

NOTEWORTHY NAMES

From A History of Rochester
1849-1999

The area which we know as Rochester has in the past been known by other names. The name "East Bridgewater" appears in land deeds around 1834 and seems to have been applied to the part of town directly across the Beaver River from Bridgewater. "Fairport" is used on a deed dated 1836, and probably referred to another part of the settlement, although by the next year, it seems to have been applied to the place as a whole. "Beaver Point" was an early name frequently used as a mailing address. The name "Rochester" is of uncertain origin; some give credit for the naming to Ovid Pinney. A more interesting account tells of Water Street merchant Mitchell Hammond, who sometime in the late 1830's had some goods which were bound for his store from Pittsburgh marked "Rochester," following a discussion with the river pilot. The designation caught on, and was thereafter used as the name of the town.

Rochester was incorporated by Act of Assembly, March 20, 1849.

THE REVEREND FRANCIS RENO 1758-1837

Francis Reno was the first known settler in Rochester, having built a log cabin in 1799 on land now occupied by Passavant Memorial Homes. He was ordained when he was 34 years old, and was a circuit pastor of the Episcopal Church, traveling on horseback through the district, holding services in log cabins, barns, and groves. He and his wife Lydia (Savours) had seven sons and two daughters. The Reno family is prominent in the early history of Rochester. Reno Street is named in their honor.

GENERAL ABNER LACOCK 1770-1837

Abner Lacock brought his family to this area from Virginia in 1796. He was, in that year, commissioned by the Governor of Pennsylvania as a Justice of the Peace for Pitt Township, Allegheny County, which later became part of the newly formed Beaver County. This made him the first Justice of the Peace in Beaver County. By the time he moved to Rochester in 1810, he had already served as the first representative to the State Legislature from Beaver County, had been appointed the first Associate Judge of Beaver County, had represented Allegheny, Beaver, and Butler Counties in the State Senate, and had been made a Brigadier General of the Pennsylvania Militia. In 1813, he was elected by the State Legislature to a six year term in the United States Senate. He was an active promoter of internal improvements in Pennsylvania, including the establishment of the public school system. He and his wife Hannah (Eddie) had eight children. Hannah managed their large estate while Abner was engaged in his public duties. To honor his surveying work on the canal connecting the Erie division of the Pennsylvania Canal with the Portsmouth and Ohio Canal, the first canal boat built west of the Allegheny Mountains was named the General Lacock. Lacock Cemetery, where he is interred, and Lacock Street are named after him.

MARCUS TULLIUS CICERO GOULD 1792-1860

Marcus Gould was born in Rome, New York. He was reared by an aunt, having been orphaned at an early age. He became a merchant, but lost his business as a result of a disastrous fall in prices following the War of 1812. He next became a student of stenography in Albany, New York, a skill which he practiced for most of the remainder of his life. He taught stenography and was the inventor of the Gould System of shorthand writing. He also invented the fountain pen. For many years, his ability was sought for the making of reports of speeches, including some by Daniel Webster and Henry Clay.

In 1832, he moved with his wife and three children to New Brighton, Pennsylvania, which was at that time a Quaker community. (He had earlier produced two publications in Philadelphia, espousing the belief of the Quaker Elias Hicks.) He became the close friend of the New Brighton industrialist, R. Townsend.

Marcus Gould had a vision of a great city located at the confluence of the Beaver and Ohio Rivers. In 1853 he moved to Rochester, and with Ovid Pinney, encouraged the settlement of the place. He traveled to New York and other places for this cause, and induced Hiram Walbridge of Philadelphia and John Thompson of Rhode Island, among others, to invest heavily in the Rochester land holdings of Ovid Pinney. He was the leading spirit in the organization of the Rochester Manufacturing Company and the Locomotive Works. He constructed a promotional map showing the land within a 100-mile radius of Rochester. The following is a quote from an earlier history of the area: "No man that lived here in those days left a greater impress on the place than Mr. Gould."

OVID PINNEY 1793-1875

Ovid Pinney was already a wealthy man when he came to Rochester in 1834. His business was the buying and selling of land, which he continued to pursue in this area. In 1853 he sold 407 lots and other tracts of land in Rochester and Moon Township. After he moved to Minnesota in the early 1850's, his influence continued in Rochester. Between 1854 and 1875, other Rochester lots of his ownership were sold. He deeded the Masonic Fraternity the land on which their building stands. He gave to the citizens of Rochester the land for their town park, and also contributed the sites of several Rochester churches.

Mr. Pinney was a sponsor of Rochester's incorporation in 1849. His home is the present location of the Rochester Lodge of the B.P.O.E. A Rochester street bears his name. His will provided for the care of orphans and the children of the poor in Beaver County, but was successfully contested by his heirs.

CAPTAIN JAMES AVERY SHOLES 1796-1875

James Avery Sholes came from a family of soldiers. His grandfather was a British soldier and his father served in both the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812. At the age of 25,

James Avery was commissioned a Captain of the Pennsylvania Militia in the district comprising Beaver, Butler, Crawford, Mercer, Erie, Venango, and Warren Counties. A short time later he was commissioned Lieutenant Colonel and then Colonel by Pennsylvania's Governor. He made Rochester his home when he was in his mid-30's. Although by trade a steamboat man on the Ohio River, he also held public office: Sheriff of Beaver County, Beaver County commissioner, and for the last 18 years of his life, Justice of the Peace of Rochester Borough.

JUDGE JOSEPH IRVIN 1797-1884

Judge Joseph Irvin, son of Joseph and Jane Irvin, came from Ireland, with his parents, to Bridgewater, Pennsylvania in 1799. Shortly thereafter, the family moved to what is today Rochester Township. He acquired the best education that the community of that day had to offer. His interest in farming induced him to buy a large tract of land for that purpose.

He and Samuel Moore became the first Justices of the Peace in Rochester in 1841. He was an assistant Judge of Beaver County for twelve years. It is told that he rode each day to his duties in Beaver in a wagon pulled by a yoke of oxen. He and his wife Eleanor (Carlin) had thirteen children. A son Matthew, dying of cholera, requested he be buried on his father's farm. This was the beginning of Irvin Cemetery. Another son, John C., owned land comprising much of the present day Second Ward. Irvin Avenue is named in honor of the Irvin family.

JEMUEL WOODRUFF 1804-1900

Jemuel Woodruff was born in Colebrook, Connecticut. He was associated with the Hitchcock Chair Company of Hitchcocksville, now Riverton, while living in that state. He came with his wife, Julia (Oatman,) to Rochester in 1832, having sold clocks door to door along the way. He opened a furniture factory here, in which he installed the first steam engine to be used for manufacturing in Rochester. He abandoned his business and its associated undertaking business in the mid-1800's to join the California gold rush. From 1877 until his death, he owned and operated a planing mill and lumber business in Rochester. At the time of his death, he had the distinction of being the oldest Freemason in the United States.

THE CAMP FAMILY 1804-PRESENT

The Camp family came from Germany in the early 1800's by sailing vessel, and later settled in Rochester. A brief biography follows of this family, believed to be the oldest continuing family in Rochester. Michael Camp, Sr. was born in Hanover, Germany in 1804, and with his brother John, came to the United States in 1832. About 1823 he married Barbara Schlesman, and they had ten children. Michael Camp, Sr. died in May, 1879. The eldest son of Michael, Sr. and Barbara Camp was Michael Camp, Jr., born in Germany in 1828. In his youth he learned the trade of brick molding and followed that occupation for some years.

Later he was the owner and manager of the Pavilion Hotel in Rochester. He served on Borough Council, and he and his wife were members of Grace Lutheran Church. They had one son, Henry Michael Camp, born May 12, 1853.

Henry M. Camp was one of the organizers of the Rochester Heat and Light Company, the Peoples Electric Street Railway Company, and the Ohio Bridge Company. (This company erected the first bridge crossing the Ohio River from Rochester to Monaca.) He was active in the Point Bottle Works, the Keystone Tumbler Company, and the Olive Stove Works. He was one of the organizers of the Beaver County Telephone Company, and was its general manager. Henry Camp married Tillie E. Schneider on May 15, 1879. They were members of the Grace Lutheran Church. Mr. Camp was church treasurer and a member of the building committee when the present church was built. He was a member and Past Master of Rochester Lodge No. 229 F.&A.M. Their children were Charles A. Camp and two daughters who died in infancy. Charles A. Camp was born in 1880. He was active in many affairs in Rochester, and married Edna Gordon. They had three children: Henry, Gordon, and Glenn. Charles Camp died in 1964.

J. Gordon Camp, born February 14, 1905, was the First Sergeant of Company B 110th Regiment at the New Brighton Armory. He started the Dry Cleaning business in Rochester which bears his name. Gordon married Zoa E. Schroeds, and their children are: James G., Jr., Shirley, and Michael D. Mr. Camp was the first Democratic Chairman of the Board of Beaver County Commissioners. During his tenure, many improvements were made, which included the Beaver County Geriatric Center, the East Rochester-Monaca Bridge, the Allencrest Detention Center, and many more. The Camps were members of Grace Lutheran Church, and Gordon was a member and Past Master of Rochester Lodge No. 229 F.&A.M. He was an avid aviator and polo player, and was killed while enroute to Harrisburg on May 12, 1961, when the plane he was piloting crashed in bad weather at Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

James Gordon Camp, Jr., born July 14, 1923, was a Second Lieutenant in the US Air Corps. Trained as a fighter pilot, he later piloted B24 bombers. He married Edith M. Powell on December 21, 1944 while in advanced training. After WWII ended, he continued to fly P47 Thunderbolt fighters for 14 years with the Pennsylvania Air National Guard. Upon the death of his father, Gordon Camp, he operated the dry cleaning business in Rochester. He was elected Burgess and later served as Mayor of Rochester for 23 years. During his tenure, he facilitated many improvements to the Borough including the New York Avenue overpass, the Junction Stretch bypass, the Rochester Plaza, and the Edwards and Camp Apartments. He later became the Chairman of the Board of Beaver County Commissioners, the second generation in his family to hold this position. Also during this time, the Beaver County Transit Authority, the Department of Engineering, and many other improvements were created. James and Edith Camp are members of Grace Lutheran Church, and their children are: Kristen Jo, James G.III, David Kent, and Charles A.II. Fraternally, Mr. Camp is a 55 year member of Rochester Lodge No. 229 F.&A.M.

WILLIAM LEAF 1808-1880

Born in England, William Leaf came to Rochester in 1832. He was a stone cutter by trade and had earlier worked on the Philadelphia Mint Building and Girard College. While in

Rochester, he was superintendent of the masonry work of the Pennsylvania Canal System, Susquehanna and Beaver division, and was for 25 years in charge of the construction of the stone work of the Pittsburgh, Chicago, and Fort Wayne Railroad. For several years, he built and managed Leaf House, a hotel at the corner of Shields and Maine STREETS. His home was at 335 Adams Street.

SOCRATES ADAMS RENO

Socrates Reno was a grandson of the Reverend Francis Reno, and a son of Savours and William (Evens) Reno. He was the owner and captain of a passenger boat, the St. Louis, which traveled on the Ohio River between Pittsburgh and St. Louis. After the Civil War, he left the river and opened a furniture store on Madison Street. The present owners of Batchelor Brothers Furniture trace their ancestry back to Socrates Reno. It is his home which still stands on Connecticut Avenue, between Adams Street and Jefferson Street.

HENRY GORDON 1838-1914

Upon the death of his father, Henry Gordon moved with his mother from Freedom to Rochester when he was seven years old. They eventually occupied a small house on Brighton Avenue, near a spring noted for its pure, cold water. Henry was self-supporting from the time he was nine years old, finding suitable occupation on the river. During the Civil War, he carried soldiers and supplies on the river for the government. Retiring after fifty years on the river, he later served as Rochester's Park Commissioner and the janitor of the Adams Street School. He and his wife, Anstis R. (Davis,) had three children.

OLIVER B. SHALLENBERGER 1860-1898

Oliver B. Shallenberger's early education was in the public schools of Rochester. He entered the Naval Academy at Annapolis for the customary 3 year course when he was seventeen years old. When he was 24, he retired from the Naval Service and thereafter devoted his attention to the study of electricity. He soon became the chief electrician of the Westinghouse Electric Company. In 1891, ill health compelled him to reduce his services to Westinghouse to that of consulting electrician, while continuing his research at his laboratory in Rochester. He is best known as the inventor of the electric light meter, but many other accomplishments in the field of electrical engineering are his. His Rochester home, on a rise overlooking Rhode Island Avenue, was for many years a Rochester landmark. It was torn down in the 1950's.

THE REVEREND JOSEPH H. BAUSMAN 1854-1924

Joseph Bausman is best known to residents of Rochester as the author of the definitive two volume history of Beaver County, published in 1904 as Part of Beaver County's Centennial Celebration. It was his desire to preserve for posterity a record of local

history. He came to Rochester in the mid-1870's, at which time he organized and was the first pastor of the locality's Congregational Church.

He had a reputation as a stimulating public speaker, often delivering addresses without notes, depending upon knowledge gleaned from his research for books and articles. He commuted over weekends between Rochester and Washington and Jefferson College in Washington, Pennsylvania, where he was a professor of English Language and Literature. At the time of his death, he was president of the Beaver County Historical Society. In 1975 his Rochester home, built under his supervision, was designated a Beaver County Historical landmark.

MAJOR GENERAL JOSEPH H. PENDLETON, U.S.M.C. 1860-1942

The man for whom Camp Pendleton in California is named was born in Rochester, son of Joseph and Martha (Cross) Pendleton. He graduated from Rochester High School in 1882, and afterwards was appointed to the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland. His military career included service under Admiral G. Dewey in the Philippines during the Spanish American War, and subsequently the commanding of Marine units throughout the world. During WWI he was Commandant of Paris Island Marine Base in South Carolina. He retired in 1924, one year following his promotion to Major General.

ARNOLD B. McMAHON 1917-1992

As the author and publisher of the three "Beaver County Albums," Arnold B. McMahon chronicled the life and times of Rochester and surrounding towns. Born February 16, 1917, the son of Lydia and Taylor McMahon, Arnold lived all his life in Rochester. A graduate of Rochester High School in 1935, he married Elma Steffens on December 9, 1937. Arnold and Elma had two children, Carlene McMahon Masson and William Taylor McMahon, four grandchildren and seven great grandchildren. Arnold was an electrical contractor by trade. He was active in the First Wesleyan Church and many historical societies. He died March 9, 1992