA Monument and Flag.

At the end of the Commons in the area just beyond where Arthur's Store is now located, on the corner of Hancock and Church Streets, was St. Mary's Catholic Church. The first Catholic Church in Rochester, it was built in 1868 and used as a church until 1886 when a larger building was finished on Charles Street. It became a Catholic School in 1891 and was used until 1952 when a new school was built on Charles Street.

The Pound Street School on Upham Street, now the offices of New Hampshire Catholic Charities, was built in 1878 as a two story school at a cost of \$2558.61. In 1896 one teacher taught 42 students in grades one to three, and in 1897 one teacher taught 51 first and second graders in it. By 1899 it was in need of extensive repairs. In 1901 when the new high school on Wakefield Street was completed the students in this school were moved to Allen School which had been the high school. In 1910 the City Council passed a resolution to sell all vacant school buildings, and this school and its lot were sold to Thos. Baril for \$445. In 1915 Miss Lea Laverdiere, a retired teacher from Somersworth, bought it and gave it to the St. Charles Home. They used it for their school for more than 50 years.

St. Charles Children's Home is in the only remaining Wallace home. Built by Edwin Wallace in 1878, it was purchased by the Roman Catholic Bishop of Manchester in 1913 and converted into an orphanage. In 1915 about 150 children had a joyous Christmas holiday here thanks to donations from many local residents and businesses. In their first 50 years they housed 4000 children.

Cross South Main Street at the crosswalk. If you would like to visit Rochester's second oldest cemetery walk between the Hourihane-Cormier Real Estate Office and the Yankee Electric Building. When the meetinghouse was moved to the Commons they attempted to

build a cemetery next to it, but the ground there was too wet and it was moved to higher ground across the street. In this cemetery are interesting old gravestones and the final resting places of a number of prominent Rochester names, including McDuffee, Farrington, Wentworth, Dennett, and Hanson. Otherwise turn left to return up South Main Street.

Across from the Commons on South Main Street is the site of Rochester's first mail delivery. For about 50 years beginning in 1768 a post rider came through here on his route between the Seacoast and Wolfeboro. He carried letters and newspapers in his saddlebags. The New Hampshire Gazette cost 9 shillings per annum. Rochester's first official post office was established in an inn where the Methodist Church is now. Around the area of Linden Street Andrew Pierce had the biggest dry goods store in town in 1806. In the 1900s Hunt's Jenney Station, later a Citgo Station, was on the corner of Linden and South Main. South Main Street has had many gas stations and automobile dealerships.

Auto Zone is on a site formerly occupied by Hosmer's Motor Sales and Gerald E. Towle's Oldsmobile and Cadillac Sales and Service and the Bowlaway Bowling Lanes which featured candlepin bowling.

The Greek Revival/Italianate house at 116-118 South Main Street still contains original details in its box cornice features, distinctive brackets, and pendant drops. This may have been worker housing associated with Wallace Shoe.

Leo's Diner, built by the Worcester Lunch Cart Company in the traditional train car style with enameled sheet metal sides and rounded roof, containing wooden booths, marble counters, and stools was a popular eating spot located next to this house from 1942-1985. It was sold in 1988 and moved to Salem. It was one of the last diners in NH.

From here to Columbus Avenue is the site of the Wallace Shoe Factory, which began as a leather tanning business in 1854. By the Civil War they were making shoes. At its peak it covered 5 acres of ground and had two substantial brick buildings. They produced more than 1 million pairs of shoes a year. Later the business was owned by several different owners, including Maybury Shoe, the Rochester Shoe Corporation, and Al-gor Shoe Company which closed in 1989. After a fire in 1992 it was demolished.

The plaque on the corner of South Main and Columbus Avenue commemorates the Strafford County Court House built in Rochester in 1797. At that time there were only five counties in New Hampshire, and there were three county courthouses in Strafford County located in Dover, Rochester, and Gilmanton. In 1840 the state was divided into 10 counties, and Belknap and Carroll Counties were subdivided from Strafford County. One county seat was established at Dover and the County Court was established there. Beginning in 1798 the second floor was used for town offices, and the church meeting house was no longer used for town meetings. The town continued to use the court house building until it burned in 1849.

Cross Columbus Avenue at the Lights.

Service Credit Union, formerly the Kendall Real Estate office, was built c. 1971 with solid brick walls and glass panels. A small public park had been built here on land donated to the city by the B & M Railroad in 1915. For many years in the 1900s the Chamber of Commerce had an Information Booth here. Winter Street met South Main Street facing Academy Street until Columbus Avenue was built. On the other side of Winter Street was Farmer's Motor Sales. They sold Chevrolets. Later Signal Auto Supply was here.

Edgerly Funeral Home has been operated on this site by a member of the Edgerly family since 1839 when James Harvey Edgerly opened a carriage shop and an undertaking business. This building was erected in 2005-6.

The Colonial Revival **Gilman Professional Building** was built by Dr. Louis Gilman as his home and office in 1905. It became a professional building in 1951. **Rochester Town Hall** was located on this site from 1851 until about 1891 when Rochester became a city and began to rent office space.

The blue building behind the Gilman Building on Dreyer Way was built before 1871 as **Torrent Fire House #2** and was kept as a fire house until 1940, and was then used as a ward voting house. In 1969 Dr. David Dreyer opened his office here. His office closed in 2003, and it is now an apartment building. Wentworth Street was renamed Dreyer Way in the E-911 street renaming in 2005.

The **Off Price Store** is in the former Sears-Roebuck Catalog Store which was originally a Buick and Pontiac Automobile Showroom.

Continuing along South Main Street the **Bank of America** is located on the site of the fourth Wallace House, built by Albert Wallace in the late 1800s. It was home to the Rochester Lodge of Elks from 1926 to 1967 when it was razed and the bank, a contemporary office building with white glazed brick and plate glass windows, was built in its place.

The **62 South Main Street Condominiums** building is the former Telephone Exchange built in 1922 for the New England Telephone and Telegraph Company. In this Georgian Revival Building the operators at the switchboard asked, "Number, Please?" in the days before direct dialing. It has also been used for federal offices and as the School Administration Building.

The gold building visible behind the driveway is the **Springfield House** built around 1870 for Isaac Springfield who owned textile mills in East Rochester. It was located closer to the street and moved back when the telephone exchange building was built. It was the home of Eagle Hospital from 1918-22. Six nurses cared for patients in 20 beds here. Nurse Minnie Eagle and Dr. Walter Roberts started Eagle Hospital on Charles Street in 1916.

Across the street the brown house at 57-59 South Main was built around 1850 as the residence of Dr. Enoch Dow who examined Civil War recruits.

Portland Street, called Railroad Avenue until 1906, began at South Main Street. Across South Main Street was the City Hotel which operated as a hotel under several names from around 1867 until 1964 when it was demolished. In 1912 Carll's Garage and Livery Stable advertised, "Automobiles to rent by the hour, day, week, or month. Agents for steam and gasoline cars." They were located behind the hotel. Portland Street was extended to Charles Street in 1984.

Crossing Portland Street at the lights you come to

The Queen Anne style Barker Block, a commercial building built in the 1890s. For 50 years a millinery (hat) shop was one of the businesses in this building.

Across the street the Hair Excitement building was one of the first automobile showrooms in Rochester. In 1924 Mitchell's Garage sold Maxwells and Studebakers, and in 1941 they sold DeSotos and Plymouths. Later it was the SD Sundeen appliance sales building.

A Methodist Church has been here since 1825 when a 42' by 55' wooden building was built on the site of Barkers Tavern. This larger Italianate style building was built in 1868 using brick made locally. Rochester and Gonic were major brick producers making millions of bricks each year in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

The Avis Goodwin Community Health Center was the site of a bank from 1835-1992 when one of the bank mergers common in the 1990s led to its closing at this location. This sandstone building with its colonnaded façade was built in 1903 in the Beaux Arts style.

The Chamber of Commerce is in the Wentworth Block. Joseph Hanson built Strafford County's first brick store on this site in 1810. This building was built in 1880.

Turn right onto Hanson Street. This street was built by Dominicus Hanson through his backyard and garden in 1849 at the request of the Great Falls & Conway Railroad to give railroad passengers direct access to Central Square. In 1901 he had the street paved with 56,000 granite blocks at his own expense. When he died in 1907, at the age of 93, his son turned the street over to the city. This was a busy center of commerce with many Italianate style commercial buildings of various sizes conveniently located close to the railroad station. In 1914 Adeline Estes Wright wrote, "Hanson Street . . . although only about 500 feet in length, almost every kind of business and profession is to be found on this street: livery stable, blacksmith shop, restaurants, provision market, florist, undertaking rooms, bakeries, barber, tailor, harness shops, hardware, furniture, clothing, dry goods, millinery, music and stationery, grocery and fruit stores, pool and billiard rooms, dye house, boot and shoe blacking rooms, photographer's studio, real estate, dentist, doctor, and lawyer's offices, and the room occupied by the Hanson's American

Band . . . The Masonic Temple . . . The Post Office". Buildings remaining from those days include:

The **Foss and Came Insurance Building**, an Italianate style built c. 1855 with the gable facing the street. It features second story segmented windows and a third floor trefoil gable window.

Two buildings were lost to fire in 2006, including **Colby's Ol' Place** which began as a pop corn stand in 1919 and opened as a lunch room in 1923 famous for Mrs. Colby's pies.

The **Farrington Block** is a later Italianate style built on a larger scale as a rectangular commercial block of the late 19th century. It has a heavy bracketed cornice and elaborate window surrounds. A furniture store was located in this building for many years. An advertisement in 1895 said, "Save money by leaving a little in our furniture. Hanscane & McDuffee The largest Furniture Dealers in this vicinity. You can buy anything in the furniture line of us, and our prices are about right, judging from the orders. No watch in the world keeps up with time better than we do with Styles in Furniture. General Furnishing Undertakers, Special Attention given to Embalming. Orders for flowers and funeral designs filled immediately."

The **Neoclassical Masonic Temple** was built in 1911 on land donated to the Masons by Charles A. C. Hanson. Historically the Masons used the top two floors and rented commercial space at street level.

The **Robbins Auto Parts Store** built c. 1940 has been Lyman's Ford Garage, Rochester Motor Sales, and Bober Ford Sales.

The two 2 story wooden Italianate commercial buildings at 41 and 53 Hanson Street may be the earliest buildings still surviving on this street. They have had many uses, including being the home of the Salvation Army before they built on the corner of Signal and Autumn (now Olde Farm) Streets.

Small wooden buildings were constructed on Hanson Street as saloons for train passengers. During prohibition some became ice cream parlors.

The three story Georgian Revival style **Balomenas Block** at the end of the street was built c. 1925 by Costas Balomenos, a Greek immigrant to Rochester. Stores were on the first floor and apartments were above. City Councilor Sandra Keans grew up here.

At the end of Hanson Street looking ahead is the area where railroad lines converged and the site of **Union Station**, later called the Boston & Maine Station, where trains left and picked up passengers and freight from 1849 until the decline of the railroads following World War II. The property was sold in 1959 and in 1962 Jerry's Supermarket opened in part of the building currently there.

To the right the **Knights of Columbus Hall** on the corner of Portland Street was the Boston & Maine Freighthouse.

To the left where the blue office building and parking is now was the **Wrisley Hotel**. Facing the train station this 44 bedroom hotel and dining room opened in 1881 and burned in 1930. President Grover Cleveland stopped at the Wrisley on a campaign trip in New Hampshire.

Behind the **Wrisley Hotel** were the **Wrisley Stables**, later the city stables. Visitors getting off the train could hire a horse here. In 1936 the city leased it to the American Legion. In 1938 they rebuilt part of it for their meeting hall. It has also been a meeting hall for the Veterans of Foreign Wars, a dance studio, and a child care center. It is now the **Rochester Historical Society Museum**. Inside are the resources used to compile this walk:

Franklin McDuffee's History of Rochester

Florence Horne Smith's Images of Rochester

City reports, directories, maps

Walks and writings done by Florence Horne Smith and Violet Horne Dwyer

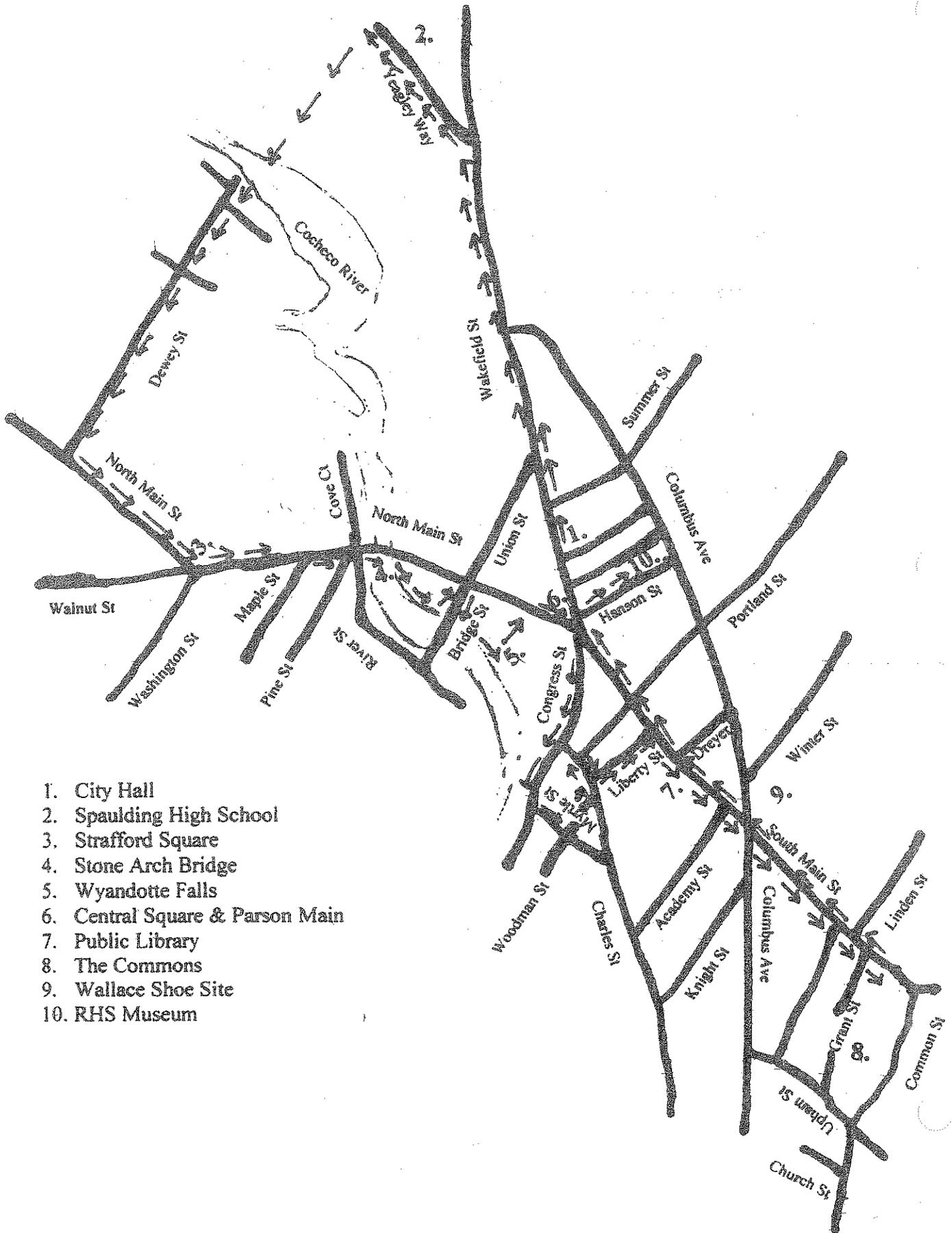
Scrapbooks and Photographs

Cultural Resources Survey, Inventory and Plan of Downtown Rochester by the NH Division of Historical Resources, March 1982

"Rochester Today with Glimpses of Its Past" by Adeline Estes Wright, 1914

Martha Fowler
Rochester Historical Society
April 2006

Rochester Historical Walk



1. City Hall
2. Spaulding High School
3. Strafford Square
4. Stone Arch Bridge
5. Wyandotte Falls
6. Central Square & Parson Main
7. Public Library
8. The Commons
9. Wallace Shoe Site
10. RHS Museum