

25 years at the Landmark Society • 1981-2005

THE 2005 ANNUAL REPORT (JULY 1, 2004-JUNE 30, 2005) is dedicated to the last quarter century of the Landmark Society's 68-year history. These 25 years represent the last years of leadership of Billie Harrington, the Landmark Society's first executive director (1962-1984) and 22 years of leadership by Henry McCartney, who will leave the Landmark Society December 31, 2005. We had hoped to summarize these years, but it was impossible. Instead, we present here only the brightest lights.

1981-1985

As the 1980s dawned, the Landmark Society, founded in 1937, had become a substantial organization, operating the Campbell-Whittlesey and Stone-Tolan House Museums, managing a budget of over \$200,000, including monies from its Early Attic Treasures Shop in Pittsford, and making significant accomplishments, most notably in revitalizing Corn Hill and protecting East Avenue. Annually, we conducted a house tour as part of the Corn Hill Festival. Our other major event was the Stone-Tolan Country Fair. In 1984, Billie Harrington retired and Henry McCartney, then at the National Trust for Historic Preservation, was recruited as executive director. In addition, we:

- Launch survey of historic buildings in downtown Rochester.
- Make loans for the restoration of Penfield's Mud House.
- Applaud the adaptive reuse of Old City Hall and the Naval Armory's transformation into GEVA Theatre.
- Develop a reuse plan for the Free Academy Building.
- Work to turn the Ryder Estate into condominiums.
- Encourage Kodak to purchase St. Bernard's Seminary.
- Open St. Joseph's Park in the burned-out remains of St. Joseph's Church.
- Begin to rotate our House & Garden Tour to various historic places.
- Inherit the Mt. Hope Avenue properties of Landmark Society founder, Miss Helen Ellwanger, and open Ellwanger Garden to the public.
- Complete historic resource surveys of 12 Rochester neighborhoods, from the South Wedge to Edgerton.
- Write National Register nominations for buildings in the Central Business District, facilitating reuse of historic buildings using federal tax credits.

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Preservation Advice – Every Day

Can what you do every day be considered a highlight? For many more than 25 years, the Landmark Society staff has advised homeowners, given technical advice to building owners, testified at hearings, encouraged potential buyers of old buildings, listed buildings in the National Register, consulted with public agencies, and provided support to local preservation boards. We cannot list these thousands of actions – but they are all highlights. For over 25 years, every month or so we've been at the Rochester Preservation Board meeting, providing our opinion on proposed changes and frequently providing up-front and follow-up advice to applicants. Just for that board, that's more than 300 meetings and several thousand projects. Over time, the Landmark Society's preservation staff has had positive involvement in all of Rochester's preservation districts, in virtually every neighborhood, in a high percentage of downtown's older buildings and in communities throughout the Rochester region. So our brightest highlight is a better preserved, more vibrant Rochester region.



Henry McCartney,
Landmark Society executive
director, 1984-2005.

1986–1990

The Landmark Society is able to expand, initially by attracting grants and additional public support. Less dramatic, but the long-term key to success, will be a careful, constant attention to building the Landmark Society's membership and volunteer corps. In 20 years, the Society will experience a three-fold expansion in membership and donations. As the decade ends, a vital capital campaign is launched. In addition, we:

- Initiate annual Preservation Awards program to honor Rochester's best preservation projects and the people behind them.
- Hold first Regional Preservation Network Conference.
- Launch an effort to save Seneca Park Zoo from inappropriate expansion, eventually endorsing the "1991" plan.
- Make loan for Powers Building exterior renovations.
- Help save Stone Warehouse in last minute rescue.
- Continue multi-year effort to rescue Hoyt Potter House
- Receive Sloan House as a bequest and sell with protective covenant.
- Celebrate the Landmark Society's 50th anniversary with *Landmarks of the Week* column in the *Times-Union*.
- Begin a major survey of Wyoming County; also survey Henrietta, Perinton and Clarkson.
- Campaign to save Holy Redeemer Church.
- Spearhead efforts to save the Roycroft Inn, a National Historic Landmark. The Inn had been a National Trust Endangered Place and its revival received a National Trust Honor Award.
- Nominate Brown's Race to National Register as a City Preservation District.
- Serve as liaison with the state preservation office, through the Preservation Outreach Partnership from 1989 to 1993.
- Launch Pioneer Days as summer camp in 1987.
- Start Corn Hill Holiday Tour.
- Produce six-part series on local architecture with Greater Rochester Cablevision.

1991–1995

The success of the \$2 million dollar capital campaign allows the Landmark Society to address capital needs (particularly roofs!) at its properties while also helping weather a downturn in public support. Another major achievement is the transformation of the Hoyt-Potter House into Landmark Society headquarters. The Landmark Society's publishing efforts are launched as are several new Landmark events. During this period we:

- Publish *Images of History: Walking Tours of Downtown Rochester*.

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25 years of fine reading and listening



Photo, Andy Olenick

Since 1990, the Landmark Society has created what is undoubtedly the most significant collection of publications ever produced by a local historic preservation organization.

- *Images of History: Tours of Downtown Rochester*, 1991
- *The City of Frederick Douglass: Rochester's African-American People and Places*, by Eugene DuBois, 1994
- *200 Years of Rochester Architecture and Gardens*, by Richard Reisem, text. and Andy Olenick, photography, 1994
- *Rehab Rochester: A Sensible Guide for Old-House Maintenance, Repair and Rehabilitation*, by Steve Jordan, 1995
- *Landmarks in Music: Rochester's Jazz Collection CD*, 1998
- *Erie Canal Legacy*, by Richard Reisem, text, and Andy Olenick, photography, 2000
- *Songs of the Erie Canal CD*, 2000
- *Rochester Routes: Tours of Monroe County's Historic Places*, by Pat Braus, 2001
- *Ghost Walk: Chilling Tales from Rochester's Past*, by Cindy Boyer, 2004



From the Landmark's Society 2004 trip to Savannah, Georgia, a city with fabulous old houses and gardens. The Landmark Society offers day- and long-weekend trips to historic places all over the East Coast and beyond. See page 6.

- Complete Capital Campaign, allowing significant repairs to Landmark Society properties.
- Launch Antique Show on Stone-Tolan House grounds.
- Publish *200 Years of Rochester Architecture and Gardens*
- Nominate the former Hallman's Chevrolet as a city landmark (now Spot Coffee).
- Survey the towns of Greece and village of Webster.
- Launch research of African-American sites; publish *The City of Frederick Douglass: Rochester's African-American People and Places*.
- Print first *Cornerstone Summer Special*.
- Start Dining for Landmarks 1993.
- Help find funds to restore Olmsted parks after ice storm.
- Publish *Rochester Rehab: A Sensible Guide for Old-House Maintenance, Repair and Rehabilitation*.

1996–2000

The Landmark Society starts its most successful public-private partnership, The Home Room, that remains an acclaimed 'best practice' for encouraging city living and continues to be supported by the City of Rochester and the Greater Rochester Association of Realtors. We expand our book publishing and start entrepreneurial efforts that include the Rochester Map Tie and the Landmarks in Jazz CD. Soon we'll launch *The Landmark Collection* of heritage gifts for the Rochester region. We also:

- Sponsor *Walk the Walk: Encounters with Rochester's African-American Ancestors*.
- Offer first NYS-certified course for on preservation for Realtors.
- Establish Home Room, the City Living Resource Center.
- Tackle Preservation Issues – Hochstein School of Music, Gorsline building, Dr. Anthony Jordan's home, Eastman Dental Dispensary.
- Publish *Erie Canal Legacy*.
- Issue *Landmarks in Jazz CD, Songs of the Erie Canal CD*.
- Begin Saturday bus tours in conjunction with City Living Sundays.
- Debut Twilight Campfire Tales at Stone-Tolan House.
- Start hosting Western Erie Canal Heritage Corridor Planning Commission; region's Management Plan approved in 2005.
- Undertake surveys in Brockport, Gorham, Caledonia and Brighton.

Museums and Education

A big part of the Landmark Society for the last 25 years — actually for all 68 years — has been our house museums. The Landmark Society was founded to save what is now the Campbell-Whittlesey House Museum (built in 1835). We opened the 1805 Stone-Tolan House Museum in 1972 and our historic 1867 Ellwanger Garden in 1985. Every year these historic places are toured by adult visitors and provide tours and special programming for numerous school groups. The Stone-Tolan House also hosts the popular Pioneer Days Summer Camp. These unique buildings require constant care, occasional capital projects and significant conservation of their collections. Our grounds and gardens also require special attention.

Since 1984, we have brought the Built Environment Awareness Program to area schools. Since the start of the program, we have served over 23,000 students (276,000 instructional hours). To highlight Rochester's rich African-American heritage, we have since 1995 produced Walk the Walk, dramatic encounters with Rochester's African-American ancestors, serving up to 1,200 students and teachers per year.

Creating Today's Landmark Calendar

Creating a new event requires imagination and vision. As important, organizing and producing an annual event requires care and dedication and frequent changes to keep an event fresh and lively. With the hard work of volunteers, staff, and Trustees, the Landmark Society now produces a major community event in every season. Our largest event, in June, is the ever-popular House & Garden Tour that since 1985 has rotated every year to different historic districts. In July, we host the Landmark Society Antique Show on the grounds of the Stone-Tolan House Museum. The Landmark Society's newest event is September's Inside Downtown Tour. October features the Landmark Society's creepiest event, Ghost Walk, dramatizing true but somewhat scary stories from Rochester's past. A December highlight is the Corn Hill Holiday Tour. Spring features our Regional Preservation Conference. Based in one of Western New York's villages or small cities, the conference provides lots of preservation advice. And many times during the year, we host our Coffee Walks and organize group tours to historic places. These events raise funds, highlight historic resources, publicize our organization and partially quench our members' desire to experience wonderful architecture.

2001 – present

With other cultural institutions, the Landmark Society must deal with a very difficult financial environment, facing a significant loss of public support and reduced investment/interest income and more competition for donor support. We persevere, keeping our staff and programs intact, because of our loyal, supportive membership coupled with great staff and volunteer efforts to expand revenue generating activities: tours, events, publishing, heritage-gift sales, donations and more.

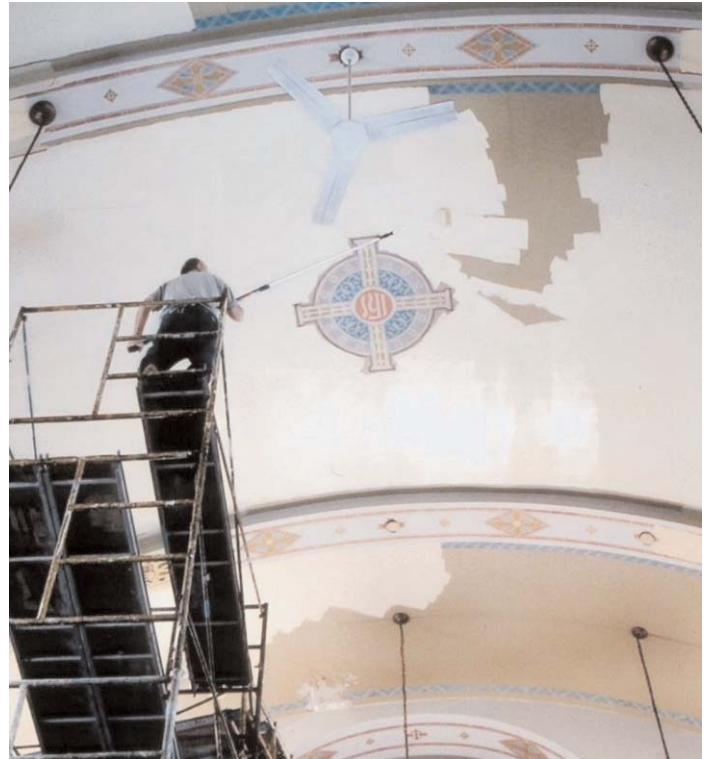
- Embroiled in the Save our Seneca Park campaign, raising public awareness of our Olmsted Parks, placing Seneca Park in the National Register, launching legislative and court battles and, eventually, endorsing an appropriate approach to expanding the zoo.
- Build and expand lively, loaded website.
- Publish *Rochester Routes: Tours of Monroe County's Historic Places*.
- Convene the Susan B. Anthony Collaborative, fostering numerous rehabilitations.
- List Maplewood neighborhood in the National Register of Historic Places.
- Work to improve the City Preservation Code and the state Building Code.
- Bring thousands to the city for Inside Downtown Tour.
- Designed, built and decorated by professionals, our Victorian, child-size playhouse is a popular raffle.
- Publish *Ghost Walk: Chilling Tales from Rochester's Past*.
- Create design guidelines for historic properties for the Rochester Preservation Board.

Landmark Society Tours (See photo, page 4.)

In the last 25 years, the Landmark Society has led hundreds of trips to places like:

- Charleston, South Carolina
- Nashville, Tennessee
- Providence, Rhode Island
- The Adirondacks
- Ottawa, Ontario
- Saratoga Springs
- Niagara-on-the Lake, Ontario
- Belvidere, Angelica, Auburn
- Historic Brighon
- Farmington and Clifton Springs
- Moravia and Cayuga County
- Nunda and Portage
- Historic Pittsford Farms
- New Orleans

Check your newsletter for updated information on our latest tours.



In 2004, Henry Swiatek received a Craftsman Award for his fabulous restoration work on churches throughout the area. He is shown here working on the ceiling of St. Stanislaus Church, which received a Special Achievement award that year. The congregation previously received Stewardship and Merit Awards. Since 1986, the Society's award program has honored hundreds for meritorious rehabilitation projects, outstanding stewardship, craftsmanship and significant individual achievement.



In an effort to promote Rochester's significant African-American heritage, we published *The City of Frederick Douglass*, followed by *Walk the Walk: Encounters with Rochester African-American Ancestors*, a performance program for school-age children and adults. (L-R) Eugene DuBois, *City of Frederick Douglass* author, Henry McCartney and Kay Jordan, the force behind the Landmark Society's African American heritage efforts.