

RECONNAISSANCE-LEVEL SURVEY OF THE
TOWN OF CANANDAIGUA, NEW YORK
PART I: HISTORIC CONTEXT STATEMENT



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Reconnaissance-Level Survey of the Town of Canandaigua, New York

Part I: Historic Context Statement

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June 2019

This project is funded by a grant from Preserve New York. The Preserve New York Grant Program of the Preservation League of New York State is made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.

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I. Introduction and Purpose

This Reconnaissance-Level Survey was initiated and sponsored by the Town of Canandaigua as part of its ongoing efforts to identify and raise awareness of local history and historic properties. The town's administrative coordinator Sarah Reynolds is the project manager; additional project guidance and management is provided by the town's Local History Team, which consists of co-chairs Saralinda Hooker and Town Historian Ray Henry and other volunteer members.

The Local History Team was created by the Citizens' Implementation Committee, whose purpose is to work toward the goals identified in the 2011 Update of the Comprehensive Plan of the Town of Canandaigua. The Team's charge includes addressing two of these goals:

- Goal 5 - to preserve local history and encourage the protection of historic sites;
- Goal 6 - to encourage public awareness of Canandaigua's rich local history.¹

This project is one of several initiatives the team has undertaken in pursuit of those goals.

For the past several decades, the Town of Canandaigua has experienced rapid growth and development, mainly in the form of new housing developments, new development along commercial corridors, and both subdivision and redevelopment of lakefront properties. This growth brings advantages but can also place historic properties at risk. Proactive preservation planning can help guide development so as to avoid unfortunate and irreversible losses, while also drawing attention to historic properties that present opportunities for developers to undertake sensitive rehabilitation. It can also prevent costly, unpleasant last-minute controversy, by establishing a common understanding of what is important before projects that threaten historic resources are proposed.

This reconnaissance-level survey is being conducted in two phases. This first-phase report consists of a chronological overview of town history in Section III, followed by an exploration of significant historic themes and related resource types in Section IV. Because historic resource surveys focus specifically on identifying extant historic resources, the purpose of this document is not to present an exhaustive account of every aspect of town history, but to create a targeted narrative that explains the broad patterns of development in the survey area that are reflected by extant historic properties.

The second phase will focus on creation of an *annotated property list*, which is an inventory of buildings, structures, objects, sites, and/or districts that are historically significant. The second phase will also include recommendations for next steps, such as potential nominations to the National Register, designation of local landmarks, educational outreach, or other actions that can help raise awareness of and/or protect historic resources. The inventory will be limited to extant properties and will not include archaeological sites or resources that have been demolished.

¹ Local History Team, Town of Canandaigua Website, <http://www.townofcanandaigua.org/page.asp?id=195>, accessed 4 April 2019.

II. Methodology

The methodology for research and analysis follows guidelines established by the National Register of Historic Places, the nationwide program for recognition of historic resources. In particular, National Register Bulletin 24, *Guidelines for Local Surveys: A Basis for Preservation Planning* provides helpful information about survey methodology and organization.

This first-phase report is based on primary and secondary source research conducted from August 2018 through May 2019. We began by meeting with representatives of the Town of Canandaigua and the Local History Team to garner their recommendations on research sources and relevant themes. The committee provided access to a collection of historic maps and images they had already collected and continued to supplement throughout the duration of the project. We met several times with Town Historian Ray Henry, who shared books, articles, and programs he had prepared, shared knowledge about important themes in town history based on his many years of researching and writing, and pointed out significant sites on maps and in person during preliminary driving tours. Research also included several days at the Ontario County Historical Society reviewing primary and secondary sources in their extensive collection, review of books written from 1851 through the present about town and county history, and research into specific topics using sources including historic newspapers, journal articles, and census records.

As part of preparation for the second phase, Town Assessor Christopher Lyon provided a database of properties with principal structures built in or before 1974. The date of 1974 was selected to encompass those properties that already are, or will soon be, 50 years old or older (the National Register and many local preservation programs have adopted a 50-year guideline as a way to establish historical perspective). In addition, Ray Henry provided a database of houses and/or barns in the town that are at least 100 years old. These databases will mainly be useful in the second phase when we identify specific properties; we used them in this phase as a way to keep track of information relevant to individual properties for future reference.

III. Historic Overview

This Historic Overview provides a generally chronological account of the origins and physical evolution of the town of Canandaigua, as this history informs the types and locations of historic resources in the town. Key themes that run throughout town history, and the types of resources associated with these themes, are addressed in more detail in Section IV: Agriculture, Community Planning and Development, Education, Recreation, and Transportation.

A. Geography and Natural Features

The town of Canandaigua is located at the center of Ontario County, situated in the Finger Lakes region of New York State. The town's boundaries relate to the original land divisions of the Phelps & Gorham Purchase, which divided the land into ranges and townships (see below); part of the east boundary is a line down the middle of Canandaigua Lake.

Canandaigua's topography reflects the influence of glacial activity in the Pleistocene Epoch, which began about two million years ago. During this period, glaciers filled pre-existing river valleys, transforming their profiles from a V shape (in cross-section) to a broader U-shape (Figure 1). When the glaciers finally retreated northward, starting about 19,000 years ago and ending some 11,000 years ago, the U-shaped troughs they left behind became the eleven narrow, north-south Finger Lakes. Canandaigua Lake is the third largest Finger Lake by volume and fourth largest by surface area. It extends about 16 miles long and averages about 1.1 miles wide.² North of the lake, terrain is level and rolling, with consistently high soil quality, as one travels south the terrain becomes more hilly, formed by the same glacial activity that created the Finger Lakes.

Canandaigua Lake, the town's most distinctive natural feature, was valuable to the early Native American and European-American residents as a source of fish as well as transportation. Beginning later in the nineteenth century, and continuing to today, year-round and seasonal residents and visitors also valued the lake for its beautiful scenery and as a place for recreation. An interesting feature of the lake is Squaw Island, a tiny island near the north end of the lake (Figures 3, 4). A longstanding legend held that Seneca women and children fled there during the Sullivan Expedition, but that story may not be accurate.³ Once much larger, the island is now

² W.H. McIntosh, *History of Ontario County, New York* (Philadelphia: Everts, Ensign & Everts, 1876), p. 36; Canandaigua Lake Watershed Council, *Comprehensive Update of the Canandaigua Lake Watershed Management Plan*, 2014, p. 9; Y.W. Isachsen et al., eds. *Geology of New York: A Simplified Account*, 2nd ed. (Albany: The New York State Geological Survey, New York State Museum, 2000); "Formation of the Finger Lakes," Ithaca, New York: Paleontological Research Institution, <https://priweb.org/index.php/education/education-projects-programs/earth-101/finger-lakes-geology/formation-of-the-finger-lakes>, accessed 2 January 2019.

³ "Squaw" is considered a culturally insensitive term, but remains the official name of the island. Town Historian Ray Henry has raised doubts about the legend of Seneca women fleeing to the island; see, for example, "Historically Significant Sites / Areas of the Town of Canandaigua," available online at https://web.archive.org/web/20140729073712/http://www.townofcanandaigua.org/doc_histy/historicallysignificantsitesinthetown.pdf. For more information on the island see Preston Pierce, *Small Wonder: Squaw Island, Canandaigua Lake* (Canandaigua: Ontario County Historical Society, 2003).

about one-fifth of an acre in area, and is a New York State Wildlife Management Area in part due to the unusual “water biscuit” formations found there.

Another historically important water feature is the Canandaigua Outlet, which flows north from the north end of Canandaigua Lake through Manchester and Phelps into Wayne County, where it eventually flows into the Erie Canal at Lyons. Prior to the construction of the Erie Canal, the Canandaigua Outlet was a tributary of the Clyde River. It was one of the routes by which European settlers arrived in Ontario and Wayne counties. Since the late nineteenth century the City of Canandaigua has controlled the flow of the outlet as a flood control measure; the City also controls the flow of a canal, known as the Feeder Canal, west of the outlet constructed in the early twentieth century to carry treated wastewater into the Outlet. The two channels merge north of County Route 46.⁴

The town of Canandaigua has many smaller watercourses, including over a hundred streams and small tributaries that feed the lake. Spring rain and melting snow travels into the lake, leading to higher lake levels in the spring than at other times of year.

The glaciers that shaped Canandaigua’s land and water features deposited soil consisting of a mix of clay, sand, and gravel. Overall, about three-quarters of the land in the town (including the city) is designated by the USDA’s Natural Resource Conservation Service as being of high quality for agriculture, including soil identified as “Prime Farmland” (32.5%), “Farmland of Statewide Importance” (22.1%), and “Prime Farmland if Drained” (20.9%). The largest swaths of high-quality farmland occur in the northern half of town, although the southern part of town, which has steeper and more varied topography, also has areas of excellent soil, interspersed more finely with areas classified as less ideal. Overall, Ontario County’s soils are identified as being among the best in the northeastern United States for agriculture.⁵

Canandaigua’s natural features proved highly significant to its settlement patterns and economy. For the Seneca, who had a village north of the lake (see below), and the European-American settlers who began arriving in the late 1780s, the north part of town was especially desirable for occupation and farming, although farms ultimately thrived throughout the town. Thanks to the productivity of the soil, agriculture has remained a cornerstone of the economy. As of 2016, approximately 41% of land in the town (14,670 acres) remained in active farmland, with another 4,450 acres consisting of old fields or successional shrubland that could be used for farming.⁶ The lake has also played a key role in the town’s history and development, providing sustenance, transportation, and recreational opportunities to residents and visitors.

⁴ Canandaigua Lake Watershed Council, pp. 10, 104.

⁵ LaBella Associates, *Town of Canandaigua Agricultural Enhancement Plan (Draft)*, Prepared for the Town of Canandaigua, 2016. Accessed online at <http://townofcanandaigua.org/documents/files/DRAFT%20Canandaigua%20Agricultural%20Enhancement%20Plan%20Sept%202016.pdf>, 15 November 2018; Cornell University Cooperative Extension, *Profile of Agriculture in Ontario County, NY*, accessed online at <http://cceontario.org/resources/profile-of-ontario-county-agriculture>, 15 November 2018.

⁶ La Bella Associates, p. 7.



Figure 1. Historic view of Canandaigua Lake facing south. Source: *West Lake Legacy*



Figure 2. Canandaigua Lake, aerial view from the north, early twentieth century. The south end of downtown Canandaigua is in the lower right corner. Source: *West Lake Legacy*.



Figure 3. Historic view facing east across the north end of the lake, with “Squaw Island” visible at right, and the City Pier jutting into the lake at center. Source: *West Lake Legacy*.



Figure 4. “Squaw Island.” Source: Historic postcard (eBay).



Figure 5. Historic view of downtown Canandaigua and Canandaigua Lake, copyright 1938, Rural Directories, Inc. Source: Ontario County Historical Society.

B. The First Residents of Canandaigua: The Seneca

Prior to the American Revolution, Canandaigua was part of the homeland of the Seneca, the westernmost of the nations that made up the Six Nations (the Haudenosaunee, or Iroquois League). Seneca legends trace their origins to Nundawao, now called South Hill, on the east side of Canandaigua Lake in the town of Middlesex.

The name “Canandaigua” is derived from a Seneca word that has been translated as “The Chosen Spot,” “The Chosen Place,” or “The Chosen Town,” referring to a significant Seneca village that was located in the town. A variety of spellings of Canandaigua can be found in historic sources and maps.

The exact location and origins of the Seneca village were subjects of some debate before being clarified in more recent scholarship. Remains of a village west of the present city of Canandaigua excavated in the 1930s showed evidence of two distinct periods of occupation, one prehistoric and one more recent, between which the site was abandoned. Archaeologists in the 1930s posited that the initial prehistoric occupants were a group scholars called the Owasco, who occupied the site by the year 1140 and were believed to have been unrelated to the Seneca. More recently, thanks to more advanced understanding of the evolution of Iroquois culture, the Owasco have been understood as ancestors of the Seneca.⁷

The village was occupied by the Seneca in 1779 when Major General John Sullivan, sent by George Washington on an expedition against the Iroquois who were then siding with the British, burned it and other settlements in the Finger Lakes. The site was never re-occupied. Most of the Seneca fled the area, but they did not disappear from the region entirely; in 1876 historian W.I. McIntosh noted:

Yearly they came to their old haunts to fish, and hunt, and watch that the whites made no infraction of the treaty to observe the sacred character of their burial-grounds; and not long since a few old squaws were seen in Canandaigua, where hundreds had been wont for many years annually to assemble.⁸

For years a sign marking the Seneca village site was located on Lakeshore Drive in the city of Canandaigua. In 2009 the sign, which had sat in storage for decades after having been removed when Lakeshore Drive was reconstructed, was restored and relocated to a site near the actual village, on the West Avenue Extension west of the city. The sign sits on the property of 5255 West Avenue Extension; the village site itself was across the street (5280 West Avenue Extension).

The village site on West Avenue Extension is the only known permanent Seneca site in the town of Canandaigua. The Seneca are believed to have occupied temporary, seasonal sites elsewhere

⁷ Ray Henry, interview, 24 October 2018; Ray Henry, *Memories of the Heart II* (Canandaigua: Ontario County Historical Society, 2013), pp. 1-8; Matthew Dennis, *Cultivating a Landscape of Peace: Iroquois-European Encounters in Seventeenth-Century America* (Cornell University Press, 1993), pp. 43-47.

⁸ McIntosh, p. 27.

in the town. Several major roads in Canandaigua originated as Seneca trails, and still follow a more or less similar alignment.



Figure 6. Historical marker on West Avenue Extension in the vicinity of the former Seneca village. Source: waymarking.com

C. The Creation of Ontario County and the Town of Canandaigua

Following the close of the American Revolution, both New York and Massachusetts claimed ownership of the “Genesee country,” encompassing all of what is now western New York, thanks to conflicting royal charters and treaties dating back to the early seventeenth century that bolstered both states’ claims.⁹

In 1786, representatives of the two states came to an agreement:

Massachusetts surrendered her claim to the government, sovereignty, and jurisdiction of the entire state. New York conceded to Massachusetts the right of pre-emption to the soil (subject to Indian title) for that part of the state lying west of the preemption line. That meant that Massachusetts had the right to buy the land from the Indians and could sell this right to individuals. If, however, Massachusetts sold the preemption right, the grantee had to have any treaty with the Indians confirmed by Massachusetts. Furthermore, when the land was purchased from the Indians – recorded in the office of New York’s secretary of state – it would become part of New York. The two state legislatures ratified the agreement and submitted it to Congress for approval.¹⁰

The “preemption line” as it was originally surveyed was somewhat irregular, running from the Pennsylvania border north, just west of Seneca Lake, and ending just west of Sodus Bay. This line was later found to have been surveyed erroneously as described below.

In 1787, Massachusetts sold the preemption right to over six million acres west of the preemption line, subject to the Indian title, to a group of investors including Nathaniel Gorham and Oliver Phelps. Phelps and Gorham thereupon negotiated with the Seneca to purchase over two million acres, extending from the preemption line approximately to the Genesee River. It is this area that is referred to as “The Phelps and Gorham Purchase” (see Map 1). The Seneca opted to retain the land west of the Genesee River for the time being.

Phelps and Gorham had the land surveyed and divided it for sale using a system of ranges and townships: ranges, which were numbered from east to west, were each about six miles wide and extended from the Pennsylvania line to Lake Ontario, while townships were generally six miles square and were numbered from south to north within each range. The town of Canandaigua today encompasses all of Township 10, Range 3, and part of Township 9, Range 3 (see Map 1). Phelps and Gorham reserved two townships for themselves: Township 10, Range 3, which encompasses the north part of the town of Canandaigua and the city of Canandaigua, and Township 9, Range 7, which is the town of Geneseo. They sold much of the remaining land to speculators, who often resold their land quickly. In 1788, Phelps and Gorham sold Township 9, Range 3 and two other townships (now Richmond and Bristol) to the Dighton Land Company, a

⁹ O. [Orasmus] Turner, *History of the Pioneer Settlement of Phelps and Gorham’s Purchase and Morris’ Reserve* (Rochester, NY: Erastus Darrow, 1851), 105-106.

¹⁰ Marian S. Henry, “The Phelps-Gorham Purchase,” *American Ancestors* (New England Genealogical Society), 25 February 2000. Accessed online at <https://web.archive.org/web/20140227102401/http://www.americanancestors.org/the-phelps-gorham-purchase/>, 25 March 2019.

group of investors from the town of Dighton, Massachusetts (see Community Planning and Development, Section IV-B, for more on the diverging development paths of the two townships that made up Canandaigua).

Phelps and Gorham initially selected the site of what is now Geneva as the principal village in their territory, but according to the first survey of the preemption line, Geneva was east of the line and thus not part of their purchase. They therefore selected the current site of the city of Canandaigua as the seat of their land office.¹¹

Due to lower-than-expected sales plus a change in the valuation of currency, Phelps and Gorham were unable to pay back the debt they had incurred in purchasing the land. They were obliged to sell lands they had not yet sold, making up about half of the original Phelps & Gorham Purchase, to Robert Morris in 1790. Canandaigua was not part of this sale. It was through this transaction that the Phelps & Gorham Purchase was resurveyed, and the error in the preemption line was discovered; the survey corrected the location of the line, and brought Geneva within the bounds of the Phelps & Gorham Purchase.¹²

Ontario County was initially part of Montgomery County. With the sudden influx of European-American settlers in the late 1780s, it became necessary to create a new county in the west part of the state. In January 1789, Ontario County was formally created, encompassing all the territory west of the preemption line from the Pennsylvania border to Lake Ontario. Canandaigua was selected as the county seat, and has remained so to the present. Its role as the county seat was crucial to the growth of both the town and village of Canandaigua, as “professional men, merchants, speculators and the ever attendant contingent of persons who are ready almost for anything, soon came to the town, and the result was that Canandaigua soon took a position at the head of the districts and afterward towns of the county.”¹³

Over the following three decades Ontario County was divided as other counties were set off; the county’s final boundaries were set in 1823 when Wayne and Yates counties were formed. The county that initially contained about 6,600,000 acres (10,300 square miles) thus was reduced to its present size of about 409,600 acres (640 square miles).¹⁴

Upon its creation in 1789, Ontario County was divided into “districts,” of which Canandaigua was one. In 1791, Canandaigua was reorganized as a town, encompassing Township 9 and Township 10 in the third range (see Map 2). There was no distinction between town and village at that time; there was one administrative entity until 1815, when the village was created. (For clarity, however, the hamlet that would become the city of Canandaigua will be referred to in this report as “the village” in describing the entire time period from 1789 to 1913, when the village became a city.) The size of the town was reduced in 1824 when a portion of Township 9 east of the lake was ceded to Gorham. Since then there have been no changes to the boundaries of the town, with the exception of the annexation of the present site of the Canandaigua Academy (completed in 1991) to the city.

¹¹ George S. Conover, ed. *History of Ontario County, New York* (Syracuse: D. Mason & Co., 1893), p. 200.

¹² Turner, pp. 246-247.

¹³ Conover, p. 203.

¹⁴ Conover, p. 113.

D. Canandaigua in the Pioneer Era, 1788-1820s

Oliver Phelps moved to Canandaigua and was directly involved in encouraging the settlement's growth. Nathaniel Gorham never lived in Canandaigua, although his son did. Phelps actively promoted his tract to New Englanders, even "[going] so far as to underwrite tours of his Upstate landholdings for men he deemed influential in western Massachusetts in the hope that upon their return home these men would heap praise on Phelps's land and thus stimulate migration and land sales."¹⁵ He sponsored and arranged for improvements to the future village with the intention of securing its future as the center of economic, governmental, and social activity for the surrounding town and greater region.

Phelps designed the street layout of downtown Canandaigua with growth and elegance in mind: Main Street was unusually broad and was oriented in relation to the topography rather than north-south. This alignment took advantage of a natural rise to give Main Street property owners beautiful views toward the lake, and also directed Main Street away from the marshy area in the southeast part of the village. The orientation of Main Street anchored the rest of the plan of streets and lots in Township 10. Township 9, the southern part of the town, was divided into lots along a regular north-south grid consistent with surrounding towns. Phelps also focused early attention on establishing roads within and beyond Canandaigua, both to help new residents get to the town and to enable those who moved there to travel to important sites such as mills and to transport their goods to markets (see Community Planning and Development, Section IV-B, Transportation, Section IV-A, and Map 2).

Ontario County, including Canandaigua, experienced a rapid increase in population starting around 1790 as newcomers, attracted by the region's vast potential for agriculture, bought farms and established their homes in what was briefly the western frontier. This first wave of settlement lasted until about 1820, by which point in Canandaigua, as in the rest of western New York, all of the lands considered suitable for agriculture had been purchased and the process of clearing and farming the land was well underway.¹⁶

The pattern of growth in the town of Canandaigua during this period was described succinctly in the 1893 *History of Ontario County*:

Although it is well known that the settlement of this town began in 1788 and 1789, it is quite difficult to determine just when pioneership ceased, and equally difficult to ascertain the names of persons and families who are entitled to mention in that connection. However, we may state that early settlements in the town began in the village and rapidly extended therefrom in almost every direction until the lands were well occupied and put under cultivation.¹⁷

Several hamlets became centers of settlement. The village of Canandaigua itself began as an unincorporated hamlet; it was not incorporated as an entity separate from the town until 1815.

¹⁵ James W. Darlington, "Peopling the Post-Revolutionary New York Frontier," *New York History* 74, no. 4 (October 1993), p. 348.

¹⁶ Darlington, p. 346.

¹⁷ Conover, p. 202.

Centerfield and Cheshire were the other sizable hamlets that emerged in the first few decades of settlement (see Community Planning and Development, Section IV-B, for more on these and other hamlets).

Outside the village of Canandaigua, the town's European-American settlers were almost exclusively farmers attracted by the town's rich soil; they promptly began clearing their tracts and growing crops. Some village residents cultivated their properties as well the first documented wheat crop in Ontario County was harvested in 1790 from a site on Main Street in the village of Canandaigua on a property owned by Abner Barlow.¹⁸ Wheat and corn quickly became the staple crops of the first residents. Early farmers also grew rye, hops, grapes, and fruit, and raised merino sheep as well as dairy cows (see Agriculture, Section IV-C).¹⁹

Although the soil was excellent, particularly in the rolling terrain in Township 10 (the north part of town), farmers' prospects were hampered by the high cost of transportation. The cost to transport their produce to markets either by rudimentary roads or by a complex water route effectively erased whatever profit they could hope to make. The road network both within Canandaigua and across the region and state developed slowly in the 1790s and into the first two decades of the nineteenth century. The construction of the Erie Canal in the 1820s and the railroad network in the 1840s finally provided the regional and national links that allowed Canandaigua, like the rest of western New York, to move from a subsistence-based economy to a market-based one where farmers had access to a much larger customer base that supported a broader range of agricultural options (see Transportation, Section IV-A).

Just as agriculture was initially focused on providing for the immediate needs of the region, so too did manufacturing in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Industrial facilities in the pioneer era were limited to those that processed raw materials into food and building materials residents needed: sawmills, grist mills, lime kilns, and brickyards. Residents of Canandaigua had access to a sawmill built in the early 1790s just west of the town line on Mud Creek, in the northeast part of the town of East Bloomfield.²⁰ Other mills were also built along Mud Creek during this era. East of town, the Canandaigua Outlet also powered pioneer-era mills in Hopewell and Manchester. Within the town of Canandaigua, the 1852 map (Map 11a-c) shows a grist mill on Menteth Creek just west of Menteth Point, a saw mill on Beaver Creek, and a saw mill south of Cheshire (Figure 7). Goods were also produced at home; for example, families wove much of the cloth they needed at in-home looms.²¹

¹⁸ Although McIntosh wrote that Barlow's property was on the west side of Main Street, where the YMCA is today, the 1794 map of village lots (Map 4) shows Barlow's property was on the east side of Main Street opposite the present YMCA, on or near the County Courthouse grounds. McIntosh, pp. 47-48.

¹⁹ McIntosh, pp. 47-48; Charles F. Milliken, *A History of Ontario County, New York, and Its People* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1911), pp. 221-222.

²⁰ Conover, p. 203. Conover states that the proprietors of the mill, Judge Augustus Porter and General John Fellows, made an agreement to build the sawmill during the winter of 1789-1790, "which was in due time accomplished."

²¹ McIntosh, p. 59.



Figure 7. Among the mill locations shown on the 1852 map (Map 11) are a Grist mill ("G.M.") at Menteth Point, saw mill "S.M." just south of "Cheshire Village," and another saw mill on Beaver Creek, north of present-day Yerkes Road.

E. Canandaigua in the Rail and Steamboat Era, 1830s-1890s

The opening of the Erie Canal in 1825 launched an era of economic and population growth for upstate New York, but without direct canal access, Canandaigua was at a competitive disadvantage compared to communities along the waterway's route. It was the arrival of the railroad in the 1840s that proved transformational for Canandaigua, linking both village and town to markets around the country (see Transportation, Section IV-A).

Steamboat service along Canandaigua Lake linked the railroad to numerous lakefront sites in the south part of town (Figure 8). Steamboat companies flourished in the second half of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, shuttling people, produce, mail and more to and from sites along the lake between the City Pier at the north end of the lake (in the village of Canandaigua) and Woodville at the south end (in the town of South Bristol). The steamboats provided an efficient way for farmers to transport their harvests to the railroad. They also fostered the development of recreational sites along the lake, including family cottages, hotels, and summer camps (see Transportation, Section IV-A, and Recreation, Section IV-E).

The railroad encouraged industrial development, and several industrial facilities prospered in the village of Canandaigua, but neither the village nor the town was a prominent manufacturing locale in the nineteenth century, as observed by George Conover in his 1893 *History of Ontario County*:

With much truth it may be said that the village of Canandaigua has never occupied an advanced position among the county seats of the State in respect to the number of its manufacturing interests. Indeed it has been asserted that during the early history of the village there was much direct opposition to encouraging manufactures in the community and that many prominent and wealthy families were induced to come to Canandaigua on the strength of representations assuring them that they should not be annoyed by the presence of large factories. However much of truth there may have been in this assertion is now unimportant, but it is a fact that manufacturing has never been prominent in this village.²²

Canandaigua was not devoid of industrial facilities in the nineteenth century; in addition to mills located in both the village and the town, the village had the prosperous McKechnie brewery and a number of small-scale industries, including establishments that produced cider and vinegar, plows and other metal implements, window sash and blinds, and wagon wheels.²³ There was also a spoke factory in the hamlet of Cheshire.

As Conover was writing in the early 1890s, Canandaigua was attracting new industries, most notably the Lisk Company, which moved to a site along the railroad tracks in the village in 1892. Just north of the village line, the New York Hydraulic Pressed Brick Company was established in 1893 to take advantage of a local clay supply. The Pressed Brick Company was located on what was then Collins Road, now Brickyard Road, a site that offered excellent railroad access

²² Conover, p. 242.

²³ Catherine Hayes, "General location, good transportation brought many industries to Canandaigua in early days," *Daily Messenger*, 9 December 1947.

(Figure 9). The company operated for a couple of decades. Buildings associated with this company do not survive; Artisan Meats is located on the same site today but in a modern building. This general area immediately north of the village became a more heavily developed industrial and commercial area in the mid to late twentieth century.

Social welfare institutions were also located mainly in the village in the nineteenth century, with the exception of the Ontario Orphan Asylum. This organization was established in 1863 to care for orphans, particularly children who had lost one or both parents in the Civil War, and was located at the corner of Main Street and North Street just outside the village (Figure 10). The organization's name was changed to the Ontario Children's Home in 1931, but it operated for only two more years, closing in 1933 when the county discontinued the practice of housing children at the institution in favor of placing them in private homes.²⁴

The growth in industry and commerce in the village of Canandaigua was reflected in its population growth, from about 3,528 village residents in 1840 to 6,151 in 1900. The town, meanwhile, saw a modest decline in population during the same period, from 2,165 in 1850 to 2,133 in 1900. This decline in population at the end of the century was related to increases in efficiency in agriculture, such that tasks that were labor-intensive in the first half of the nineteenth century required far fewer hours to complete by the turn of the century. At the same time, rural regions across the state were losing population to industrializing urban areas with better employment opportunities, as well as to migration of those looking to start a new farm in the newly available midwestern states.



Figure 8. Source: Historic postcard. The steamboat era began in the early nineteenth century, and contributed to the rise in popularity of lakefront recreation.

²⁴ "Ontario Children's Home," 1982, pamphlet at Ontario County Historical Society; and Nancy Yacci, *Around Canandaigua* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 1996), p. 88.



Figure 9. New York Hydraulic Pressed Brick Company, Brickyard Road. Source: MP Now / Town of Canandaigua.



Figure 10. Ontario County Orphan Asylum, Main and North streets. Source: *Around Canandaigua*.

F. Early Twentieth-Century Canandaigua, 1900s-1940s

During the first few decades of the twentieth century, town population remained fairly stable at around 2,000 residents, while the population of the village climbed steadily. In January 1913, the citizens of the village of Canandaigua voted in favor of becoming a city; the change in status became official in April of that year when the governor signed the bill that formally created the city. This change reflected the growth and sophistication the former village had already achieved in the railroad era as a transportation hub and county seat.

While the newly incorporated city was developing a more diversified mix of shops and industries, the surrounding town of Canandaigua remained overwhelmingly agricultural, with many farms remaining in the ownership of the same families that had first arrived a century earlier. Wheat, grapes, and other fruit were important crops; many farmers raised sheep and dairy cows as well. Farmers continued to steadily improve their methods, keeping up with advances as new technology and methods became available. Electrification and mechanization brought many changes, although changes and upgrades were gradual; for example, Don Outhouse was still using horse-powered farm equipment in the 1940s.²⁵ Some parts of Canandaigua did not receive electrical service until the 1930s. The hamlet of Cheshire continued to serve as the main location outside the city where farm families could shop, attend church, and gather for social events (see discussion of the Academy Grange, below).

The advent of widespread automobile ownership began to affect farmers and other residents of Canandaigua by about the mid-1910s. Canandaigua had been a leader in road infrastructure improvements since the 1890s, pioneering new ways to finance and implement road work that made roads safer and more reliable (see Transportation, Section IV-A). By the 1930s, automobiles and trucks had largely supplanted the railroad and steamboats for passenger and freight traffic. As more vacationers traveled by car, new types of auto-oriented attractions and lodging establishments catered to their new traveling style. The lakefront in the village became the focal point of a tourist-oriented corridor that extended into the town along present-day Lakeshore Drive and into the adjacent town of Hopewell along Routes 5 & 20 (see Recreation, Section IV-E).

In 1930, the Federal Board of Hospitalization selected Canandaigua as the site of a new Veterans Administration hospital, to focus on mental health care (Figure 13). The selection was considered a major victory for Canandaigua, as the hospital was projected to bring 240 permanent jobs and between 250 and 450 construction jobs at a time when Canandaigua was feeling the effects of the Great Depression. In 1931, the government purchased the 118-acre Sonnenberg estate, one of the residences of Frederick and Mary Clark Thompson, including the mansion and extensive gardens, plus over 300 acres of adjacent property, and began construction of the hospital campus on part of the estate.²⁶ The hospital opened in 1933 with 202 staff and 468 beds, and was expanded in the 1930s and 1940s. The 461-acre hospital campus originally

²⁵ Ray Henry, *Memories of the Heart: An Oral History of the Town of Canandaigua – 1900 to 1950* (Canandaigua: Ontario County Historical Society, 2006), p. 54.

²⁶ Fifty acres of the original estate, including the mansion and formal gardens, were transferred to a nonprofit association in 1972 that operated the house and gardens as a museum; the property was purchased by New York State in 2006 as a state historic park.

included a farm where veterans worked as part of their medical treatment; the campus was later reduced in size to 123 acres. Situated adjacent to the city line on property that was recently annexed by the City of Canandaigua, the VA Hospital became the county's leading employer. Over 1,000 people worked at the campus by 1959. As of 2013, the hospital employed 1,269 people.²⁷

After World War II, as veterans' health care systems changed, the focus of the campus shifted to outpatient care. Since 1995 the Canandaigua VA Hospital has operated a part of a regional network of veterans' health care facilities offering primarily outpatient clinics. The number of beds at the hospital was reduced from 750 in 1990 to 200 in 2000.²⁸

The VA Hospital was responsible for a sudden population increase in the town. Having dipped from 2,133 residents in 1900 to 1,938 in 1930, the population jumped to 3,083 in 1940. Over a thousand of the 1940 residents listed in the census were patients in the hospital; had these patients not been included in the count, the town's population would have declined slightly between 1930 and 1940.



Figure 11. Roseland Park in the village (now city) of Canandaigua anchored a growing auto-oriented tourist corridor at the north end of the lake. Historic postcard.

²⁷ For more on the hospital's history, see *Canandaigua Veterans Administration Hospital*, National Register Nomination, 2012. Additional information from "Forecast '59," *The Geneva Times*, 21 January 1959, and *City of Canandaigua Comprehensive Plan 2013 Update*, <https://www.canandaiguanewyork.gov/?SEC=F85005EC-0BBF-4471-9D27-E99511A874C9>.

²⁸ *Canandaigua Veterans Administration Hospital*, National Register nomination, Section 8, pp. 41-42.



Figure 12. View south on West Lake Road around the turn of the twentieth century. Historic postcard.



Figure 13. Canandaigua Veterans Hospital. Historic postcard.

G. Canandaigua in the Mid- to Late Twentieth Century

In the mid- to late twentieth century, Canandaigua became increasingly tied to Rochester, as a bedroom community and recreational destination. While much of the town remained agricultural, a dramatic increase in population in the second half of the century was reflected in the development of new housing along existing roads and in new subdivisions. New lakefront development took several forms. Existing summer houses were winterized for year-round use, enlarged, or demolished and replaced; meanwhile infill construction on new waterfront sites increased density along the lake shore.

During this time period, trucking replaced the railroad as the main method of transporting agricultural produce and other goods. This shift away from the primacy of the railroad meant that Canandaigua's railroad connections no longer provided the competitive advantage they had previously offered. Passenger rail service to Canandaigua ceased in 1958, followed by the abandonment of the Penn Central line in 1977. Canandaigua retains limited railroad service through the Finger Lakes Railway, a privately owned, Geneva-based short line railroad that links a small number of manufacturers in the Finger Lakes region to the CSX, Norfolk Southern, and New York Susquehanna railroads. Operating on the former New York Central tracks through the town and city since 1995, the Finger Lakes Railway provides freight shipping services to the cluster of industrial sites just north of the city line.

The development of the Interstate Highway System in the 1950s-60s facilitated nationwide truck traffic, enabling regions in the southern and western states with longer growing seasons and low labor costs to supply produce year-round to northern and eastern markets. Small-scale farms in the northern and eastern states found it difficult to compete with the massive agricultural operations that developed in other parts of the country. An array of other challenges also contributed to a decline in the number of farms in Canandaigua, as described in Section IV-C, Agriculture.

Although the number of farms and farmers declined in Canandaigua and nationwide in the second half of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first, the town's population as a whole more than tripled between 1940 and 2010. Town population hit a new high of 3,083 residents in 1940 (fueled by the opening of the VA Hospital as noted above) and has continued to climb since then, reaching 10,020 residents in 2010. The population of the city of Canandaigua grew more gradually over the same period, from 8,321 residents in 1940 to 10,545 in 2010.

In addition to new housing, commercial areas in the town grew, with the construction of Parkway Plaza along the newly constructed Route 5 & 20 Bypass in the city marking the start of suburban-style development within and outside the city's perimeter. Route 332 north of the city, also attracted auto-oriented commercial development in the second half of the twentieth and into the twenty-first, as it became a major commuting thoroughfare linking Canandaigua to the New York State Thruway and ultimately to Rochester (see Section IV-A, Transportation).

IV. Historic Themes and Resource Types

This section provides more detailed contextual information about major themes in Canandaigua's history that affect the types and geographic distribution of historic resources likely to be found in the town.

A. Transportation

Evolving modes of transportation and related infrastructure have played a significant role in shaping the development and physical character of the town of Canandaigua. The lack of reliable, cost-effective transportation routes was a hindrance to European-Americans who arrived near the turn of the eighteenth century, but over the following two centuries the town's strengthening transportation network contributed to its prosperity and growth.

Early Roads

When Phelps and Gorham chose the north end of Canandaigua Lake as their tract's primary village site, Seneca trails crisscrossed the area. These narrow foot paths could not accommodate wagon traffic. Many of the settlers who arrived in the first few years after the Phelps & Gorham Purchase thus came by boat, traveling a route that began at the Mohawk River and eventually led to a landing site on the Canandaigua Outlet in present-day Manchester. One of Oliver Phelps's first priorities was to lay out roads to facilitate travel to and within the territory. The first road he laid out led from Flint Creek in the town of Seneca directly west to Canandaigua Lake, closely following a Seneca trail, and connecting to a "rude road" previously opened from Geneva to the same point on Flint Creek. This road eventually became part of Routes 5 & 20; Lakeshore Drive generally follows the historic route of this eastern approach to the city of Canandaigua (the present route of 5 & 20 both east and west of downtown is the result of twentieth-century bypass projects, described below). Another priority for Phelps was to open a road from the village site to the landing site at Manchester, so that settlers arriving by water could then go on by road to Canandaigua. This road, corresponding to today's Route 21N between the city of Canandaigua and the village of Manchester, also generally followed a Seneca trail.²⁹

In the early 1790s, the road from Geneva (Routes 5 & 20 / Lakeshore Drive) was a rough path, much of it cleared by newcomers as they traveled west, and barely passable in spring or fall. The 1794 survey (Map 4) shows the road to Manchester as an improved road, but dotted lines used to depict the road to Geneva suggests that road was still in a rudimentary state of development. In 1794, New York State authorized construction of a public road from Utica to Canandaigua, part of which corresponded to Phelps's road; this came to be known as the State Road, the Great Genesee Road, or, later, the Seneca Turnpike. This significant public works project improved the trail to a 20-foot-wide, graded road with a gravel surface. In 1797 state lotteries were held to raise additional funding for completion of the road across the entire state.³⁰ With the completion of improvements to the State Road, the first stagecoach service reached Geneva in 1797; a line between Albany and Canandaigua began running weekly in 1804. Canandaigua served as an

²⁹ Irving W. Coates to Dr. J.H. Pratt, 1 July 1901, Ephemera Collection, Ontario County Historical Society.

³⁰ Conover, pp. 202-203; Barbara S. Rivette, "Genesee Road," in Peter Eisenstadt, ed., *The Encyclopedia of New York State* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2005), 631.

important hub of multiple stagecoach lines until the railroad overtook the stagecoaches as the fastest, most reliable form of year-round transportation.³¹

Much of the responsibility for creating roads within the town fell to the settlers themselves. Records of town meetings in the early 1790s show that the creation of roads was a major topic of discussion, with four road supervisors overseeing the work of laying out roads connecting major points in the town such as mills and farmsteads, and connecting those major points back to the growing hamlet at the north end of the lake.

Investors based in Canandaigua and Geneva were among the local promoters of the construction of turnpikes, privately financed toll roads that crisscrossed the state in the early nineteenth century. Turnpike projects undertaken in Canandaigua included a road from Canandaigua to Bath approved in 1802; a road from Canandaigua to Pultneyville, begun in 1810; and a road from Canandaigua to Rochester, begun in 1816.³² The “mania for speculation in the construction of roads” proved a poor investment for the speculators, but a great long-term benefit for the communities.³³

Historic maps from the early nineteenth century depict the progress of road development (see Maps 6-11). By 1839, recognizable roads include those that are now North Bloomfield Road, Macedon Road, Route 5 & 20, Route 32, West Lake Road, Route 364, Route 4, Route 46, and Route 332, among others. Roads in the Cheshire and Academy areas are difficult to make out on this map (Map 9). By the mid-1850s, most of the major roads in use today were in place (Map 11).

The town’s developing road network attracted a handful of transportation-related businesses. An early entrepreneur in the northeast part of town, near the head of the lake on the State Road, was Elihu Tupper, who “opened a tavern, acquired a three-horse team and a wagon, and made journeys to and from Albany with grain and goods. During his absence his wife looked to the interests of the tavern.”³⁴ In his 1876 *History of Ontario County*, McIntosh mentions a number of other taverns, including the Wilder Tavern, still extant as a private house at 5648 County Road 30 (North Bloomfield Road), as well as taverns in Cheshire, Academy, and Tichenor Point.

The Erie Canal and the Railroads

The opening of the Erie Canal by stages in the 1820s, culminating in the opening of the entire route in 1825, launched an era of economic and population growth for upstate New York. The canal ran through Wayne and Monroe counties, north of Canandaigua; the hamlet of Port Gibson in the town of Manchester is the only community with any canal frontage in Ontario County. Towns and villages along the canal’s route experienced immediate, rapid growth. In Canandaigua, by contrast, the lack of direct canal access led to “a dormant period which lasted

³¹ Richard F. Palmer, “Canandaigua: A Stagecoach Town,” *Crooked Lake Review*, September 1992.

³² The Canandaigua to Rochester route begun in 1816 does not seem to have corresponded to present-day Route 332, as no road resembling that alignment appears on historic maps as late as 1839. The 1852 map does show a road similar to Route 332.

³³ McIntosh, p. 55.

³⁴ McIntosh, p. 115.

until the mid-1850s” as growth was outstripped by that in the towns and villages along the canal’s route.³⁵

The arrival of the railroad had a more direct positive impact on Canandaigua. The first railroad in town was the Auburn and Rochester Railroad, which was promoted by Canandaigua residents Oliver Phelps III, Francis Granger, and Henry Gibson, among others, all of whom recognized the tremendous potential of this new transportation technology. The Auburn and Rochester was authorized in 1836; ground was broken in 1838, and in 1840 the line began service between Canandaigua and Rochester. Other early railroad lines included the Canandaigua and Corning (incorporated 1845, partially opened in 1851), the Canandaigua and Niagara Falls (organized in 1851; completed to Niagara Falls in 1853; commonly known as the “Peanut Branch”), and the Northern Central, which connected to Canandaigua by 1858 and linked to the coal mines of Pennsylvania and south to Washington, D.C. The history of railroad mergers, takeovers, bankruptcies, and reorganizations is complex, but for Canandaigua, the end result was that in the second half of the nineteenth century, the village was a regional railroad hub whose connections to major national lines proved a significant economic advantage. The New York Central Railroad line opened a station north of the village in 1872; this area came to be known as Padelford after the family that owned the surrounding farmland (Figure 14a and 14b). The hamlet of Padelford was home to a post office, the train station, and a few houses; today with the tracks and station gone there is little evidence of this small nineteenth-century hamlet that was home to the only railroad station in the town of Canandaigua. In 1903, a new rail service opened in Canandaigua when the Rochester & Eastern Rapid Railway, an electric interurban railway, began operating between Rochester and Geneva, connecting Canandaigua to both cities and other towns and villages along the route (Figure 15). This line ran until 1930. (Railroad lines are most easily seen on Map 14a.)

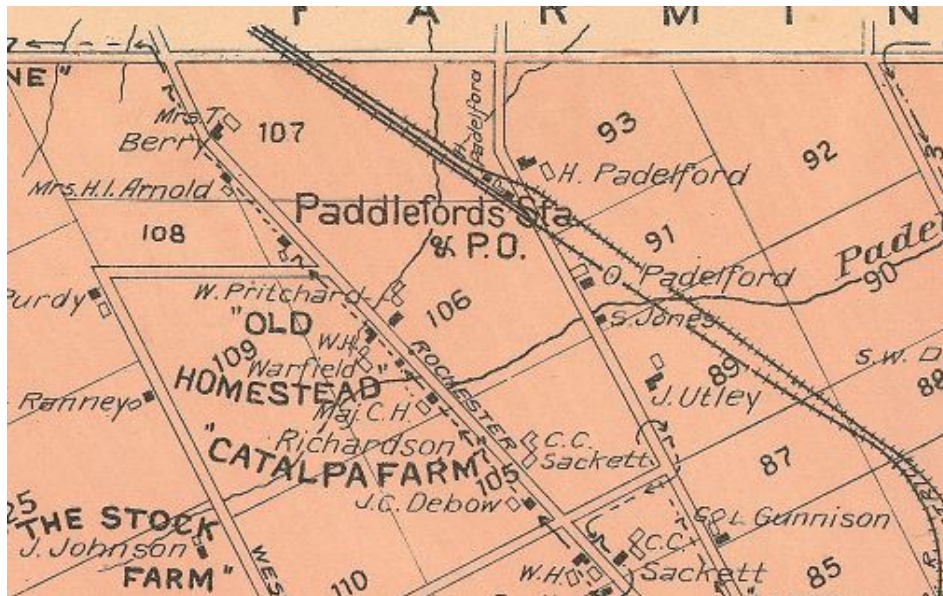
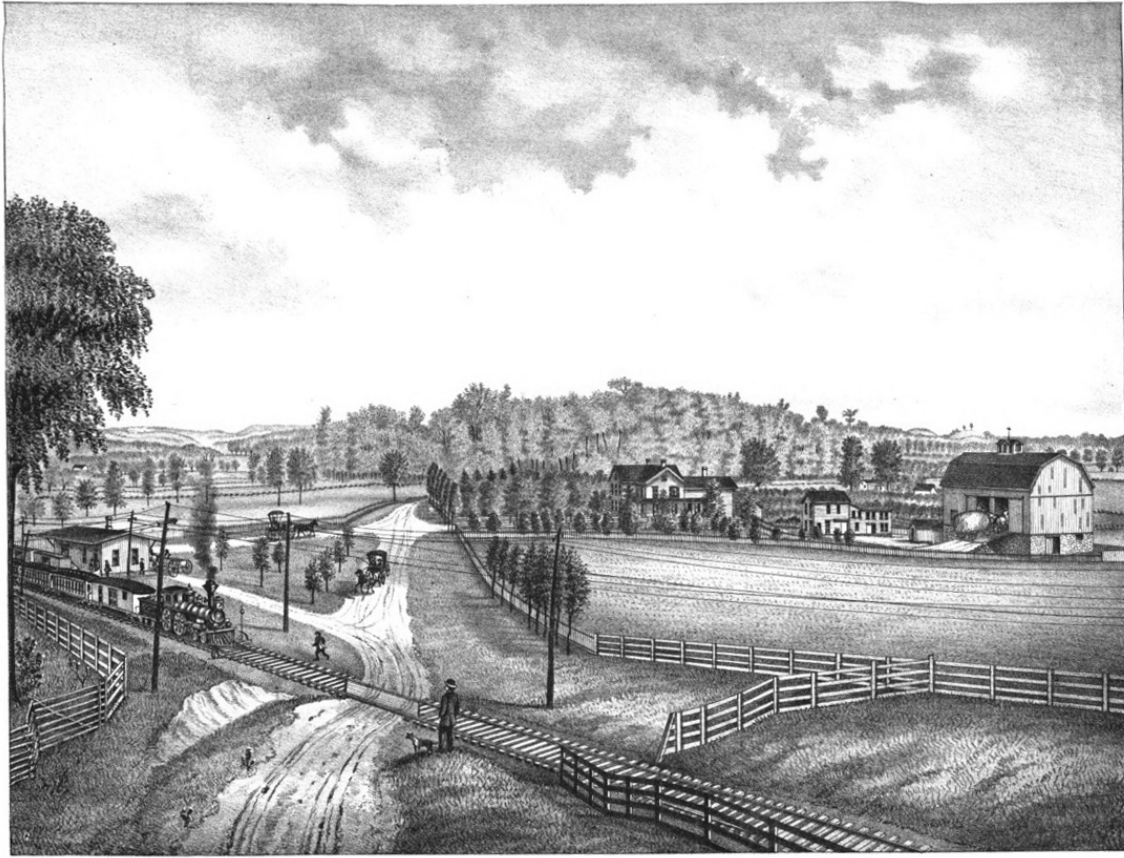


Figure 14a. Padelford (“Paddlefords Sta.”), detail of 1904 map.

³⁵ Linda McCurdy Hotra, *Canandaigua 1850-1930: A Photographic History of the Village and the Lake* (Canandaigua: Ontario County Historical Society, 1982), xi.



PADEFORD STATION, AND RESIDENCE OF H. PADEFORD, CANANDAIGUA, NEW YORK.

Figure 14b. Padelford railroad station, 1876. Source: McIntosh.



Figure 15. This small building, located just outside Canandaigua in the town of Hopewell, has been identified as a station on the Interurban line. Slide, eBay.

The Steamboat Era

Steamboats provided the key link between the rail network and sites on Canandaigua Lake. The first effort to run a steamboat service on the lake occurred in 1827, when “The Lady of the Lake” was launched. This initial venture was short-lived and did not succeed financially. Other boats were launched over the years, many lasting just a few years due to either financial failure or mishaps that destroyed the boats.

The first economically successful steamboat on the lake was the “Joseph Wood,” which was launched in 1855. Rival steamboat companies were consolidated into the Canandaigua Lake Steam Navigation Company in 1880. This company instituted a regular operating schedule. The period from the 1880s through the early 1910s was the heyday of the steamboat era on Canandaigua Lake. By the 1910s, cars and trucks were gaining popularity as the preferred modes of transportation for passengers and produce. Passenger steamboat service was in a steep decline by the 1920s and ended in 1935.³⁶

The link between rail and steamboat service was at the site now called the City Pier, which began as the village’s steamboat landing and over time became an intermodal transportation hub serving the city and town of Canandaigua (Figure 16). Within a few years of its opening in 1848, the City Pier was lined with boathouses as well as warehouses storing produce that was transported via steamboat to the pier. In 1887, the pier was enlarged to accommodate railroad tracks, linking the steamboats and railroad more closely. The City Pier served as the southern terminus of the horse-drawn (later electric) streetcar line that ran up and down Main Street beginning in 1887.³⁷ In 1903, the Rochester and Eastern Rapid Railway leased the former streetcar line, but in 1905 it abandoned the branch that led to the pier. Although the City Pier is (as the name suggests) in the city rather than the town of Canandaigua, it is relevant to the town’s history because it was a key location that facilitated the transportation of passengers, via rail and steamboat, to and from sites along the lake, and also facilitated the conveyance of produce up the lake via steamboat to rail connections and thus to more distant markets.

Steamboat operations coincided with, and fostered, growth in interest in lakefront destinations, including clubhouses, camps, and private cottages. As summer residency along the lake became more common, people could commute daily via steamboat to jobs in Canandaigua, or the steamboat ride could be one leg of a trip to and from Rochester at the beginning and end of a longer stay. Families and private clubs built cottages and cabins along the lake; entrepreneurs set up small hotels that served as vacation sites offering room and board as well as simple pastimes such as boating, fishing, and hiking. Summer camps along the lake offered children and young adults the experience of rustic living in cabins or tents with their peers (see Recreation, Section

³⁶ The history of the steamboat era on Canandaigua Lake, including history of individual boats, has been well documented, and much more information is available than is relevant to the scope of this project. For more information see “Canandaigua Lake Steamboats,” Town of Canandaigua, <http://www.townofcanandaigua.org/page.asp?id=81>; Lynn Paulson, “The era of the Canandaigua Lake steamboat 1827-1935,” *Daily Messenger* 28 April 2013; and James S. Lee, “The Story of the Canandaigua Lake Steamboats,” *Ontario County Times*, 9, 16, and 23 August 1932.

³⁷ Lynn Paulson, “Canandaigua Centennial: Pier Boathouses - heritage on the water,” *Daily Messenger*, 1 December 2013.; and Preston Pierce, “Historical Tour of Canandaigua Lake.” Ontario County, N.Y., Available online at <http://co.ontario.ny.us/DocumentCenter/View/168/Historical-Tour-of-Canandaigua-Lake?bidId=>.

IV-E). While steamboat sites at some hotels and camps had docks, the steamboats also stopped at landings without docks, where they either lowered a gangplank by which passengers disembarked, or took passengers ashore in a rowboat (Figures 17-19).³⁸

Farmers in the town of Canandaigua also benefited from steamboat service. At the end of the summer season, “passenger business became of secondary importance to carrying the produce of the hillside farms. Crates of berries, baskets of peaches and sweet scented grapes and barrels of pears and apples usurped space on the boats ... all members of the crew assisting to hasten the loading and transfer to the iced cars destined for Boston and Philadelphia waiting on the siding at the basin.”³⁹ (See Agriculture, Section IV-C.)



Figure 16. City Pier. Source: *West Lake Legacy* / Ontario County Historical Society.

³⁸ Dr. Robert G. Cook, *A History of Canandaigua Lake* (pamphlet), 1931, Ontario County Historical Society Ephemera Collection, pp. 14-15.

³⁹ Lee, “The Story of the Lake Steamboats,” 16 August 1922.



Figure 174. Steamboat dock at a lakeside hotel, on a busy day. Source: *West Lake Legacy*



Figure 18. Two-story steamboat dock at the Natural Science Camp. Source: *West Lake Legacy*.



Figure 19. Steamboat landing via gangplank. Source: *West Lake Legacy*.

The Automobile and Road Improvements

The next new form of transportation to affect Canandaigua's residents and visitors was the automobile. Canandaigua was a regional and state leader in developing the technology and funding mechanisms by which rural roads were improved to facilitate automobile traffic. Town highway supervisor Ira Cribb gained a national reputation after he "directed the building of the first crushed stone road in the State of New York through the appropriation of public monies" in the 1890s.⁴⁰

In their first demonstration projects, the road crews simply put stone over road beds in their existing alignment. As the budget for road improvements rose, the highway department was also able to straighten crooked roads and prepare the road beds and shoulders more thoroughly (Figure 23). In addition to a more practical surface that facilitated transportation, the process had aesthetic benefits, according to Cribb:

First, the road bed; second, the road side, and third, the farm lands. I say the farm lands are improved. For proof, go over any of these improved roads and you will note the farms are cleared of unsightly stone hedge rows, boulders, etc. In fact, the farm is cleaned up and the owner made happy.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Ira Cribb obituary, cited in Henry, *Memories of the Heart II*, p. 48.

⁴¹ Ira P. Cribb, "Ontario County Roads," in *First Annual Convention of the Monroe County Good Roads Association, October Tenth and Eleventh, 1904* (Rochester: Rochester Herald Print, 1904), pp. 14-15.

Cribb continued to advocate for public expenditures on road improvements after his election as town supervisor in 1898, a position he held until 1906 when he became state supervisor of highways in the Town Highway Bureau.⁴² Meanwhile, the process he and his crews developed for improving roads became widespread, as officials from other towns and counties visited Canandaigua to see the benefits and decided to replicate the system on their local roads.

When Cribb began his experiments, automobile ownership was uncommon. By the 1910s, however, automobiles were becoming widespread, and both year-round and summer residents of Canandaigua benefited from Cribb's prescience in making the roads safer and more reliable for the increasing number of drivers by improving both the surface and alignment of the roads. The popularity of the automobile contributed to the decline of the steamboat business and the Rochester and Eastern Railway, as it was much more convenient for farmers to convey their produce by truck, and for summer residents to go to their lakefront houses by automobile, than it had been to rely on steamboats and trains. The automobile also opened up a much greater range of options for vacationers, who were no longer limited to places served by train and boat; new attractions opened to appeal to these travelers. Roseland Park in the city of Canandaigua opened as a seasonal attraction in 1925, anchoring what became an area oriented to vacationers and day-trippers traveling by car (see Recreation, Section IV-E).

Road improvements in the first half of the twentieth century were followed by expansion of some of the town's main roads into highways that facilitated high-speed travel through the town. The bypass that now carries Routes 5 & 20 through the city was built in two phases: the first portion, east of Main Street, was constructed in the 1950s, followed by the western section in the 1970s. This took through traffic off Lakeshore Drive and Main Street, and opened new areas to auto-oriented commercial development.

In 1994, the New York State Department of Transportation initiated a project to expand Route 332 north of the city of Canandaigua, which was then a two-lane road, into a four-lane divided highway, providing a highway connection from Canandaigua to the New York State Thruway interchange in Farmington. This project both reflected and facilitated Canandaigua's rapid growth around the turn of the twentieth century as a bedroom community in which many residents commuted to and from Rochester.

In the mid-1940s, there were two private airports in Canandaigua. One, known as the Canandaigua Airport, was located on the north side of Lake Street near East Lake Road, and operated until 1948. The airport site became the site of the Parkway drive-in theater (now the U.S. Postal Service site). The other private airport was established in the 1940s at a 50-acre site on Brickyard Road with a single, grass runway. The county government considered creation of a regional airport in the 1960s, and revisited in the issue in the 1980s, eventually establishing an expanded airport on the Brickyard Road site in the early 1990s. This airport, now featuring a 5,500 foot long paved runway, is currently a public facility owned by the Ontario County Industrial Development Agency, used for flight training and Mercy Flight departures, as well as small private and corporate planes.⁴³

⁴² Henry, *Memories of the Heart II*, pp. 48-50.

⁴³ Marci Diehl, "From grass landing strip to Tim McGraw's airport of choice," *Democrat & Chronicle*, 22 March 2016; "Plan open air theatre near New Roseland Park," *Chronicle-Express* (Penn Yan, N.Y.), 19 February 1948;



Figure 20. West Lake Road as a rural dirt road. Source: *West Lake Legacy*.



Figure 21. West Lake Road. Source: *West Lake Legacy*.

“Private airport site bought at Canandaigua; Grading planned,” *Times-Union*, 29 August 1941; “Discussion set on airport for Canandaigua,” *Democrat & Chronicle*, 11 March 1962.



Figure 22. Drivers at Canandaigua Lake, circa 1918. Source: Albert Stone Collection, Rochester Museum & Science Center.

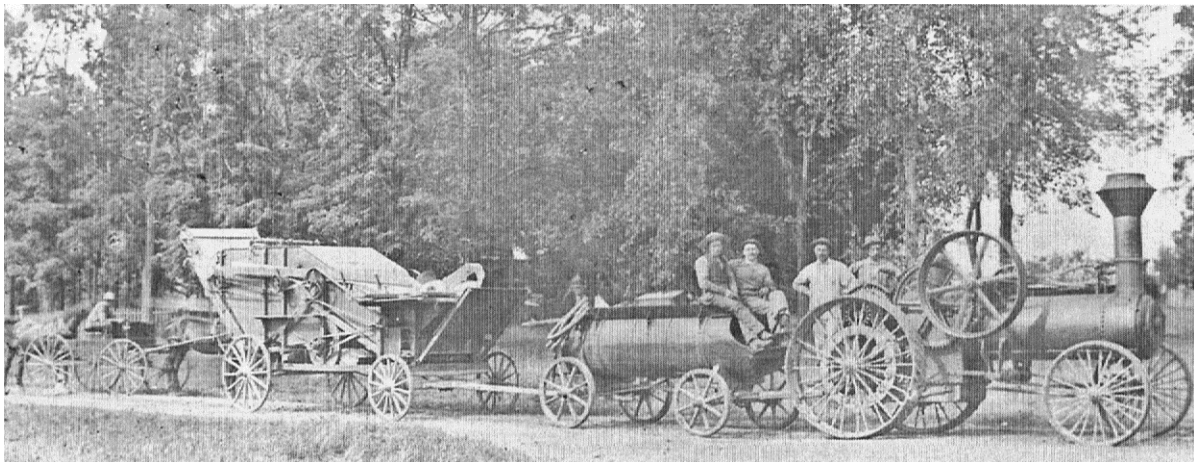


Figure 23. Town of Canandaigua stone crusher and steam engine, c. 1910. Source: Town of Canandaigua collection / *Memories of the Heart II*.

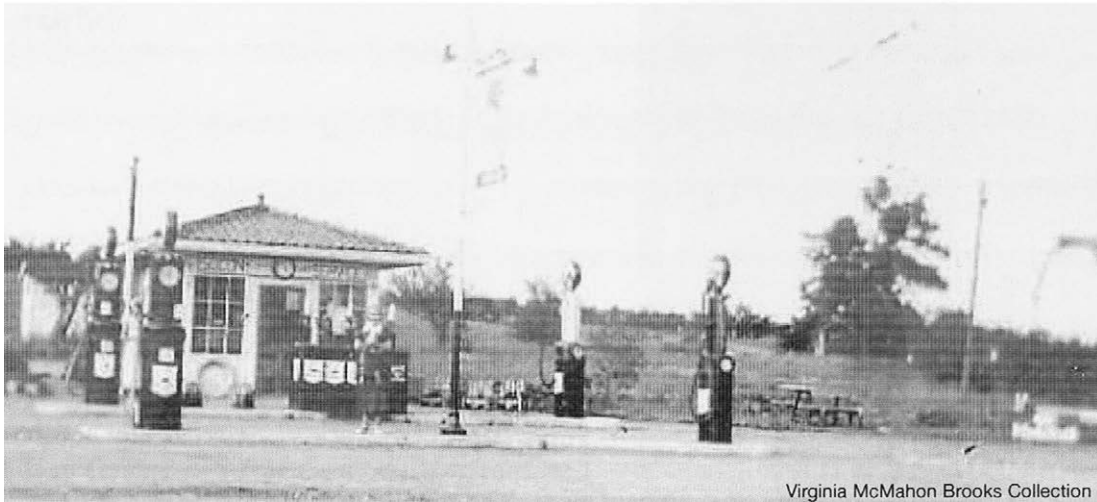


Figure 24. Early twentieth-century gas station on Routes 5 & 20 in Centerfield. Virginia McMahon Brooks Collection / *Memories of the Heart*.

Associated Property Types

The evolution of transportation methods has played a significant role in the development of Canandaigua, helping to shape where development would occur and what form it took. At the same time, that ongoing evolution has often meant that built resources that directly relate to transportation are erased when a new mode supplants the old one, and historic resources directly related to the town’s transportation infrastructure rarely survive in their historic form.

Road Infrastructure: While it is possible for a road to be historically significant as an example of a structure, typically roads have been altered too much over time to retain their historic characteristics such as road surface, width, edge treatment, or alignment. Roads can, however, be significant as components in a historic landscape even if they do not retain all of those characteristics.⁴⁴ Besides National Register or other landmark recognition programs, there are ways to recognize roads for their historic and scenic qualities, for example through scenic byway or viewshed protection programs.

Taverns: Taverns catered to travelers on early roads, particularly along major stagecoach routes like the State Road (Route 5 & 20 / Lakeshore Drive). A few are known to survive in Canandaigua, including the former Wilder Tavern at 5648 County Road 30 (North Bloomfield Road) and the inn in the hamlet of Centerfield at 6136 Routes 5 & 20. (Later hotels are included under the theme of Recreation.)

Railroad Resources: Bridges, culverts, and small-scale features such as the “Whistle Post” on the former “Peanut Line” right-of-way are examples of railroad-related historic resources. The one train station that was built in the town of Canandaigua was at Padelford, and does not survive.

⁴⁴ For more information on evaluation of historic roads, see Mary E. McCahon, et al., *Design and Management of Historic Roads* (National Cooperative Highway Research Board, January 2012), pp. 4-12 to 4-15.

Steamboat-Related Resources: Other than the City Pier, which is in the city rather than the town, and possible remnants of earthen docks, no steamboat infrastructure is known to survive; if any is identified in Phase 2 it should be documented.

Automobile-Related Resources: Gas stations and repair shops are examples of buildings constructed to support the growing popularity of the automobile as a primary method of transportation (Figure 24). These are often remodeled or replaced due to aesthetic or functional obsolescence.

B. Community Planning and Development

The physical development of the town of Canandaigua reflected a number of factors, including natural characteristics such as topography, water features, and soil quality; its relationship to the village of Canandaigua and, in particular, the village's carefully planned street grid; and changing transportation methods, as described in Section IV-B.

Community Development, 1789-1840s

To prepare the land they purchased for development, Phelps and Gorham laid out their entire tract in a system of ranges and townships, as described in the Historic Overview, above. They established two different grid systems for the town of Canandaigua. In Township 10, Phelps and Gorham set the two main intersecting streets at the north end of the lake (now Main Street and Ontario Street) at an angle rather than orienting them north-south, due to the topography and character of the soil at the north end of the lake. Because there was initially no legal distinction between town and village, the angled grid they thus established at their intended center of settlement carried out through the entire township: all of the numbered lots they offered for sale in Township 10 followed the same angled orientation (see Maps 4, 9, and 11). This in turn affected the orientation of some of the early roads in the north part of Canandaigua; for example, Cooley Road, Andrews Road, and North Road reflect the grid by which lots were initially offered for sale.

The history of the southern township, Township 9 of the third range, is more complex, and connects to Massachusetts state politics, pioneer-era religion, and education. In 1788, Phelps and Gorham sold all of Township 9, Range 3, as well as those townships that now make up the towns of Bristol and Richmond, to the Dighton Land Company. This company was formed by a group of residents of the town of Dighton, Massachusetts, many of whom had participated in the uprising against the state government known as Shays' Rebellion, and lost their property as a result. Numerous residents of Dighton and other towns in Bristol County, Massachusetts, took advantage of the new availability of land in western New York as an opportunity to start over.

Among the agents for the Dighton Land Company was Reverend John Smith, who wanted to form an academy, or private high school, for boys in western New York. He is believed to have identified Township 10 (north part of Canandaigua) as the best location for the school, and worked with Oliver Phelps to develop a funding mechanism: a tract of 3,000 acres at the south end of Township 9 was set aside, and ultimately donated by Phelps to the county; income from the rental (ultimately changed to sale) of the lots was to be an income stream for the school. This part of town came to be known as the "Academy Tract," or later, simply as "Academy" (Figure 25). Smith had the rest of Township 9 surveyed into 400-acre lots, but in 1792-93, he sold those lots back to Phelps, who had them resurveyed into lots of about 150 acres each, consistent with lot sizes in Township 10.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ For more on Shays' Rebellion, the Dighton Land Company, and the role of Reverend John Smith, see "The Rev's John Smith and Zadock Hunn" in Henry, *Memories of the Heart II*, p. 106-107.

Probably due to the series of changes in ownership, the settlement of Township 9 began somewhat later than in Township 10, with lot sales starting in 1794 after Phelps had reacquired the property. The first lots in the Academy Tract, which was believed to be undesirable for agriculture due to poor soil, were not purchased until 1810. The first family was joined by 13 others in the next three years. Early farmers in the Academy Tract disproved the idea that the soil could not be farmed, although modern soil quality maps do show that the soil in this south part of Canandaigua is not as consistent as in the north part of town. A post office was established in Academy in 1850, operating until 1909. There were also two schools, a church, and a cemetery in the Academy Tract (Figure 26).

Phelps and Gorham's intended village site at the north end of the lake quickly became the most important population center in the town of Canandaigua. It was not officially incorporated as the separate Village of Canandaigua until 1815. Meanwhile, several other hamlets also developed as small nuclei of houses and commercial buildings.

One such cluster of early residences was Centerfield (sometimes spelled Centrefield), at the present-day intersection of Route 5 & 20 and McCann Road (Figure 27). The first identified residents built their houses here in 1790. Over the course of the nineteenth century, Centerfield had a handful of stores, a hotel, four short-lived churches, and a post office (established in 1832, discontinued in 1902). A surviving cluster of early buildings remains today, including the former inn at 6136 Route 5 & 20 (Centerfield Road) and a former schoolhouse at 6125 Centerfield Road.

The largest early nineteenth-century hamlet outside the village of Canandaigua was Cheshire, located on present-day Route 21S (Figure 28). The hamlet was originally known as Rowley's School House, after John Rowley, who built the first house in what later became Cheshire in 1795 and built a school on his land. Cheshire had its first store in 1812, first saw mill in 1814, and first tavern in 1818. By the middle of the nineteenth century Cheshire had a spoke factory, its own church (built in 1840; a new church was built in 1870 and still survives), a cluster of houses, a post office (established in 1835, discontinued in 1908), and several stores catering to the needs of the farmers living in the south part of Canandaigua and adjacent towns, including a shoe shop, grocery store, blacksmith shop and harness shop (Figures 29-30).⁴⁶

Outside the village and hamlets, Canandaigua was an overwhelmingly agricultural town, with commercial establishments limited to a few taverns and inns along the major thoroughfares.

⁴⁶ Ray Henry, *A Walking Tour & History of the Hamlet of Cheshire* (Canandaigua: Ontario County Historical Society, 2017), p. 3; and Conover, p. 212.



Figure 25. 1794 map of the Phelps & Gorham survey of Canandaigua, showing the "3,000 Acres appropriated for the support of an Academy." New York Public Library.

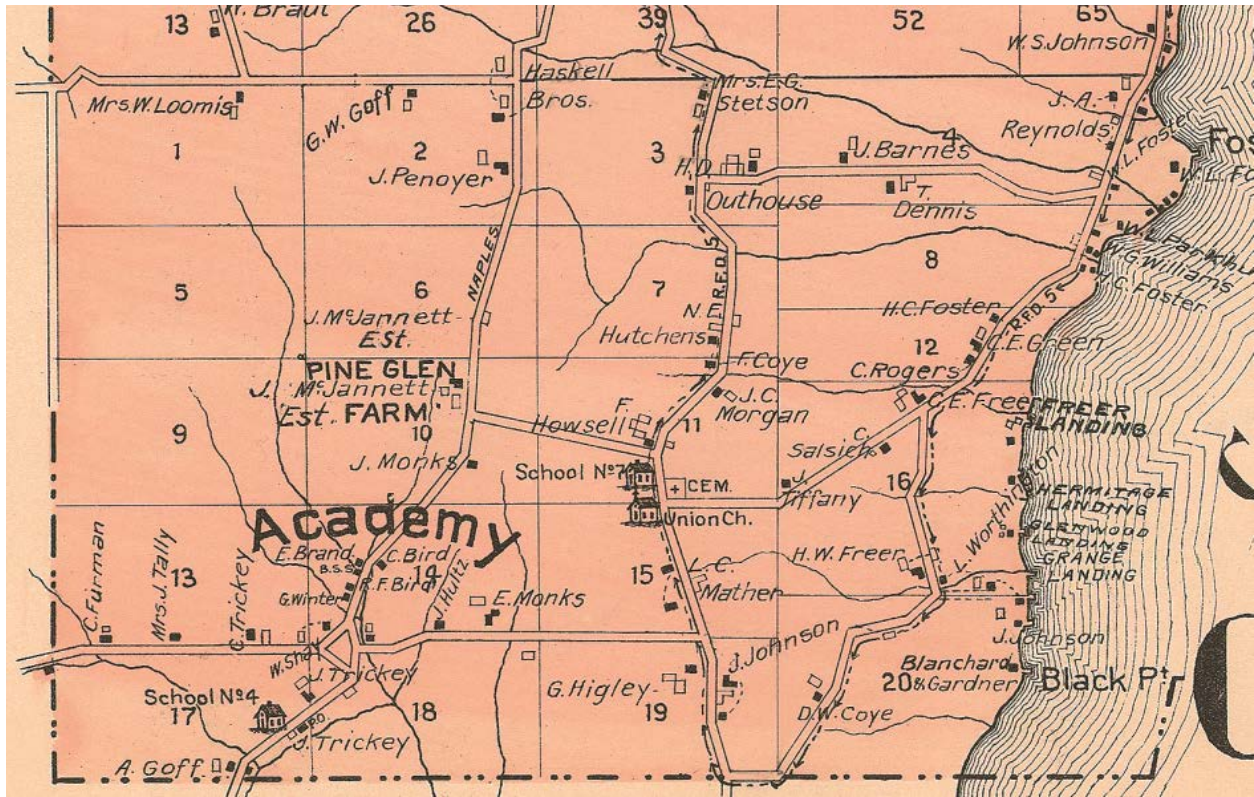


Figure 26. Academy on the 1904 New Century Atlas of Ontario County.

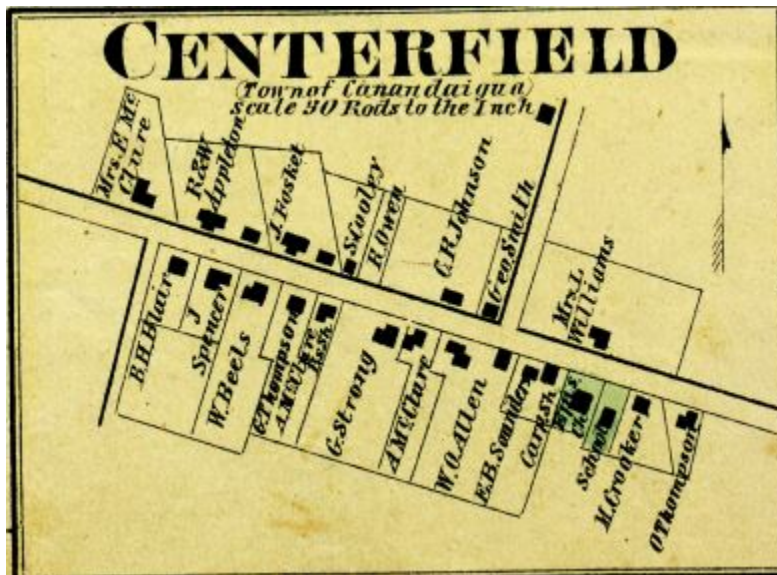


Figure 27. Centerfield on the 1874 Map of Ontario County.

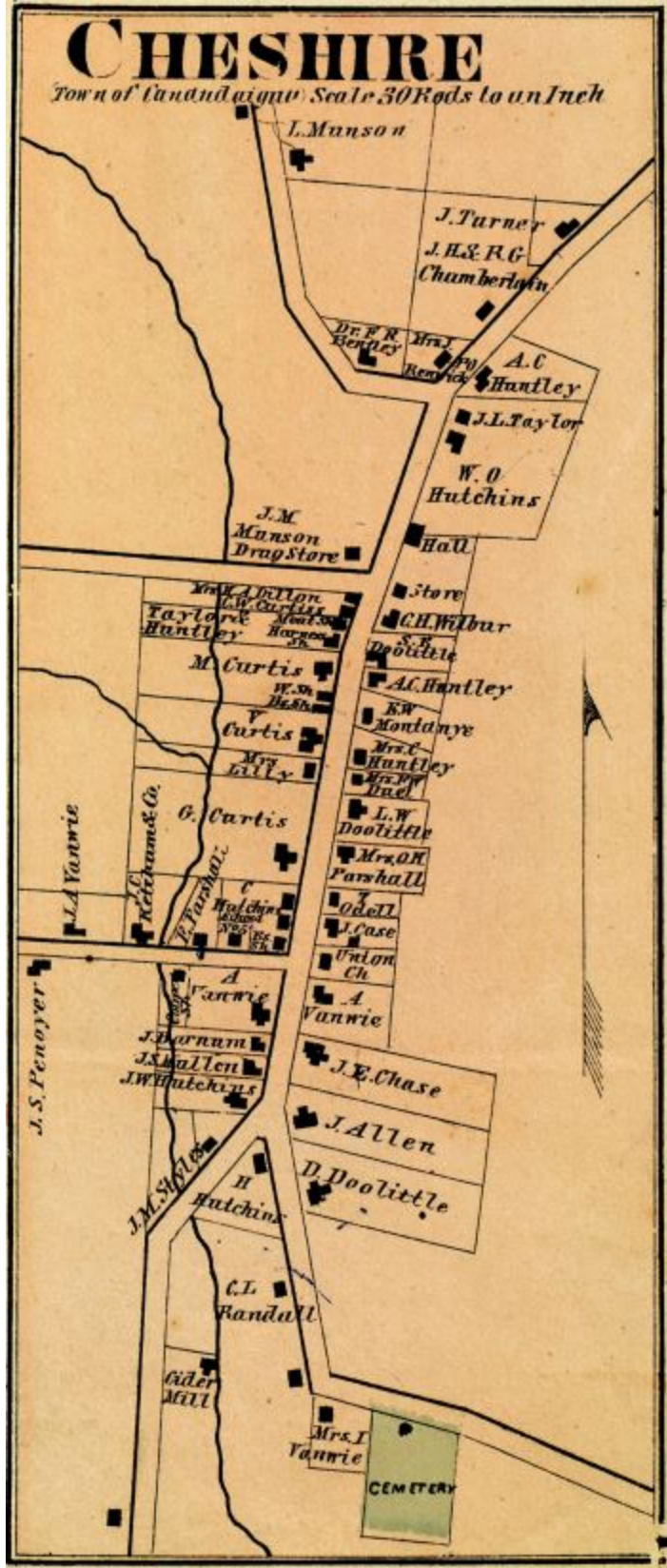


Figure 28. Cheshire on the 1874 Map of Ontario County.

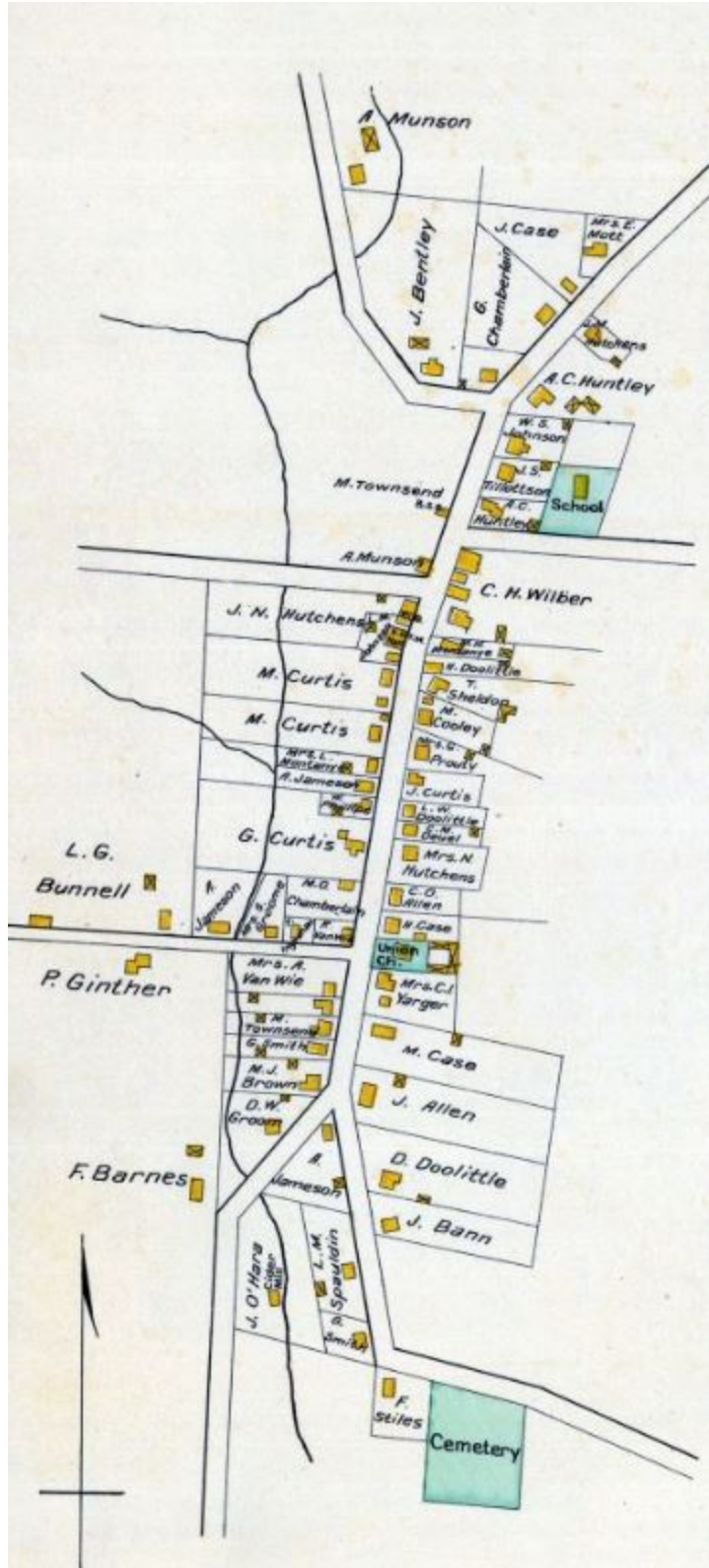


Figure 29. Cheshire on the 1904 New Century Atlas of Ontario County.



Figure 30. A longstanding store in the hamlet of Cheshire, at 4272 Route 21 South, c. 1938. Janice Mallory Eames Collection / *Memories of the Heart II*.

Community Development in the Steamboat and Railroad Era, 1840s-1900

The opening of railroad lines connecting Canandaigua to the growing national transportation network starting in the 1840s had a significant economic impact on Canandaigua, ushering in a period of prosperity and enabling farmers throughout the town to upgrade their properties (see Agriculture, Section IV-C). The hub of railroad activity, and location of railroad-related built resources such as passenger and freight stations and warehouses, was in the village, from which tracks went north, west and east. The one station in the town outside the village was opened by the New York Central Railroad in the north part of town in 1873. The owner of the adjacent land, Olney T. Padelford, “established a wood yard here [i.e., by the station] and furnished the company with wood, and it was from this that the station was named Padelford.”⁴⁷

Steamboat service directly affected development patterns in Canandaigua more directly by enabling the growth of lakefront leisure sites, including summer cabins, small hotels, and camps,

⁴⁷ Conover, p. 134.

as described in Section IV-E, Recreation (Figure 31). The 1852, 1859, and 1874 maps show that development along the lakefront was sparse (Maps 11-13). Even along West Lake Road, most houses were on the west side of the road, rather than between the lake and the road.⁴⁸ By the time the 1904 map was produced, cabins lined sections of the lake, particularly at the points; some sites had whimsical names, including “Kokokoho” (the Hallenbeck family lodge), “Walterita” (a hotel), and “Hermitage Landing” (Map 14). Since the turn of the twentieth century, lakefront property has only increased in desirability and value as it has become more readily accessible via automobile.



Figure 31. 1903 topographical map of Canandaigua; dotted line crisscrossing the lake represents the steamboat route. Note clusters of development near steamboat landings.

⁴⁸ West Lake Road is also known as County Road 16; the historic and more descriptive name “West Lake Road” is still commonly used, and is used throughout this report.

The Physical Growth of Canandaigua in the Twentieth Century

As the automobile made it possible for people to travel greater distances on their own timetables, the first auto-oriented suburban subdivisions began to appear in the town of Canandaigua in the 1920s and 1930s. The first such subdivision, in the sense of the division of a sizable tract into multiple lots to be developed all at once, was Fallbrook Park, adjacent to Canandaigua Country Club on the east shore of the lake. Around the same time that he opened the golf course, the owner of the country club subdivided the property between the golf course and lake into 50-foot-wide lots, which he sold for summer cottage construction. Nearly all of the original cottages have been demolished and replaced or extensively remodeled; a handful retain some evidence of their original appearance.⁴⁹

Two development patterns characterize residential development in Canandaigua in the second half of the twentieth century, a time of rapid population growth in the town. New suburban-sized residential lots were subdivided along existing roads, particularly close to the village and in the north part of town; for example, portions of County Road 8, Macedon Road, and Emerson Road are lined by post-war Ranch, Minimal Traditional, Colonial Revival, and Split-Level houses with attached garages, typical of the 1950s-1970s. West Lake Road north of Tichenor Point also has numerous examples of mid-century residential architecture, including seasonal and year-round residences. Another example is Foster Road, where parts of the Foster Fruit Farm were subdivided to create narrow residential lots. Remnants of the farm are still visible in rows of apple trees that survive interspersed with houses built in the 1970s and 1980s.

A second pattern is the development of residential subdivisions, including entirely new streets. The first such example in the post-World War II era was the creation of the Saddleback Road neighborhood in the late 1950s and 1960s, on part of what had been Edgewater Farms. Hallmarks of mid- to late-twentieth-century developments include winding roads and cul-de-sacs, prominent attached garages, large lots, and increasingly deep setbacks. The section of town between Middle Cheshire Road and West Lake Road north of Foster Road has many such subdivisions developed in the later twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Other recent examples of residential development in the town are a handful of neighborhoods of single-family houses, prefabricated houses, and apartment buildings near the north town line and near the west city line. Recently the Town of Canandaigua has enacted programs aiming to direct residential development away from prime farmland in the north part of town and toward areas that are less suitable for farming and have already experienced suburban development.

⁴⁹ Henry, *Memories of the Heart*, pp. 14-18.

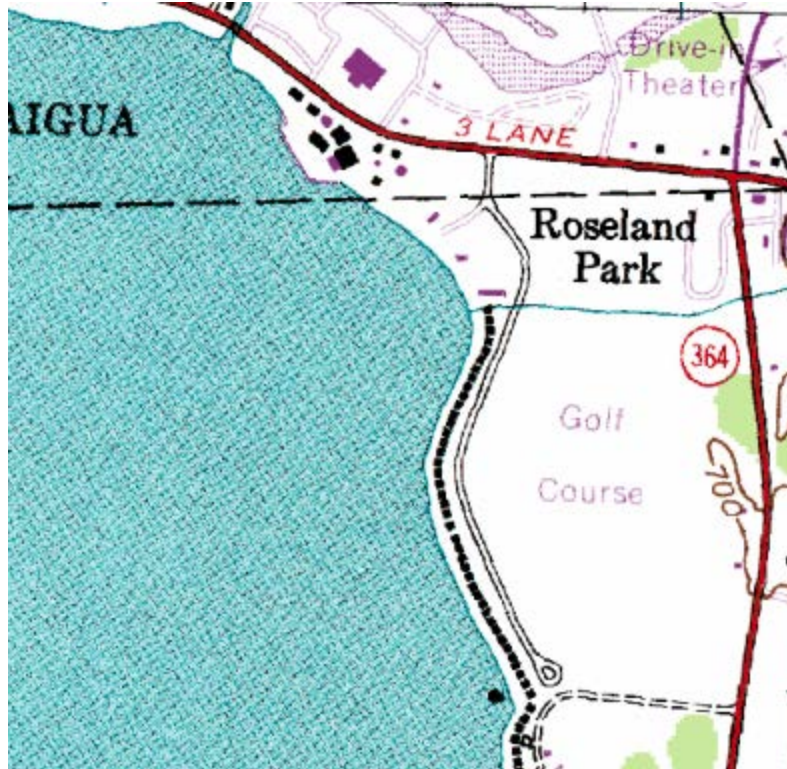


Figure 32. 1978 USGS Topographical Map, Canandaigua Lake quad. The houses between the golf course and lake make up the Fallbrook Park subdivision, which initially consisted of small summer cottages.



Figure 33. View west toward Saddleback, East Saddleback, and West Saddleback roads, on the former Edgewater Farm property, 1972. Source: Nancy Hayden Collection / *West Lake Legacy*.

Associated Property Types

Community Planning and Development is a broad theme that could potentially encompass a vast range of resources relating to evolving patterns of land use, and that overlaps with other themes. Resources identified in this section illustrate patterns of settlement and the physical growth of the town.

Residential Architecture: Individual Houses and Subdivisions: The prevalence and distribution of architectural styles and house types associated with particular time periods conveys information about changing patterns of residential development. In Canandaigua these include Greek Revival, Federal, and Vernacular (i.e., architecturally modest, not representative of a defined “style”) farmhouses of the early nineteenth century, scattered throughout town on the sites the earliest European settlers considered most desirable. Other examples include Italianate, Second Empire, Queen Anne, and Vernacular houses of the mid- to late nineteenth century, which often replaced the earlier houses as farmers’ prosperity grew, or were built as a second house for a new generation of a farm family. Colonial Revival, Craftsman, and Vernacular houses of the turn of the twentieth century likewise may speak to upgrades in the interest of fashion or accommodating additional family members. More rustic architectural styles, often evoking Adirondack motifs, were typical of nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century seasonal residences. Starting around the 1920s an increasing number of year-round houses began to appear on West Lake Road and other existing roads, a trend that accelerated after World War II when housing construction boomed nationwide. In automobile-oriented developments of the mid-twentieth century, common styles included the Minimal Traditional, Cape Cod, Ranch, and Split Level, often with attached garages; some owners and architects eschewed these traditional approaches in favor of the International Style and other expressions of Modernism.

In addition to the architectural significance a house may have as an example of a recognized style, or as an example of well-preserved vernacular architecture, the house’s age, style, location, and setting are products of changing settlement patterns, from widely scattered farmhouses to the uniform lot sizes and curvilinear streets of mid- to late-twentieth century suburban-style subdivisions. These characteristics may lead to an individual house being significant on its own or in the context of a larger group, such as a subdivision.

Farmhouses can also be significant as elements in a farmstead or rural landscape, as described in more detail in Agriculture, Section IV-C.

Hamlets: The hamlets of Cheshire and Centerfield represent a distinctive settlement pattern by which residences and buildings of other types, such as stores, churches and schools, are clustered together forming a small community, similar to a village but without the legal status of an incorporated village.⁵⁰ Individual buildings within hamlets may be historically and/or

⁵⁰ The other two named hamlets in Canandaigua, Academy and Padelford, do not retain a cluster of historic buildings.

architecturally significant; in addition, a hamlet that retains sufficient integrity, as a whole, to convey its historic importance may be considered as a potential historic district.⁵¹

Infrastructure: Facilities that support population growth, and often help determine locations and other physical characteristics of that growth, can be significant historic resources. The water pumping station at 3772 West Lake Road, constructed in 1895 as an upgrade to the Village of Canandaigua's water system, is an example of such a facility that affected patterns of development.

Cemeteries: Cemeteries established by pioneers relate to historic growth patterns because they represent locations chosen by early residents to bury and commemorate family members, usually near where they lived. They are among the most enduring historic resources relating to early settlement, often outlasting buildings like houses or barns that are more susceptible to replacement or demolition. Nine small cemeteries are located throughout town; their locations have been documented.⁵²

⁵¹ A district is a collection of contiguous historic properties (usually buildings, but structures, sites, and objects can also be included) that together form a historic entity. The National Register and many local preservation ordinances allow for district nominations as a way to recognize entire neighborhoods, villages, or campuses, for example.

⁵² [Ray Henry], "Town of Canandaigua Cemeteries," <http://www.townofcanandaigua.org/page.asp?id=120>; a 1960s document that traced the legal status of each of the cemeteries is preserved at the Ontario County Historical Society, Ephemera Collection, "Cemeteries."

C. Agriculture

Agriculture has played a significant role in Canandaigua's history, and remains critical to the economy of the town today. Farmland and historic farmsteads are among the town's most important historic and scenic assets. The nature of agriculture in Canandaigua has not been static: farmers have adapted to changes in transportation, technology, the economy, and other factors well beyond their immediate control, reflecting broad shifts at the regional, state, and national levels. These shifts and adaptations are reflected in the town's historic agricultural resources that survive today.

Seneca agriculture in Ontario County and the Finger Lakes region included orchards as well as fields in which they planted corn, beans, and squash together. In 1779, during Sullivan's campaign, American troops destroyed Native American villages, crops, and food stores, and most of the Seneca population fled to Canada. As the new European-American population moved in starting in 1789, Seneca clearings and orchards were assets to the settlers, as described by a letter-writer in 1796:

The county of Ontario, having several years the start in settlement, and the advantages of many Indian clearings of great extent, had already the comfortable appearance of an old settled country; the old Indian orchards had been dressed up and the fruit secured from depredation.⁵³

Those who migrated to Canandaigua and Ontario County in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were largely drawn to the region by its rich farmland. Families who arrived between 1789 and the 1820s practiced subsistence agriculture: they met their needs by growing and making as much as they could, as well as trading goods and labor with neighbors. The earliest migrants had access only to the tools and supplies they could bring with them, since there were as yet no local markets or local industries. As the region became more populous, blacksmiths, millers, coopers, and other tradespeople provided valuable goods and services to the residents. Apart from the areas that were previously cleared by the Seneca, Ontario County was largely forested. In order to build houses and plant crops, the pioneers first had to clear their land, using the timber to build a rudimentary cabin and barn. As soon as they could, they planted wheat and corn, both of which grew quickly, were versatile, and could be stored. Farmers also grew potatoes, raised their own livestock (and hay to feed livestock), and grew, made, or traded for anything else they needed. It took approximately a year for a pioneer to clear, plow, and sow 10 acres of forested land, so land clearing was an ongoing task for the first several years of a farmer's life on the frontier.⁵⁴

Another high priority for the newly arrived farmers was to develop passable roads through the region by which they could transport their goods to markets in eastern cities. Albany was the most profitable market, and could be reached via sleighs in winter, or by boat in the summer. Either route took a lot of time and was so expensive that transportation costs nearly eliminated

⁵³ McIntosh, pp. 25-26, citing a letter written by an unnamed author in 1796 describing conditions in the early 1790s.

⁵⁴ McIntosh, pp. 29, 116; Ulysses Prentiss Hedrick, *A History of Agriculture in the State of New York* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1933. First American Century Series Edition, 1966), pp. 109-110 and 335.

any profit farmers could hope to make, even where wheat commanded a good price. This lack of cost-effective transportation routes was a hindrance to farmers in western New York until the Erie Canal opened; Canandaigua's farmers benefited more from the railroad than the Canal (see Transportation, Section IV-A).⁵⁵

In Canandaigua, the most desirable farmland was in the north part of town, in the original Township 10. This area had excellent soil quality, good access to water, rolling terrain, and was close to the roads that led to Geneva and Manchester (Route 5 & 20 / Lakeshore Drive and Route 21N / Chapin Road). The south part of town, meanwhile, was hilly with varied soil quality; while residents eventually established successful farms on the land, the advantages of the northern part of town meant that it developed more quickly. By about 1820, farms had been established on virtually all suitable farmland in western New York, and this seems to have been the case in Canandaigua as well.⁵⁶

Key developments in the second quarter of the nineteenth century contributed to a transformation from subsistence farming to more specialized, market-based agriculture. With faster, more reliable transportation offered by the railroad (and, at a regional level if not in Canandaigua itself, the Erie Canal), farmers had access to a much wider array of markets, and could sell their produce at a profit. Railroad access made it possible for farmers in Canandaigua and neighboring communities to specialize in livestock, dairy, and fresh vegetables, now that these perishable items could be quickly transported to Rochester and other urban markets.

The mid-nineteenth century also saw the invention of new technology that vastly improved farm productivity. Mechanical reapers and threshers, the steel plow, and the steam-powered grain elevator were all introduced in the 1830s and 1840s. The reduction in labor requirements due to these new technologies was transformational: for example, raising a single bushel of wheat in 1830 required a total of about three hours of human labor; in 1896 the same task required just 10 minutes.⁵⁷

New York State was first in the nation in many aspects of agriculture in the mid-nineteenth century: by 1850 New York had the largest number of farms, the most acreage of improved farmland, and the highest value of farmland in any state; New York led the nation in the number of dairy cows and sales of milk as well as production of butter and cheese, hay, potatoes, hops, and maple sugar. This period of local and statewide prosperity was reflected in an upgrade in farmhouses, many of which were expanded or rebuilt during this period either as simple, comfortable vernacular dwellings or reflecting the fashionable styles of the day. As farmers expanded their production and aimed to produce a surplus for sale, they also required larger barns to expand their storage capacity, as well as specialized barns and other outbuildings customized for specific uses. Log barns soon began to give way to timber-framed barns, initially in the "English" style with a gable roof and doors on the broad sides.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ McIntosh, p. 48; Hedrick, p. 184; Connie Cox Bodner, *The Development of Nineteenth-Century Agricultural Practices and Their Manifestations in Farmsteads in the Genesee River Valley* (Rochester, New York: Rochester Museum and Science Center, Cultural Resource Survey Program, 1990), p. 26; Turner, p. 170.

⁵⁶ Darlington, p. 346.

⁵⁷ Bodner, p. 58.

⁵⁸ Paul W. Gates, "Agricultural Change in New York State, 1850-1890," *New York History* Vol 50, No. 2 (April 1969), p. 117.

McIntosh offered a poetic description of the state of agriculture in Ontario County in 1876, demonstrating how these statewide trends were experienced by local farm families:

A change has swept over products, prices, machinery, and methods. The utensils of the past – the sickle, hoe, maul, and wedge, the oven and irons, spinning-wheels, and tall clocks – have disappeared from sight, and in their place stand reaper, drill, sower, and buggy rake; in the household, the sewing-machine, the wringer, and washer; and in the pleasant parlor, the organ or piano.⁵⁹

His book included illustrations of several farmsteads as they appeared in 1876, clearly showing the variety of domestic styles and barn types found on farms of the mid- to late-nineteenth century (Figures 36-40).

Farming was a way of life for the vast majority of residents of the town of Canandaigua in the mid-nineteenth century. U.S. Census records for 1850, the first census to list individual residents, listed 458 households living in the town of Canandaigua. Of these, about 84% had a farmer or laborer (presumably a farm laborer) as either the head of household or, in households where the head was a widow, retiree, or otherwise not employed, as principal bread-winner. Of the rest, most worked in the building trades (e.g. carpenter, mason) or producing items valuable to farmers (e.g. blacksmith, cooper, wagon maker).⁶⁰

Even as farmers prospered in the mid-nineteenth century, the same factors that had helped New York proved even more beneficial to other regions, and the state was already beginning to lose its agricultural advantages in the late nineteenth century. While New York's farmers had access to more markets via the canal and railroad, so did newly settled areas of the midwestern states, where land was less expensive and the soil was even more fertile and easier to farm. Having been the leading producer of wheat in the early nineteenth century, New York began to be overtaken by midwestern states that could produce and ship wheat even more efficiently. Thousands of New Yorkers moved west during this period to start new farms, as they could sell their land in New York at high prices and buy land in the midwest less expensively. At the same time, industrialization offered opportunities in cities for other types of work, drawing a growing share of the population, in New York and nationwide, to move to urban areas. The number of farms in New York began to decline after 1865.⁶¹

Facing competition from other regions, farmers in New York sought to improve their methods. The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw the rise of new technologies such as mechanized equipment, chemical fertilizers, and pesticides that improved productivity but were expensive for farmers to implement. These methods further reduced the amount of labor needed, contributing to the continued decline in the percentage of the U.S. population who worked on

⁵⁹ McIntosh, p. 48.

⁶⁰ 1850 U.S. Census, Ontario County, New York, population schedule, Canandaigua (town), pp. 86-148, accessed via Ancestry.com. In the 1850 census, the residents of the village of Canandaigua were enumerated on pages 1-85, after which the census-taker noted the end of the list of village residents and the beginning of the list of town residents.

⁶¹ , Kathleen A. Brosnan and Jacob Blackwell, "Agriculture, Food, and the Environment," *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of American History*, April 2016, p. 12; Hedrick, p. 332; Gates (1969) pp. 117, 137-138.

farms. Nationwide, in 1900, about 41% of the population was employed in farming; by 1930 the percentage had declined to 21.5%. As a rural town, Canandaigua always had a higher farm population than the national average: for example, in 1920 over 70% of heads of household in the town were employed in farming.⁶²

Over the course of the twentieth century, and particularly since the Great Depression in the 1930s, the trend both nationwide and locally has been that the number of farms, and the number of people employed in farming, has declined, while the size of farms has grown, as has the average age of farmers (now around age 65). In an interview with Town Historian Ray Henry in the early 2000s, farmer Albert “Bertie” Wyffels, a member of a sizable farm family in the town of Canandaigua, summed up the reasons so many farm families have left the business since World War II: prices farmers can get for their milk and grains have declined; some farmers do not have children who want to continue farming; it is difficult to attract farm help when other types of jobs pay better; farmers’ pay has gone down; prices for farm necessities including fuel, machinery, and fertilizers have gone up; and, specific to parts of Canandaigua, rising land values, especially on the lake, make it difficult to justify continuing to farm land that has higher value for other uses.⁶³ As of 2016, about 41% of the land area of Canandaigua remained actively farmed; about half of that land is owned by 20 landowners, each of whom own at least 200 acres. Farms in Canandaigua today range from small family farms producing for local markets, restaurants, wineries, and institutions to large-scale operations of 1,000 acres or more that ship milk, soybeans, corn and other products out of the region for processing.⁶⁴

Living as they did on large properties, often far from any neighbors, Canandaigua’s farmers found ways to foster social connections and share knowledge of new techniques. A group of farmers organized the Ontario County Agricultural Society in Canandaigua in 1819; the society held its first fair and cattle show in October of that year, in and around the county courthouse. The organization lapsed briefly, and was reorganized in 1838.

The society held fairs and exhibitions on a regular basis, initially in the village of Canandaigua. In the 1930s, the fair briefly moved to a location in the town of Bristol. In 1949 the fair moved once again, to its present 80-acre site in the town of Canandaigua, along the east town line. For the first few years in this location, events were held in tents rather than permanent buildings; after a devastating storm on the last day of the fair in 1953 destroyed the tents, the Agricultural Society decided to begin gradually replacing them with permanent structures.

A second important organization that has supported Canandaigua’s farmers is the Grange (officially the Patrons of Husbandry). The national Grange movement, which began in the late 1860s, initially focused on educating farmers about advances in agricultural practices, but soon moved into a more political role, lobbying on behalf of farmers particularly on issues related to transportation. The organization also focused on providing mutual insurance and cooperative buying, in addition to fostering social networks for farm families.

⁶² Brosnan and Blackwell, p 10.

⁶³ Albert “Bertie” Wyffels, interview, in Henry, *Memories of the Heart*, pp. 69-71.

⁶⁴ *Town of Canandaigua Agricultural Enhancement Plan (Draft)*. Prepared for the Town of Canandaigua by LaBella Associates, September 2016.

The Academy Grange #62 was organized in 1874 by 29 men and women who lived in the south part of Canandaigua and in South Bristol, and was named for the Academy area where they first met. It was the first Grange organized in Ontario County; eventually there were 28 Granges in the county. In 1899, the Academy Grange began renting the Knights of the Maccabees Hall in the hamlet of Cheshire; the Grange purchased the building in 1920, and held regular meetings and social events, such as dinners and dances, in the building through the mid-twentieth century. It is evident from oral histories recorded with residents of Canandaigua, particularly those who lived in the south part of town, that the Grange provided valuable social activities, particularly for young people who had few opportunities to socialize outside the village of Canandaigua. In 1978, a private owner purchased the building, and converted it into a store. Recently the rehabilitation of the hall has been a focal point for efforts of the Cheshire Community Action Team, which has purchased the building and hopes to convert it into a community center. This building was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2013.⁶⁵



Figure 34. Fields extended to the waterfront in this view taken near Maintop (south of Menteth Point). Source: *West Lake Legacy*.

⁶⁵ National Register Nomination, Knights of the Maccabees Hall, Canandaigua, Ontario County, New York, 2013; Cheshire Community Action Team website, <http://www.cheshirecommunityactionteam.org/>, accessed 6 May 2019; Henry, *Memories of the Heart* and *Memories of the Heart II*, various chapters.

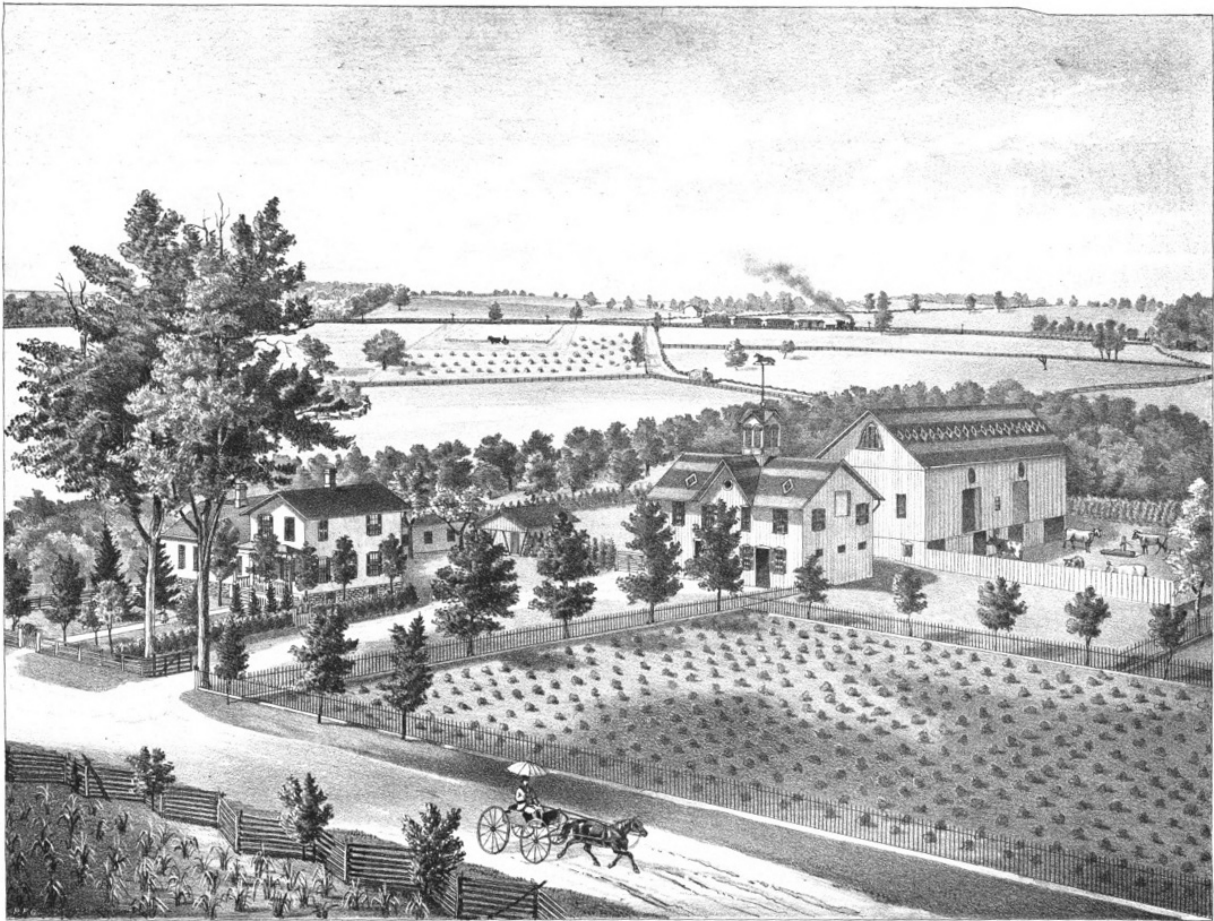


Figure 35. Orchard at Menteth Point. Source: *West Lake Legacy*.



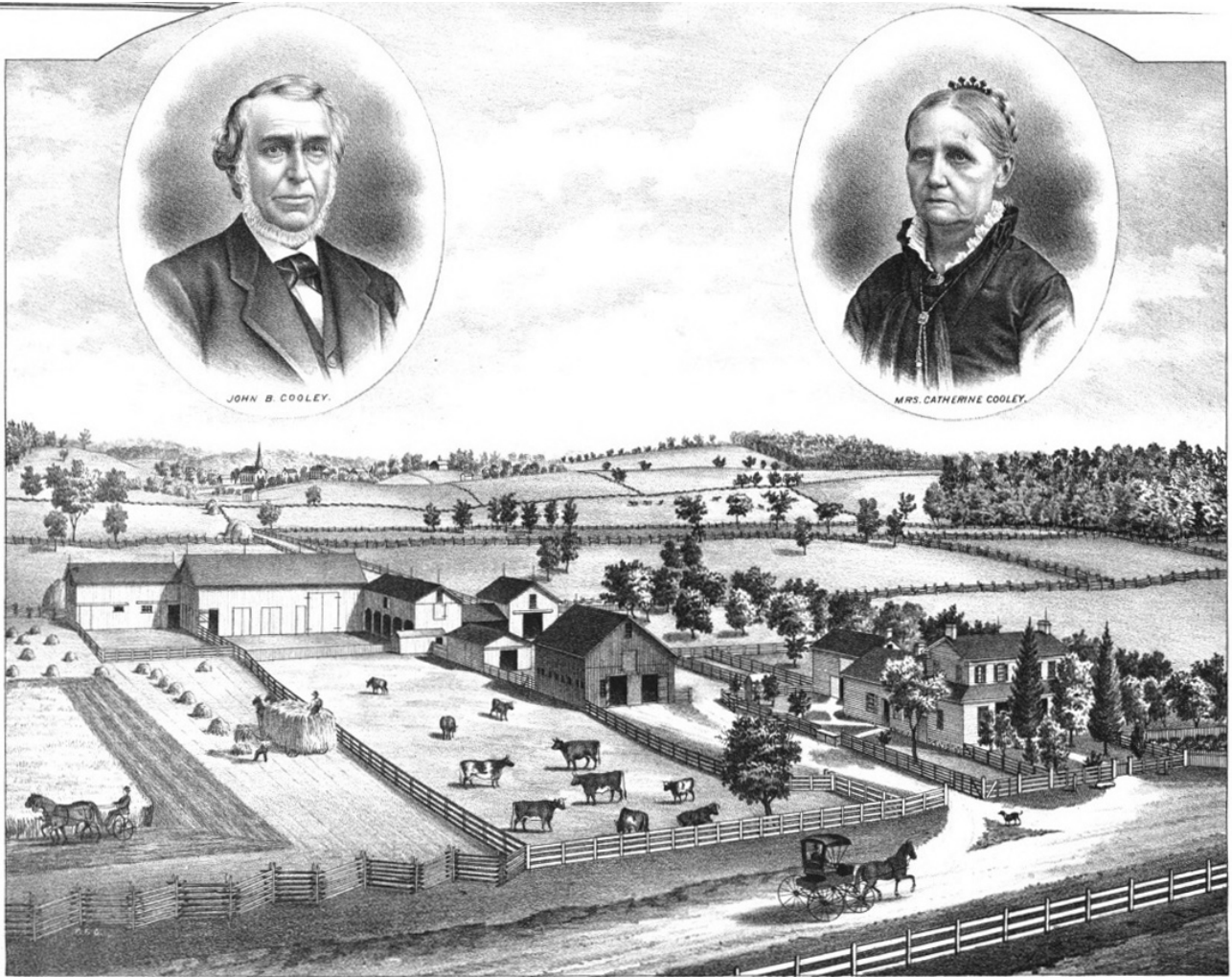
RES. OF COL. AUGUSTINE SACKETT, CANANDAIGUA, ONTARIO Co., NEW YORK.

Figure 36. 1876 illustration of Col. Augustine Sackett's farmstead, which is at 5720 County Road 30 (North Bloomfield Road). McIntosh (1876).



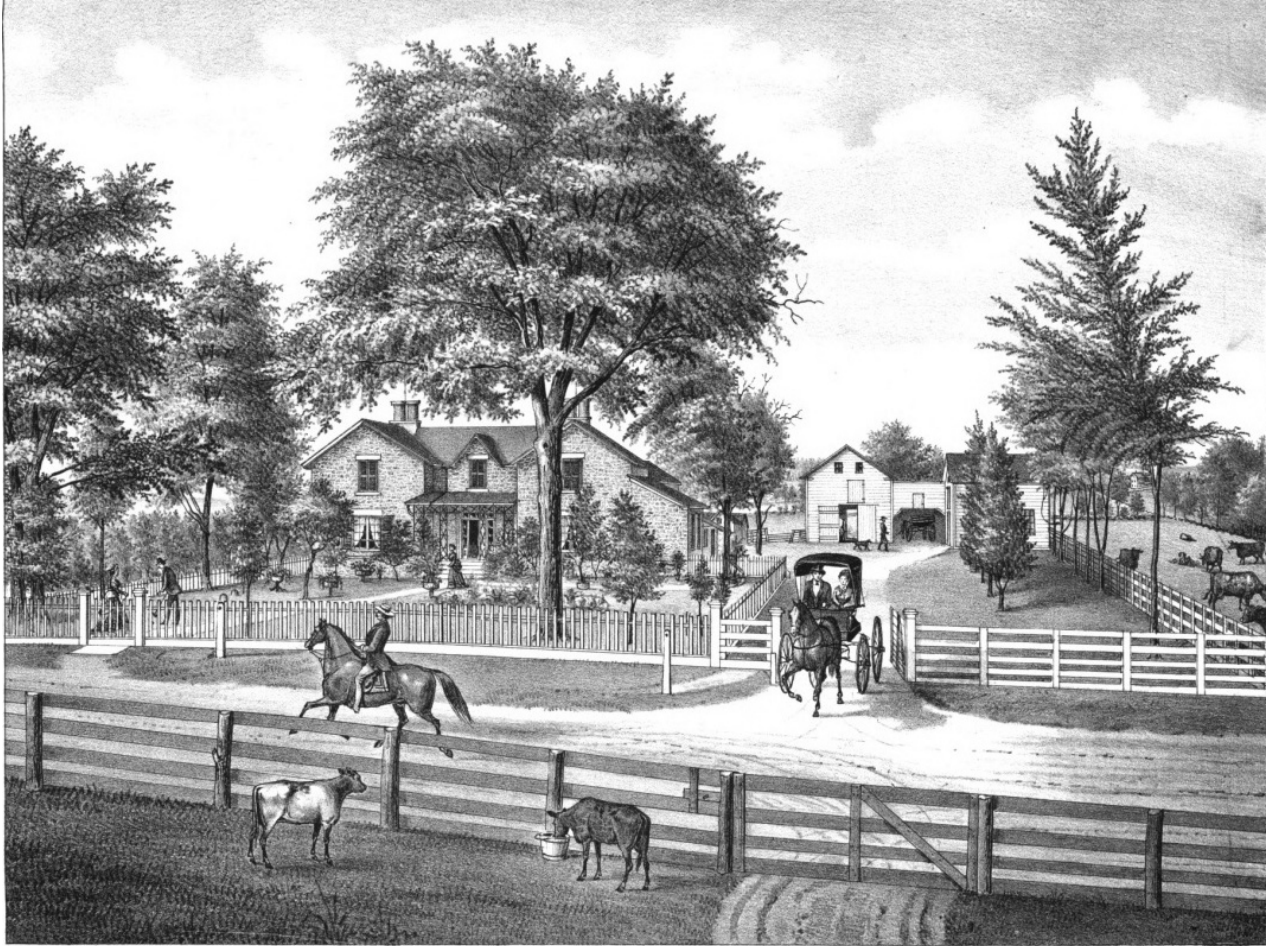
RESIDENCE OF JOHN MALTMAN, ESQ., CANANDAIGUA, N. Y.

Figure 37. 1876 illustration of the farm of John Maltman at 5620 County Road 30 (North Bloomfield Road), just east of Col. Sackett's farm above. The house and both large barns survive, although without the patterned roof shingles or cupola.



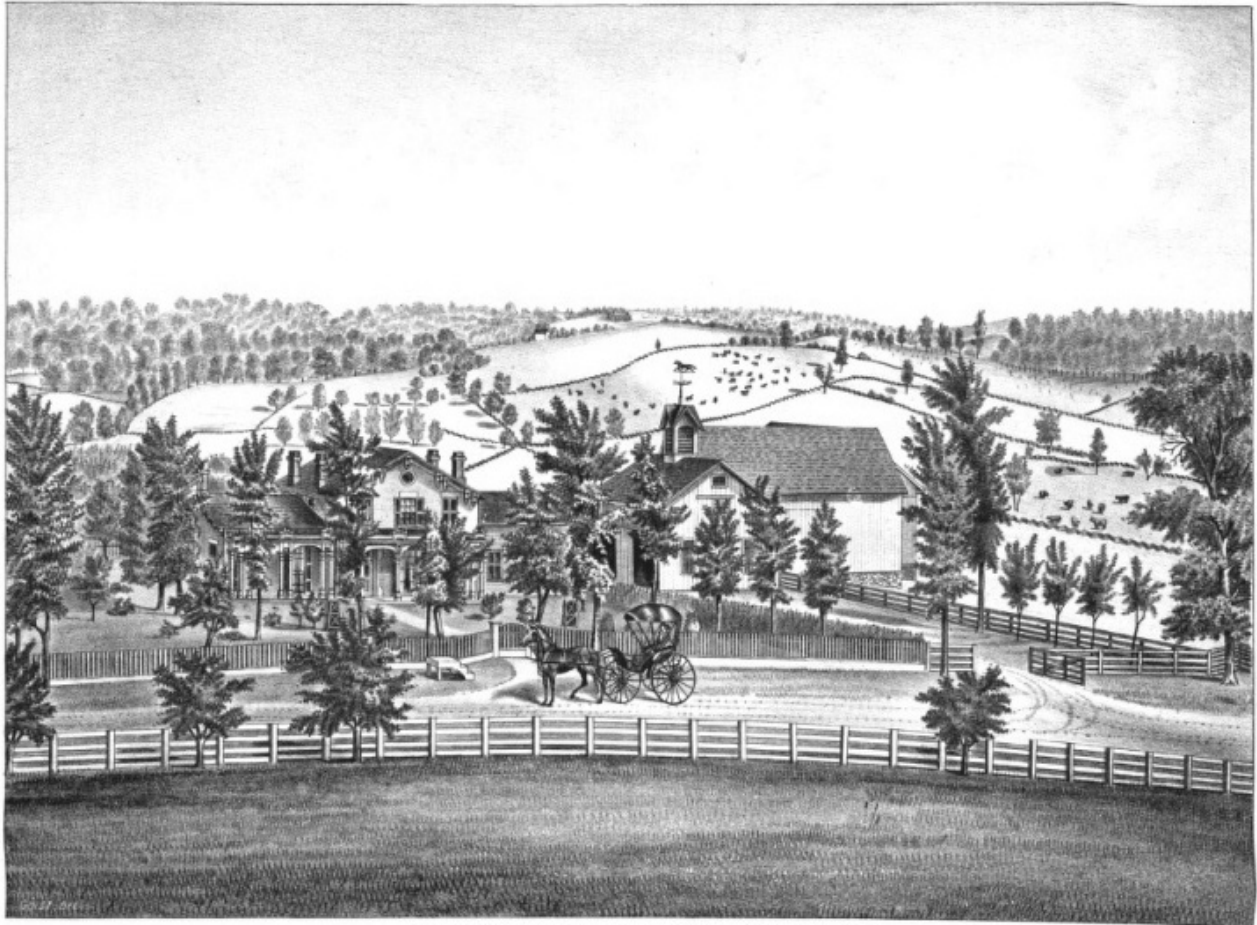
RES. OF CAPT JOHN B. COOLEY, CANANDAIGUA, N. Y.

Figure 38. The farm of John and Catherine Cooley, 2910 Cooley Road, depicted in McIntosh (1876). The Cooleys were among the families who established farms in the northwest part of town.



RES. OF F. A. SACKETT, CANANDAIGUA, N. Y.

Figure 39. 1876 illustration of F. A. Sackett's stone house at 5255 West Avenue Extension, just west of the city of Canandaigua. McIntosh (1876).



RES. OF CAPT GEORGE HICKOX, CANANDAIGUA, NEW YORK.

Figure 40. The farm of Captain George Hickox at 5535 Bliss Road, about two miles southwest of the city of Canandaigua, as depicted in McIntosh (1876).



Figure 41. Edgewater Farms, barns (no longer extant). Ray Henry Collection / *West Lake Legacy*.

Associated Property Types

Agricultural buildings and landscapes in the town of Canandaigua have been unusually well documented by Ray Henry and Jerry (Jake) Repard. Research sources that are now publicly accessible thanks to their efforts include a detailed database of historic barns available online, barn tour descriptions, oral histories with farmers, and more, all of which will be extremely valuable again in Phase 2 of this survey.

Farmsteads: A farmstead is a grouping of buildings, including a house and agricultural outbuildings, plus the fields, meadows, and/or pastures that surround it. *Complete farmsteads* are “properties which continue to function as farms and consist of one or more dwellings plus associated barns and outbuildings.” *Partial farmsteads* are those that “no longer function as farms and of which only the house or the barns, or less likely, only some of the outbuildings remain.” Both complete and partial farmsteads can be considered historically significant resources. Individual elements of a farmstead may also be significant for other reasons: for example, a farmhouse may be an architecturally significant example of a historic style as well as being an important element in a farmstead, or a barn may be a rare example of a specialized outbuilding or framing type.

Farm-based industry buildings: These buildings “focus on the processing of one or more farm products,” for example, cheese factories or flax mills.

Specialty farm buildings: These are “devoted to the production of a commodity for a specialty market,” such as greenhouses, hop houses, or fruit barns.⁶⁶

Other: Other agriculture-related resources include the former Academy Grange in Cheshire (listed in the National Register) and the Ontario County Fairgrounds.

⁶⁶ Definitions of partial and complete farmsteads, farm-based industry buildings, and specialty farm buildings are from Bodner, p. 91.

D. Education

Phelps and Gorham placed a high priority on education, recognizing that a high-quality academy, or private high school, would be an inducement to settlement. In 1791, they deeded 6,000 acres to Ontario County to support an academy. This tract in the south part of Canandaigua became known as the Academy Tract (see Community Planning and Development, Section IV-B). The idea was that proceeds from rental (later sales) of lots in the tract would provide financial support for the school. Canandaigua Academy, located in what is now the city, was incorporated in 1795 as a private school for boys. After the Canandaigua Academy was closed in 1900 it deeded its property to the public school system; the present high school for the Canandaigua school district is still called Canandaigua Academy as a legacy of that institution. The Ontario Female Seminary opened in the village of Canandaigua in 1826 as one of the first private schools for girls in western New York.

Meanwhile, as newcomers moved to Canandaigua in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, it was initially up to them to arrange for the primary-school education of their children. The 1893 *History of Ontario County* records that settlers who arrived in the 1790s set up some local school houses “several years before the beginning of the present century.” In 1795 the state legislature first provided state aid to support elementary schools, but it took longer for a permanent statewide funding mechanism to be established; the initial aid program lapsed in 1800, and was partially revived with new funding in 1805. The Common School Law, passed in 1812, finally established a statewide system of local school districts, overseen by a statewide superintendent and supported by a combination of state aid, local funding, and tuition paid by students’ families.⁶⁷

In accordance with state law, the town of Canandaigua was divided into school districts, each of which had its own school house.⁶⁸ By 1813 there were three free school districts in Canandaigua, two in the village and one in the north part of town; eventually free districts served the entire town. The pink, yellow, green, and orange sections of the 1874 map of Canandaigua depict the districts then in effect, which include “joint” districts drawing students from Canandaigua and the adjacent town (see Map 13a-c). Children attended school seasonally (children who grew up on farms could only attend in the winter months when they were not needed at home). Children could start school in first grade and continue in their rural schoolhouse through eighth grade, which was considered enough of an education for a typical farmer.⁶⁹ Several examples of small nineteenth- and early twentieth-century schoolhouses survive in the town, built of wood, brick, or stone, with one classroom for all the students; some

⁶⁷ *Researching the History of Your School*, (Albany, N.Y.: State Archives, The State Education Department, 1985), pp. 7-8; and Lynn Paulson, City of Canandaigua Historian, “History of Ontario County: Canandaigua Academy, the private school,” *Daily Messenger*, 27 December 2015, accessed online at <https://www.mpnnow.com/news/20151227/history-of-ontario-county-canandaigua-academy-private-school/1>, 5 February 2019.

⁶⁸ Conover, p. 213.

⁶⁹ W. Seward Salisbury, *Farming and Farm Living in New York State in the Horse and Buggy Era* (unpublished manuscript, c. 1965), Ontario County Historical Society Ephemera Collection, Agriculture.

of these have been converted into residences.⁷⁰ Those who wanted to continue their education beyond the eighth grade could attend Canandaigua Academy or the Ontario Female Seminary.

The only section of the town with a large enough population to support more than a one-room rural school house was Cheshire. By the late nineteenth century, Cheshire's one-room school house was replaced by a two-story school. In 1915, four of the rural districts in and around Cheshire consolidated into one district, and a new Union School with four classrooms, a woodworking shop, and other modern facilities was built in the hamlet to accommodate students from the four districts through eighth grade, after which those wishing to continue their education could go to high school in the village.

In 1954, the school districts of the town and city of Canandaigua were merged into one centralized school district. New school board members representing the former town districts were added to the school board in order to ensure both city and rural representation. Two town schools remained open: the Cheshire Union School (School No. 5) and the West Lake Road School (School No. 9). Parents in those districts had the option to continue sending their children to the local school, or to send them to the consolidated schools in the city of Canandaigua. As of 1961, each of these schools served 10 students. The Cheshire Union School closed in 1962, although the building continued to be used for other educational programs for several years. It was subsequently converted to commercial use, and remains a commercial building today.⁷¹ The interior is well preserved, and the building is a significant historic resource that contributes to Cheshire's historic character. The West Lake Road School was the last of the town's rural schools to remain open. This building, constructed in 1906 to replace an earlier building that was situated closer to the lake, was hailed in a 1913 report by Cornell University as a model rural schoolhouse. The school closed in 1969. The building subsequently housed a Montessori School, but was later converted into a community facility and its grounds became a park. Like the Cheshire school, the West Lake Road School has been well preserved, and remains an important historic resource.⁷²

⁷⁰ Jerry (Jake) Repard et al., "School Houses in the Town of Canandaigua," PowerPoint presentation; available online at http://townofcanandaigua.org/documents/large_files/TownOfCanandaiguaDistrictSchools.pdf.

⁷¹ "Public education began in Canandaigua prior to 1880," *Geneva Daily Times*, 17 August 1955; "3,453 Pupils Enroll at Canandaigua," *Democrat and Chronicle*, 7 September 1961; "Trainable class set at Cheshire," *Democrat and Chronicle*, 24 August 1962; and Ray Henry, "A Century of Fond Memories," at the Town of Canandaigua website, <http://www.townofcanandaigua.org/documents/files/Happy%20Birthday%20School%205.pdf>.

⁷² Ray Henry, *Memories of the Heart II* (Canandaigua: Ontario County Historical Society, 2013), pp. 123-147.



Figure 42. School 9. Source: *West Lake Legacy*.

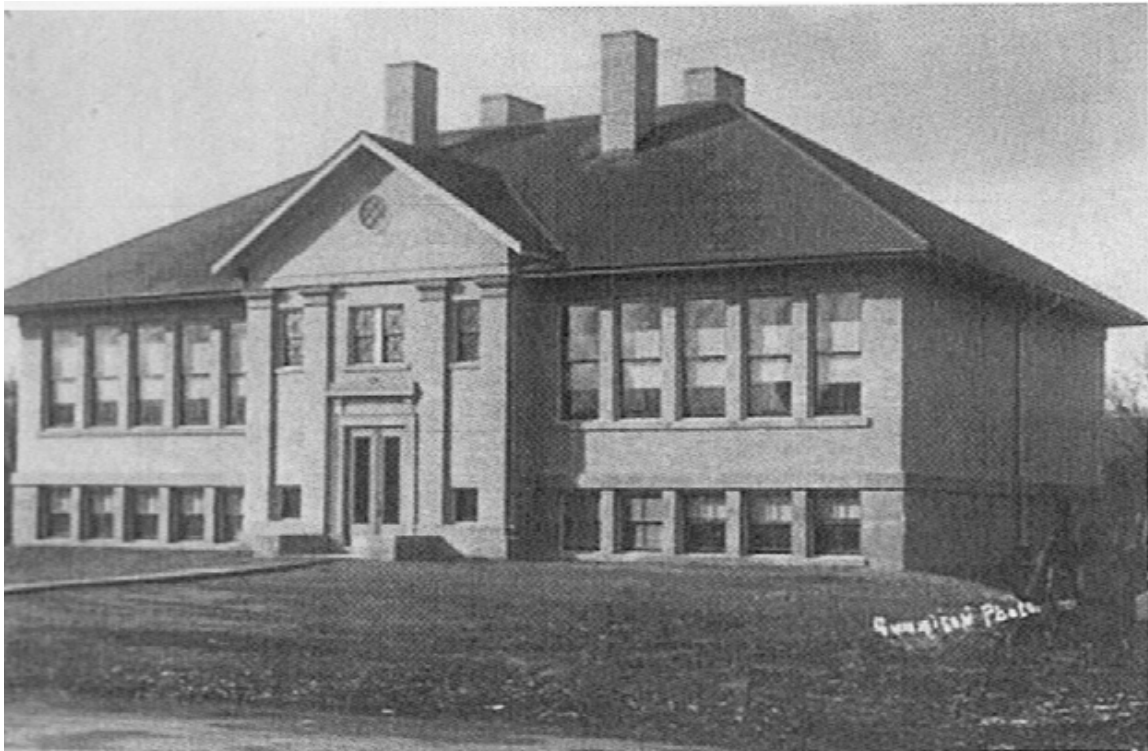


Figure 43. Cheshire Union School. *Town of Canandaigua / A Walking Tour & History of the Town of Canandaigua*.

Associated Property Types

Rural School Houses: All of the surviving school houses, as well as locations of those that do not survive, have been identified in previous research, assembled in the document *School Houses in the Town of Canandaigua* by Jerry (Jake) Repard with Jean Repard, Nila Repard, and Ray Henry.

Union School: The former Cheshire Union School is the only example in the town of Canandaigua of a larger school built when multiple rural districts were combined. In the case of Cheshire, districts 5, 6, 8, and 18 were combined and students from all of those districts began attending the Union School in the hamlet, which had multiple classrooms.

E. Recreation

Cabins and Cottages

Early nineteenth-century native and pioneer residents of Canandaigua viewed the lake primarily as a utilitarian resource rather than a scenic or recreational asset. The lake was a source of fish and a transportation route, but not generally recognized as a source of entertainment or relaxation.

As noted above, West Lake Road began as a typical rural road on which farmers built houses of various degrees of architectural sophistication. Among the notable early houses built near the lake were the elegant cobblestone home of Isaac Parrish, built in 1837, and the house owned by Major Frank Chamberlain in the late nineteenth century, now the Canandaigua Yacht Club. About twice as many houses were built on the west side of present-day West Lake Road as on the east side.

After the Civil War, growing interest in outdoor recreation was expressed in American society in a number of ways, including a nascent parks movement that promoted both the creation of urban parks and the preservation of wilderness areas for their scenic beauty and recreational potential. Spending time in the outdoors was increasingly understood as providing benefits to both physical and psychological health. Meanwhile, the growth of the national train network made it easier for people to travel away from home. In New York State, previously remote places like the Adirondacks and the Thousand Islands attracted wealthy families to build fashionable getaways where they could enjoy the outdoors in style. The Finger Lakes, meanwhile, offered residents of upstate cities a more accessible opportunity to relax in nature.

Once steamboats began providing regular passenger service up and down Canandaigua Lake, it became much easier for people to consider vacationing and living along the lake well south of the village. Steamboats picked up passengers at what is now the City Pier in Canandaigua, and conveyed them to docks and landings along the lakefront. The steamboats stopped at all the points that jutted out into the lake. These points became the earliest sites of cottages and hotels thanks to steamboat access as well as the views and level terrain that made them desirable building sites. In addition to passengers, steamboats transported mail and groceries to cottages and hotels, and conveyed produce to the pier during harvest season.

Some prosperous Canandaigua residents began building summer houses on the lakefront in the second half of the nineteenth century. In a paper he wrote in 1931, Dr. Robert Cook recalled the origins of summer cottages along the lake, by which he seems to have meant any sort of private summer house used for recreation, whether by families or organizations. He remembered three early summer places at the south end of Canandaigua, on and around Black Point: the Black Point Association's club house, built in 1844; the Foresters' Club (Figure 44), which later became a private house; and the Hermitage, which was lost to fire in 1901. According to Dr. Cook, these were the only summer "cottages or cabins" along the west side of the lake in Canandaigua as of 1870, although there were summer places on the lake to the south in South Bristol, and a handful of year-round houses close to the waterfront in Canandaigua.⁷³ Other

⁷³ Cook, p. 19.

nineteenth-century clubs on the lake included the Seneca Nation, the Waltons, the Vine Club, and the Last Man's Club.

Residents of the city of Canandaigua as well as farmers built lakefront cottages starting in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. For example, the 1893 *History of Ontario County* recorded that Hiram Freer lived on a 100-acre farm his father had purchased on the west shore of Canandaigua Lake. After buying part of his family's farm in 1890, Freer "erected a commodious horse barn and a summer cottage on the lake shore."⁷⁴ Several other families, including the Menteth and Johnson families, were also recorded in the 1893 *History* as having built summer lakefront cottages.

Many families moved to their summer cottages once school got out and stayed until Labor Day. Those with jobs in the village of Canandaigua could commute via steamboat:

Many of Canandaigua's business men spent the summer in their 'Cabins up the Lake' and daily commuted by boat to and from the village. Each on rising, eagerly would scan the waters for the white sides of the approaching boat; for, if she was about to cross the lake to Whiskey Point or Vine Valley, it meant for him a less hasty breakfast or one more griddle cake or cup of coffee.⁷⁵

As of 1891, there were 75 lakefront cottages on the entire lake, including both sides in both the town of Canandaigua and adjacent towns.⁷⁶ By 1900, there were 160 cottages on the entire lake, and by 1905 there were nearly 300.⁷⁷ With increased automobile ownership and improvements to roads in the twentieth century, more and more people could access the lake, and cottage construction skyrocketed as farms and other large properties were subdivided. By 1945 there were over 1,160 cottages on the lake (again including both sides along the entire length of the lake).⁷⁸ In 1958, unnamed Canandaigua city officials were cited in a newspaper article asserting that "Canandaigua's lake population had 'doubled in the past 10 years and its boat population is about tripled.'"⁷⁹ That number has continued to grow; meanwhile many early cottages have been replaced by larger summer and year-round houses.

⁷⁴ Conover, p. 295.

⁷⁵ Lee, Part 2 of 3, 16 August 1922.

⁷⁶ *Watkins Express*, 30 July 1891: "The magnitude of cottage life about the shores of the water of the Lake Country may be inferred from the fact that a careful enumeration recently made of those on Canandaigua Lake revealed seventy-five, including those partially and soon to be constructed. Of that number fifteen, or just one-fifth are on the east side."

⁷⁷ "Home Matters," *Advertiser-Gazette* (Geneva, N.Y.), 6 July 1905.

⁷⁸ Pierce, "Historical Tour."

⁷⁹ "New boat sanitation rules set for lake," *Democrat and Chronicle*, 1 October 1958.



Figure 44. Foresters' Cabin at Black Point. Source: *Canandaigua 1850-1930*.

Hotels

At the same time that summer cottages were beginning to appear along the lake during the steamboat era, entrepreneurs began operating summer hotels catering to vacationers. The Seneca Point Hotel, south of the town of Canandaigua, was a relatively large establishment with over 60 rooms, but this was the exception: the typical hotel along the lake was a single-family summer cottage that was expanded or converted into a small family-run hotel offering rustic accommodations and outdoor activities.⁸⁰ The most notable hotels in the town of Canandaigua were the Walterita near Menteth Point (Figures 45-46) and the Park-Hurst Resort at Point Rochester. The Park-Hurst, later called Shale Glen, featured a dance pavilion, snack bar, tennis courts, and tourist boats.⁸¹ Maintop, south of Menteth Point, was an example of a sizable residence that was used temporarily as a hotel before being converted back to a private house (Figure 47).

⁸⁰ Ray Henry, in *West Lake Legacy: The Road to Onanda* (The Ontario County Historical Society, 2011).

⁸¹ *West Lake Legacy: The Road to Onanda*.

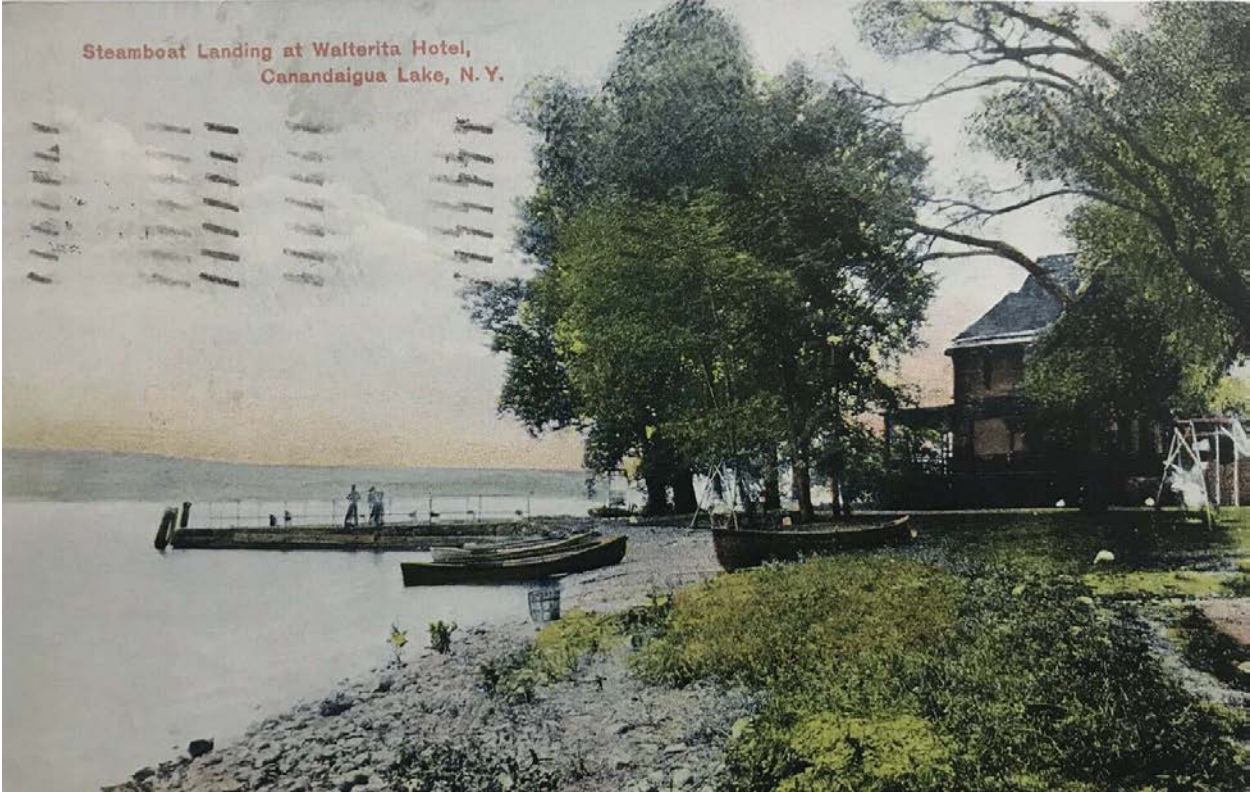


Figure 45. Walterita Hotel, around the turn of the 20th century. Historic postcard.



Figure 46. The Walterita Hotel. Ray Henry Collection / *West Lake Legacy*.



Figure 47. Maintop, south of Menteth Point, was a private house, briefly a hotel, then a private house again. Source: *West Lake Legacy*.

Summer Camps

Another manifestation of Americans' growing interest in nature as an antidote to modern urban life was the creation of summer camps for children and young adults. The first true summer camp was established in New Hampshire in 1881, and specifically aimed to provide an alternative summer experience to "the miserable condition of boys belonging to well-to-do families in the summer hotels," by offering a rustic environment in which boys would be responsible for providing their own food and shelter.⁸² By 1900, there were fewer than 100 camps in the United States; this number grew to over 1,000 by 1918.⁸³

One of those first 100 camps was the Natural Science Camp on Tichenor Point in Canandaigua, founded in 1890 by Professor Albert L. Arey of the Rochester Free Academy and the Mechanics' Institute (precursor to the Rochester Institute of Technology) (Figure 48). The camp focused on hands-on instruction in geology, botany, entomology, taxidermy, and photography, as well as sports and other outdoor activities. The camp was open to boys in its first year, and began offering a separate session for girls in 1891. Starting in 1895, boys and girls attended at the same time, occupying tents in separate areas. The Natural Science Camp was thus one of the first co-ed camps in the country, and may even have been the very first. Campers came from all over New York State and other northeastern cities as well. The facilities were continually improved, as the growth of the camp required expansions to infrastructure. Campers slept in canvas tents on wooden platforms. There were also a few permanent buildings, including a horse barn close

⁸² Ernest Balch, cited in Michael B. Smith, "'The Ego Ideal of the Good Camper' and the Nature of Summer Camp," *Environmental History* 11, No. 1 (January 2006), pp. 70-101: 75.

⁸³ Smith, p. 77.

to West Lake Road, a former apple packing house that was used as a guest house, and a wood mess hall. The camp also had a two-story dock, used by campers as they arrived and departed via steamboat and as a swimming dock. In 1904, the owners of the land sold it, and the mess hall and supplies that could be moved were transported by steamboat and railroad to a new site on Keuka Lake. (The guest house and horse barn were not moved.) The former site of the Natural Science Camp was used briefly as a YMCA camp called Camp Iola, then a Boy Scout camp, before being subdivided. The former horse barn was converted into a private house, and other substantial houses were built on the former camp grounds. Only the former apple packing house that became a guest house remains, now used as a private residence (Figure 49).⁸⁴

The Natural Science Camp was the first and most innovative camp in Canandaigua, and was significant as a representative of the first phase of the American summer camp movement. Others followed, when that movement was at its height. In 1906, the YWCA began renting houses at Point Rochester on the west side of Canandaigua Lake, where they offered young working women who boarded at their downtown facilities the opportunity to take a waterfront vacation. The cottages known as the “Nest” and the “Big House” (also known as the “Willows”) could accommodate 38 girls and sometimes housed even more. In 1919, the YWCA purchased land adjacent to the two rental houses from the Foster family, and officially established Camp Onanda (Figures 50-51). In its early days, the camp consisted of the Foster family house that stood on the site, to which additional dormitories, cabins, and other camp buildings were added in the 1920s. The camp at first continued to serve young working women from 18 to 25 years old. By 1926, the camp also accommodated school-age campers.⁸⁵ In 1982, Camp Onanda began hosting Camp Good Days and Special Times, a camp oriented to children with cancer, in addition to traditional girls’ sessions. The YWCA camp closed suddenly in 1988, and in 1989 the Town of Canandaigua purchased the former Camp Onanda and turned it into Onanda Park, keeping the camp buildings, including several that dated to the 1920s.⁸⁶

A contemporary of Camp Onanda was Camp Madonna, which was established near Menteth Point by the Catholic Women’s Club as a camp for girls around 1920. Camp Madonna lasted until 1956, after which the site was sold and redeveloped. There were twentieth-century overnight summer camps on Canandaigua Lake in other lakefront towns as well.

⁸⁴ Ray Henry, *The Natural Science Camp at Tichenor Point* (Canandaigua: Ontario County Historical Society, 2010). This book provides an outstanding history of the site and is illustrated with many historic photographs.

⁸⁵ Carol Truesdale, *When Camp Onanda Gives Her Call* (Charleston, S.C.: The History Press, 2015), pp. 25-45.

⁸⁶ Truesdale, pp. 107-114. Camp Good Days and Special Times still exists, now at a location on Keuka Lake.



Figure 48. Tents at the Natural Science Camp, Tichenor Point, c. 1890s. Ray Henry Collection / *West Lake Legacy*.



Figure 49. This building on the west side of West Lake Road, a former apple packing house, served as the guest quarters for the Natural Science Camp and is now a private residence. Source: *West Lake Legacy* / *Natural Science Camp*.



Figure 50. Two camp buildings at Camp Onanda. Source: *West Lake Legacy*.



Figure 51. Waterfront at Camp Onanda, circa 1922. Albert R. Stone Negative Collection, Rochester Museum & Science Center.

Auto-Oriented Recreation

In the second quarter of the twentieth century, Americans began relying on the car to get them to their vacation destinations. Whereas the typical vacation of the nineteenth century involved taking a train or boat to a location and staying there for an extended period of time, the freedom of the automobile meant that “tourists did not need to settle in for the season; they could travel at their own pace, move around from place to place, wander off the beaten track, and even enjoy the trip to one’s destination.”⁸⁷ Tourist campgrounds, tourist courts, and motels were new types of accommodations oriented to vacationers traveling by car.

In Canandaigua, entrepreneurs began establishing new businesses oriented to automobile tourists in and just beyond the east side of the city, near the lake and easily accessible via Route 5 & 20, which was one of two major east-west highways across New York State prior to construction of the New York State Thruway. Roseland Park (Figure 11) opened in 1925 in the city of Canandaigua, and is said to have been “one of the first amusement parks in the U.S. designed to be reached by automobile.”⁸⁸ Nearby Kershaw Park, created by filling in land next to Lakeshore Drive (then routes 5 & 20) opened in 1936 and offered public access to the waterfront, also within city limits.

As more vacationers traveled by car in the 1930s and 1940s, a new form of hotel called the “tourist court” or “cabin court” developed. These were groups of individual cabins, often arranged in a line or semicircle and giving motorists the opportunity to park right next to their cabins. The “Motel” developed as a variation on this concept, in which the simple rooms were arranged in one linear building rather than individual cottages. These sometimes were designed to evoke a theme, such as Colonial America, and often featured large signs designed to catch motorists’ eyes. Tourist courts and motels developed in Canandaigua as part of the growth of the tourism industry in the city and town in the mid-twentieth century; most were located near the growing entertainment complex around Roseland Park and Kershaw Park (Figures 52-54).

⁸⁷ Thomas Weiss, “Tourism in America Before World War II,” *The Journal of Economic History* 64, No. 2 (June 2004), 289-327: pp. 312-313.

⁸⁸ Alan Morrell, “Whatever Happened to ... Roseland Park?” *Democrat & Chronicle*, 26 April 2014.

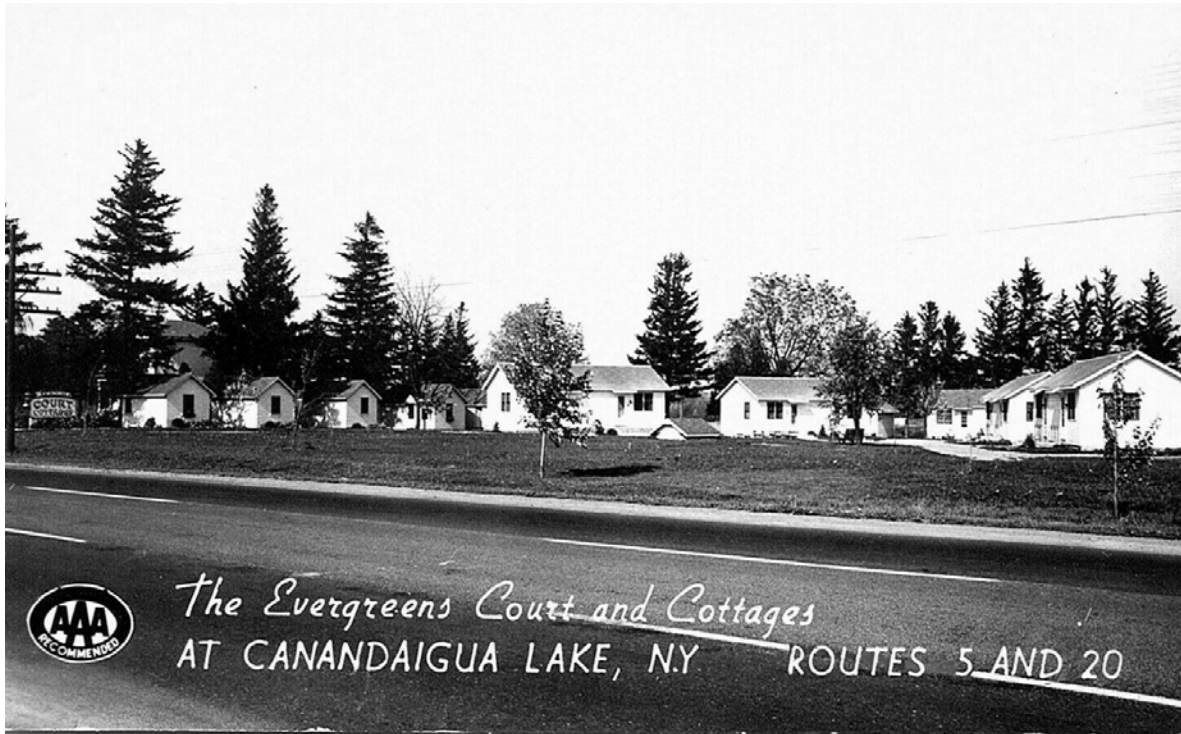


Figure 52. The Evergreens Court and Cottages was a "Tourist Court" style of motel. Historic Postcard.



Figure 53. 1950s view of the Evergreens, which is now Pinewood Manor Motel at 4425 Lakeshore Drive. The individual cabins, shown at left in the previous photo and upper left of this photo, do not survive.



Figure 54. Georgian Motel, 2580 Route 332.

Private Sporting Clubs

Several social and sports-oriented clubs have historic ties to Canandaigua. Originally known as the Canandaigua Sailing Club, the Canandaigua Yacht Club was organized in 1891, and built its first clubhouse near the city pier in the city of Canandaigua, where it operated for a few years before going dormant. When it was revived in 1930, it was based at Booth Cottage, four miles south of the city of Canandaigua on the west side of the lake. The club moved to Menteth Point in 1933, then across the lake to Thendara in the town of Gorham in 1935. Finally, in 1939, the yacht club moved to its present location in the former Chamberlain house at 3524 West Lake Road (Figures 55-56).⁸⁹

The Canandaigua Country Club, on the east side of the lake just south of the city line, was incorporated in 1922; the club purchased its current site, formerly the site of a slaughterhouse, in 1923. The developer of the country club built a golf course and subdivided the lakefront portion of the property into small summer cottage lots (see Community Planning and Development, Section IV-B).⁹⁰ A second golf course in Canandaigua, originally known as Kanandaque Golf and Country Club, opened in 1963 on Brickyard Road; it is now known as CenterPointe Golf Club.

⁸⁹ *Club History*, Canandaigua Yacht Club, <https://www.sailcyc.com/about.cfm?subpage=529360>, and Pierce, “Historical Tour.”

⁹⁰ Pierce, “Historical Tour.”

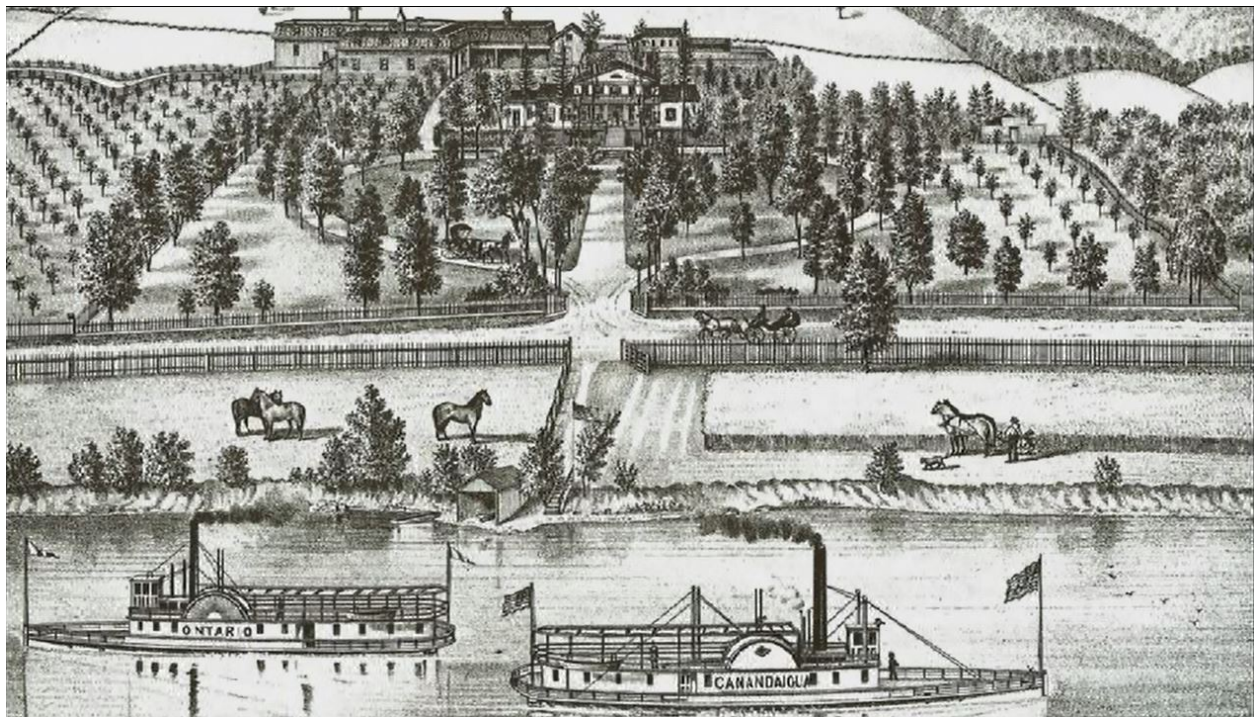


Figure 55. The Chamberlain house, center top of this image from McIntosh (1876), now the Canandaigua Yacht Club.



Figure 56. Historic view of the Chamberlain house, now the Canandaigua Yacht Club, from the Town of Canandaigua Collection / *West Lake Legacy*.

Associated Property Types

Steamboat-era cabins, cottages, and hotels: These are a significant but rare building type along Canandaigua Lake. In historic descriptions such as that of Dr. Cook, it appears that there was considerable overlap among uses in this category, with some sites repurposed over time as family summer homes, private clubs, and small-scale hotels. The word “cottage” or “cabin” might be used to describe a small-scale rustic dwelling being used for any of these purposes. These often adopted a rustic, Adirondack-inspired architectural character in keeping with their function. Because these buildings were not winterized and offered primitive conditions, they were often upgraded beyond recognition or replaced by larger, more modern summer or year-round houses. Surviving examples are significant, especially if they retain their rustic character and relationship to the lake.

Summer Camps: Canandaigua’s summer camp sites have been redeveloped for other uses; in most cases, buildings were removed or demolished, with only Camp Onanda, now a town park, retaining a collection of historic camp buildings. Some architectural and/or landscape features associated with the earlier camps survive, such as the former guest house at the Natural Science Camp.

Sports Clubs: Although their uses are similar, as public or private facilities devoted to a particular outdoor pursuit, the Canandaigua Yacht Club, Canandaigua Golf Club, and Centerpointe Golf Club will need to be evaluated individually rather than as a group due to their disparate origins and architectural characteristics. The Canandaigua Yacht Club is housed in a building that predates the club and has its own significance associated with its previous history.

Auto-Oriented Motels: These are relevant to Canandaigua’s tourism industry, which began to grow in the 1920s as more vacationers traveled by car and has continued to expand. The area around the former Roseland Park site on Lakeshore Drive has several examples (not all of which are in the town of Canandaigua, but some are) and there is one on Route 332.

F. Miscellaneous Resources

The identification of themes that significantly affected the history and physical growth of Canandaigua, and of property types that exemplify those themes, provides a framework for identification and analysis of historic resources in Phase II, but is not intended to limit those investigations to those themes or property types. Throughout the town, there are historic resources that are not closely tied to any of the themes identified above. An example is the former Our Lady of Lebanon Chapel, which was built in 1915 to offer Mass to Catholics living on the lake during the summer, including girls attending Camp Madonna. The field work methodology for Phase II will allow for identification of historic resources through visual identification, research, and through the property list generated by the Town Assessor.



Figure 57. Our Lady of Lebanon Chapel. Historic postcard.

V. Recommendations for Phase Two

This report is the first phase in a two-part reconnaissance-level survey. This type of survey, sometimes called a “windshield” survey, takes a “once over lightly” approach to resource identification, “most useful for characterizing its resources in general and for developing a basis for deciding how to organize and orient more detailed survey efforts.”⁹¹ Typically a survey of this nature consists of two major components: a context statement and annotated property list. In this case, due to the size of the town and funding limitations, these two components are being done in two phases, with this context statement laying the groundwork for a future phase that will involve preparation of the annotated property list.

A task that should be undertaken early in the second phase is to develop a set of guidelines for properties to be included in the annotated property list. Typically, one category of historic resources identified in a survey is properties (including buildings, structures, sites, and objects, as well as districts made up of multiple individual properties) that appear to meet National Register eligibility criteria. The National Register is a largely honorary program that recognizes properties that are significant on the local, state, or national level. National Register listing does not prevent private owners from altering or demolishing their buildings using private funding; grant and tax credit programs are available for some types of projects involving the rehabilitation of a National Register-listed property.

The criteria for listing in the National Register are as follows:

NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and:

- A.** That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- B.** That are associated with the lives of significant persons in our past; or
- C.** That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D.** That have yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory.

Surveys also typically identify properties that do not meet National Register criteria, often due to compromised integrity, but are still important to the community and are worthy of some form of

⁹¹ Anne Derry, et al, *National Register Bulletin 24, Guidelines for Local Surveys: A Basis for Preservation Planning* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, 1977, rev. 1985), p. 12.

documentation and recognition. Municipalities that have enacted a preservation ordinance have the ability to designate such properties as local landmarks, which can offer more protection than is possible under the National Register, depending on the strength of the preservation ordinance. Typical preservation ordinances establish a preservation commission (sometimes known by another name, such as “architectural review board”) that is authorized to designate landmarks and that must review exterior alterations to landmarks before work can begin. In municipalities with preservation ordinances, the criteria for local landmark designation can also guide survey efforts.

Because Canandaigua does not have a preservation ordinance, a useful activity early in the second phase will be for the consultant to work with the Local History Team and other stakeholders to develop criteria for selection of properties to be documented in the survey. Criteria may vary depending on property type. For example, while post-World War II residential development is an important aspect of Canandaigua’s history, houses of this era are common, both in Canandaigua and in other suburban and exurban settings; only the most significant and intact examples will be worthy of inclusion in the survey. On the other hand, masonry farmhouses are a rare property type in Canandaigua, and every surviving example is likely to be worthy of documentation, even those that have been extensively altered. The criteria to be used will depend in part on how the Local History Team foresees using the information. If the goal is to identify only those resources with the potential for National Register listing or local landmark designation (if Canandaigua were to enact an ordinance), the criteria for inclusion might be narrower than if the goal is to develop history tours or other programming that could include properties whose physical integrity has been compromised.

Once criteria have been established, property identification in the second phase will include a combination of techniques, including analysis of historic and current maps and aerial photographs, driving tours (and, potentially, tours by boat to see lakefront properties), and closer in-person investigation of selected properties.

In addition to the annotated property list, which will include photographs of and information about properties that meet the selection criteria, the Phase Two report will include recommendations for future study and for actions the Town can undertake to celebrate and protect historic resources.

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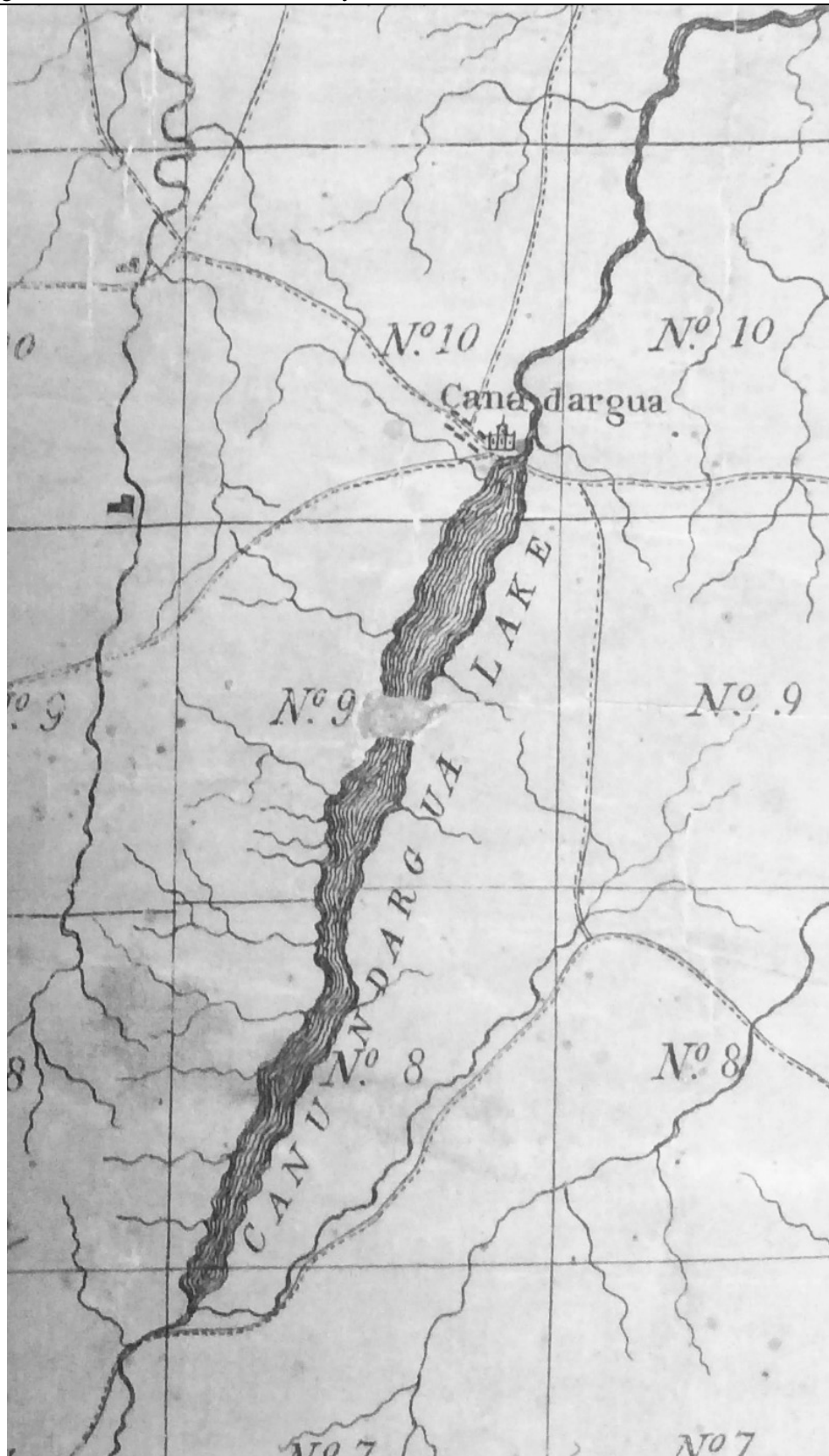
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In addition to the written sources listed above, Ray Henry provided a great deal of information in interviews and driving tours conducted in the fall of 2018 and spring of 2019.

APPENDIX I: HISTORIC MAPS



Map 1. Map of the Phelps & Gorham Purchase, showing original township and range divisions. Canandaigua encompasses Township 10 and part of Township 9 of the 3rd Range, as outlined. A. Porter, [1794].



Map 2. Detail of Canandaigua Lake on the 1794 Porter map of the Phelps & Gorham Purchase. Ontario County Historical Society.



Map 3. Northwest part of the Town of Canandaigua, showing original lot divisions by Phelps and Gorham, and indicating names of purchasers as of 1794. New York State Library.



Map 4. Northeast part of the Town of Canandaigua, showing original lot divisions by Phelps and Gorham, and indicating names of purchasers as of 1794. New York State Library.



Map 5. South part of the Town of Canandaigua, showing original Phelps & Gorham lot divisions and purchasers as of 1794. Note the Academy tract at the far south end of town that was set aside. New York State Library.



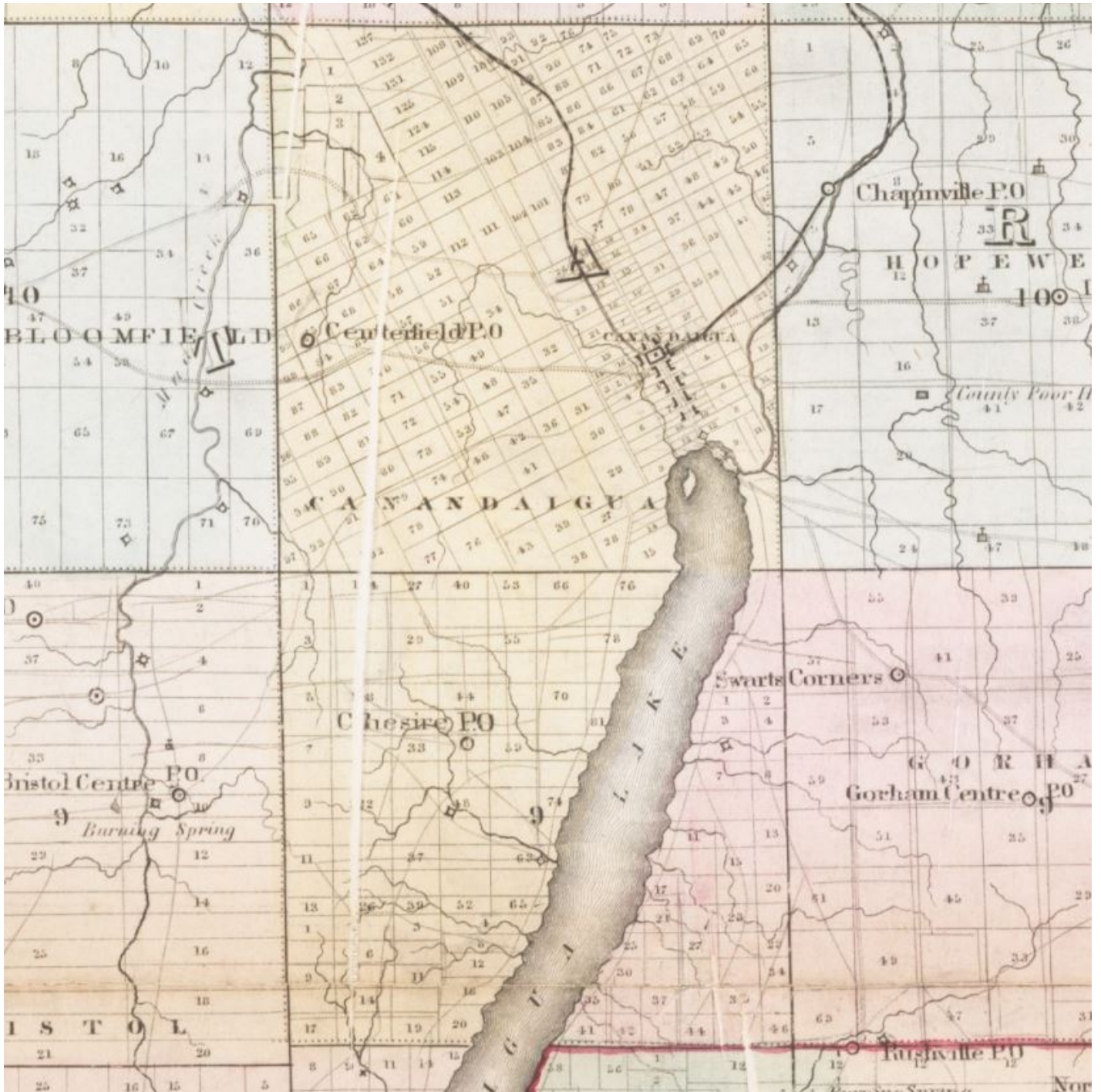
Map 6. 1804 *Map of the State of New York* ([Albany?] 1804), Library of Congress.



Map 7. 1808 *Map of the State of New York*. Library of Congress.

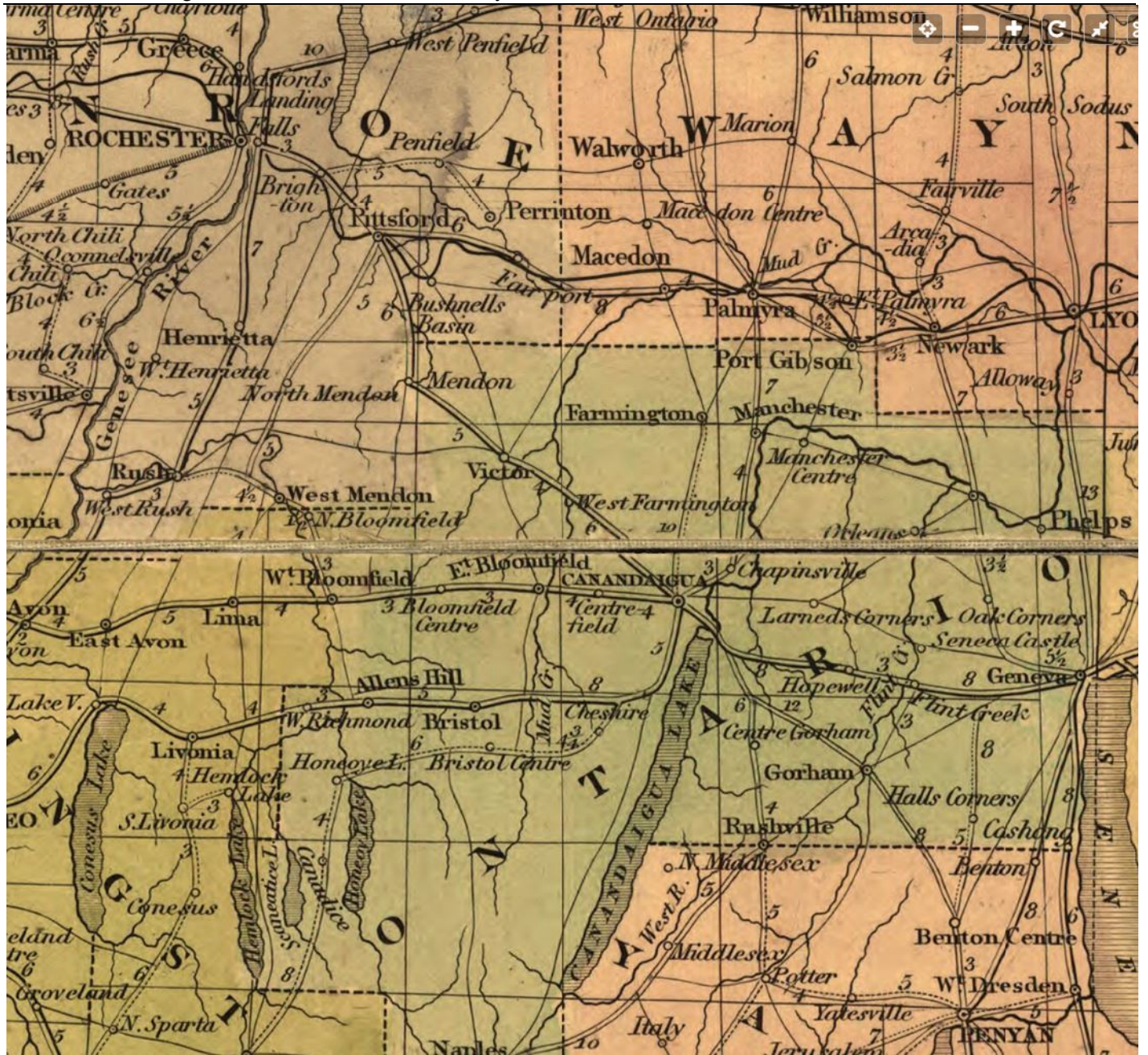


Map 8. *New York*, c. 1823. Henry Schenck Tanner, c. 1823. Library of Congress.



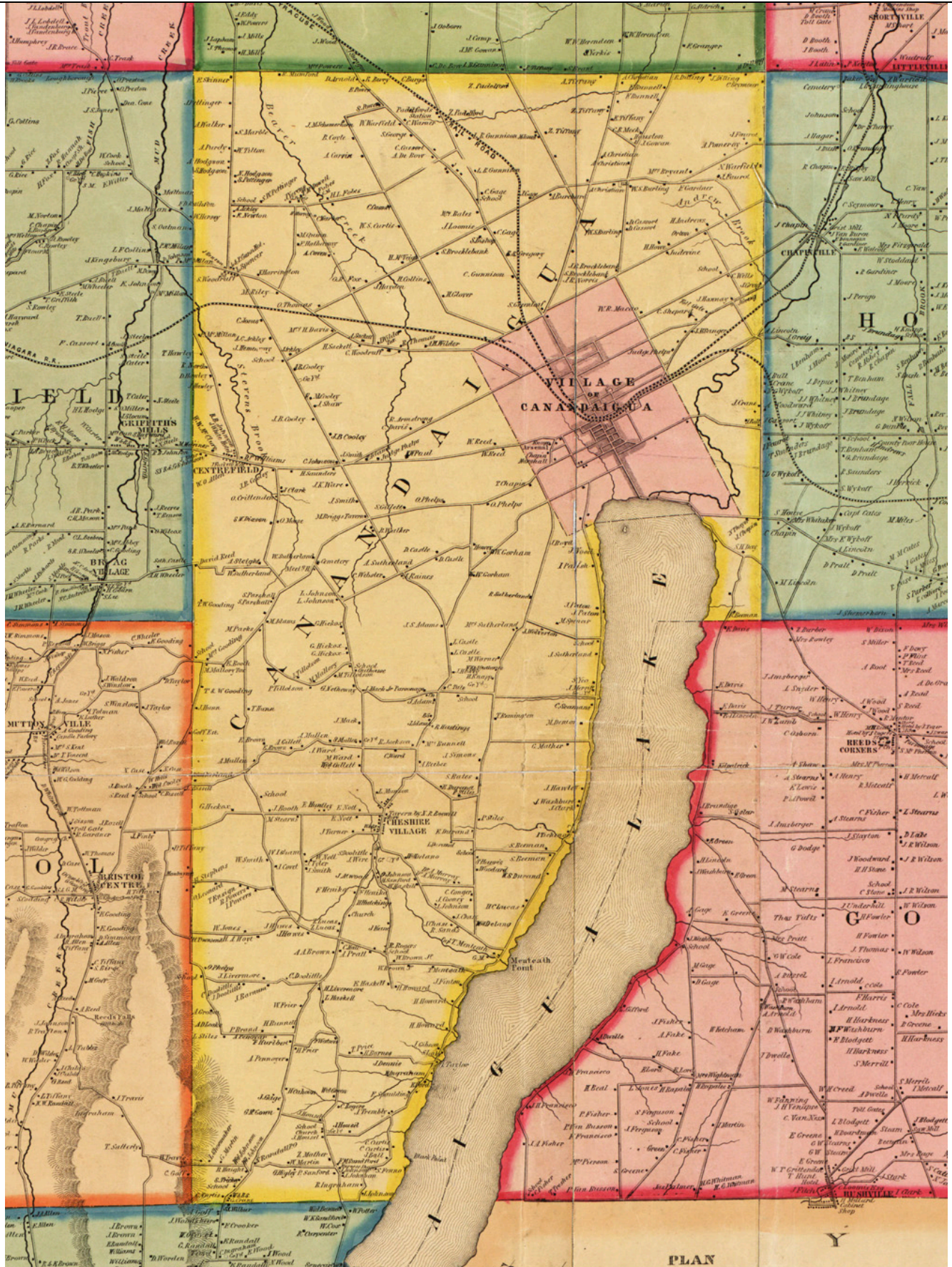
Map 9. Map of the Counties of Ontario and Yates. New York Public Library Digital Collections. The NYPL gives a date range of 1829-1839; given that the Auburn and Rochester Railroad Tracks are shown, the date cannot be earlier than 1838.

Town of Canandaigua Reconnaissance-Level Survey

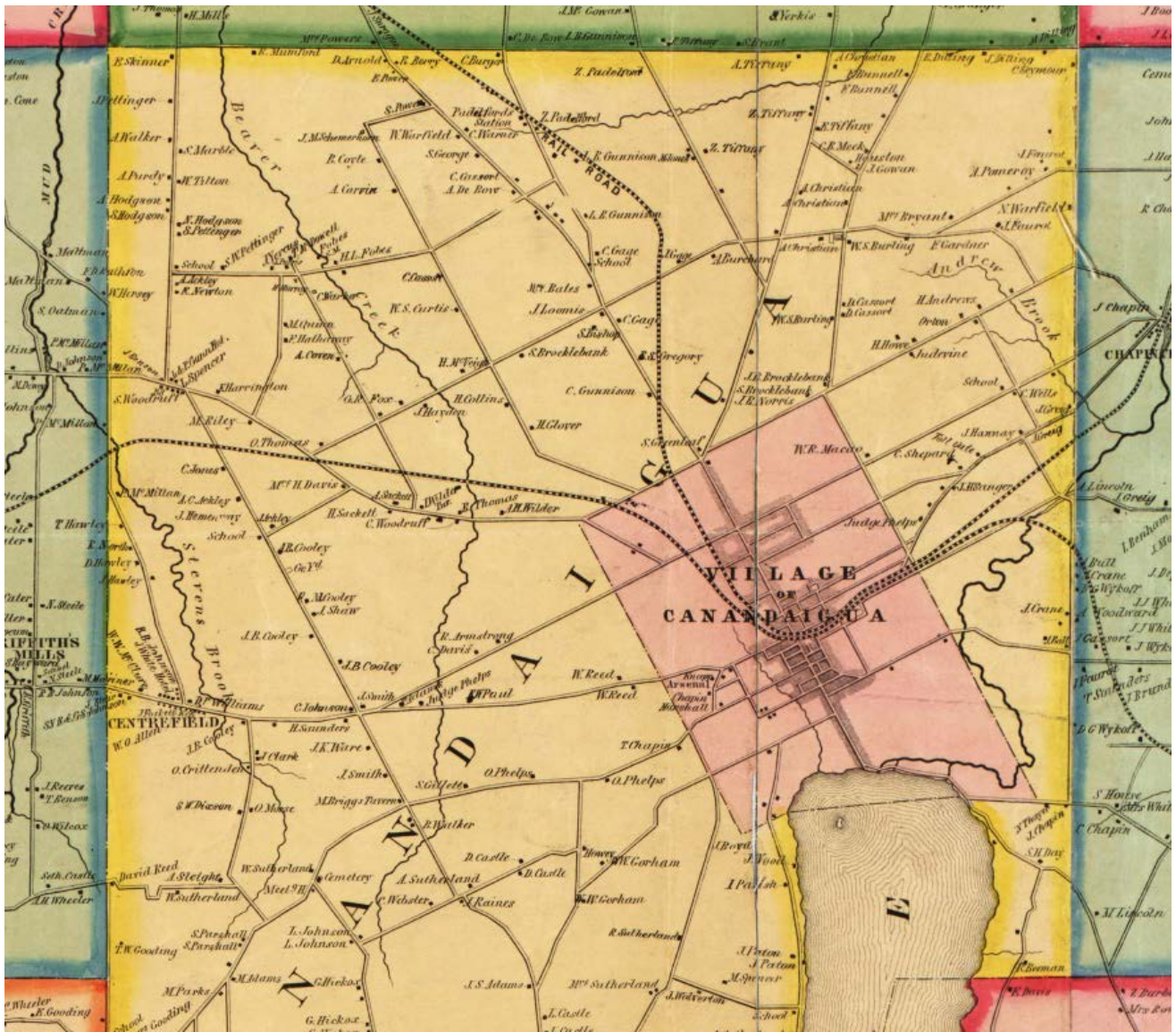


Map 10. *Map of New York...* David H. Burr; 1839. Library of Congress.

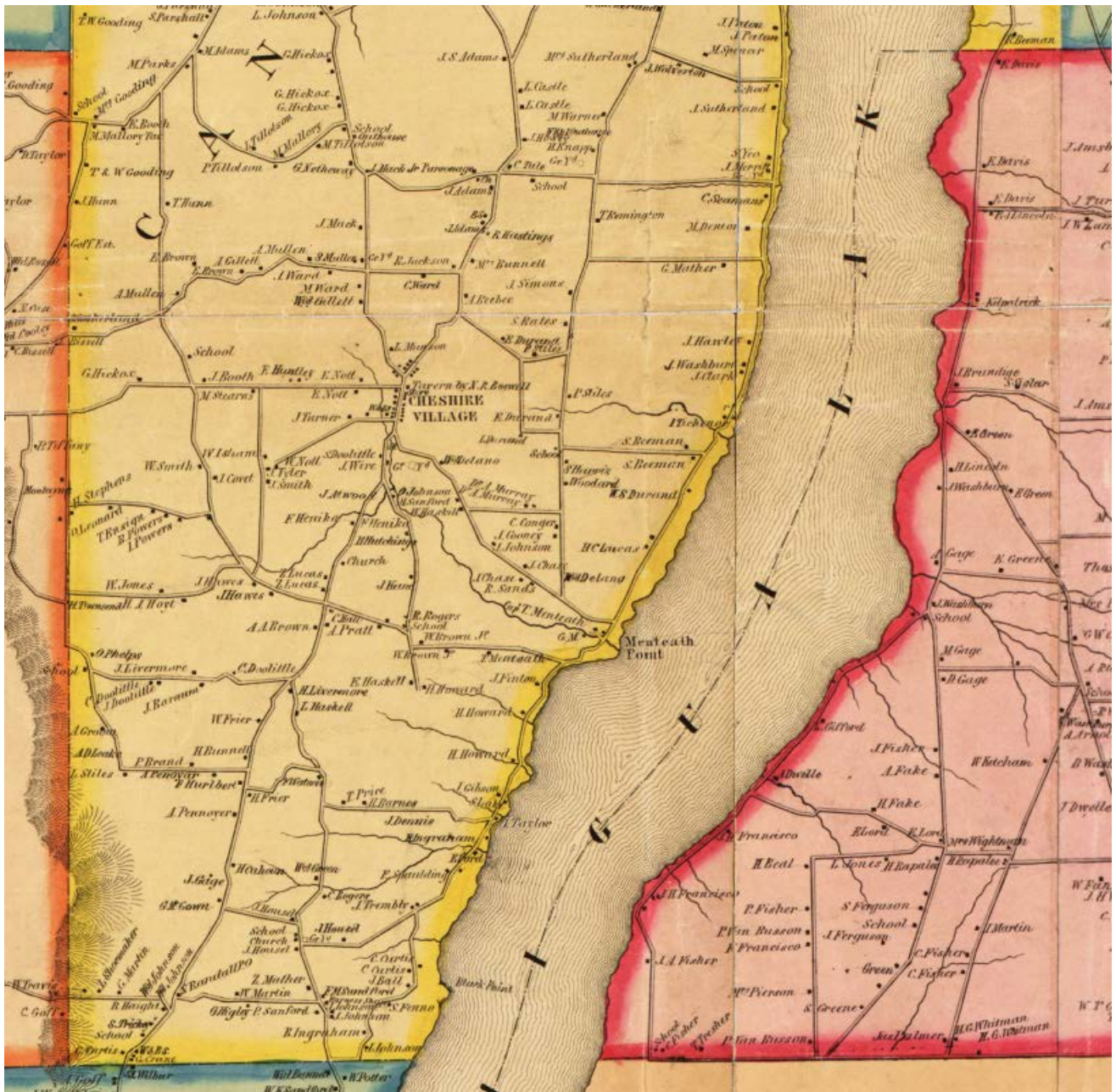
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Map 11a. 1852 Map of Ontario County. Library of Congress.

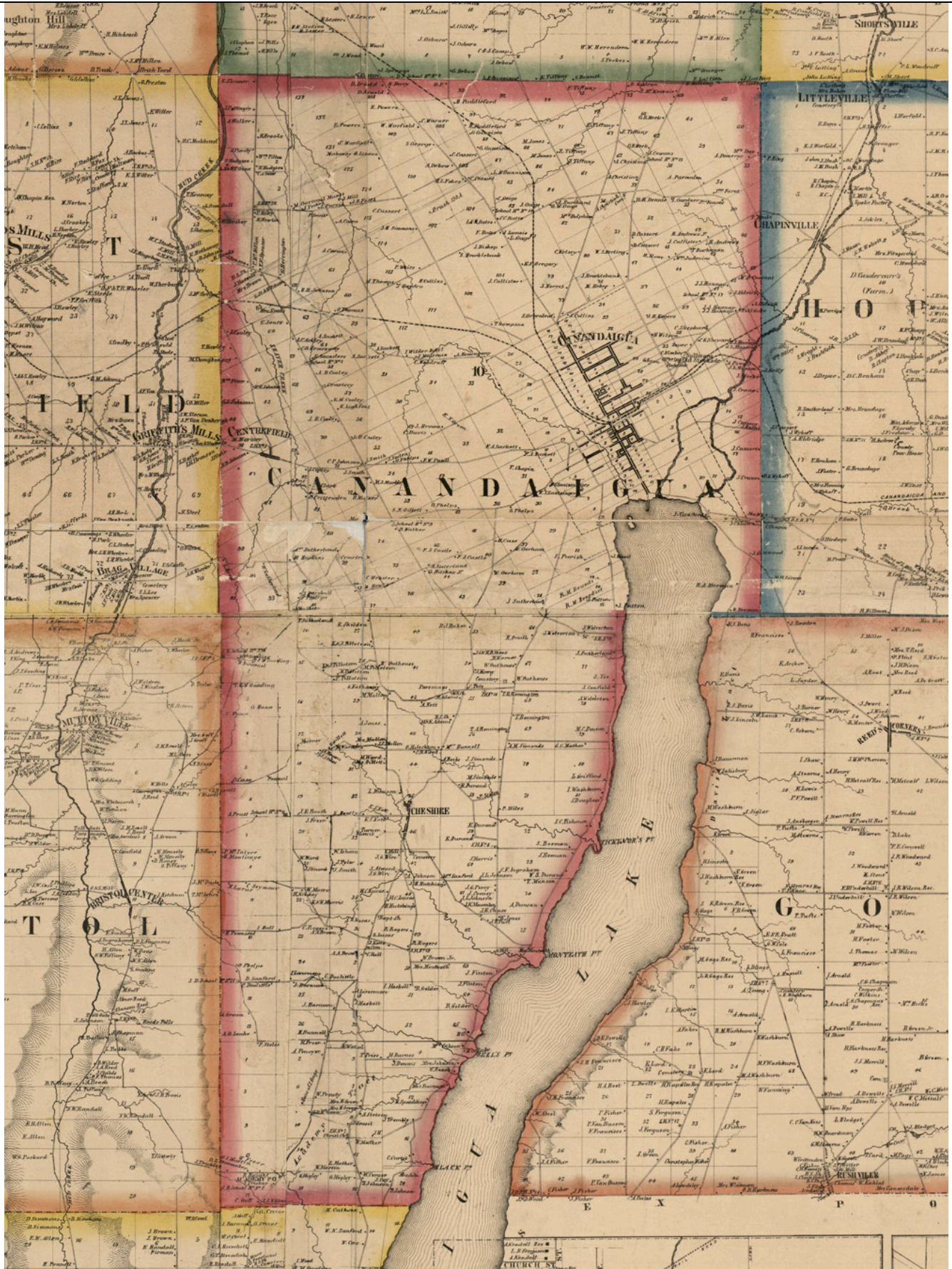


Map 12b. 1852 Map of Ontario County, north part of Canandaigua. Library of Congress.



Map 11c. 1852 Map of Ontario County, south part of Canandaigua. Library of Congress.

Town of Canandaigua Reconnaissance-Level Survey



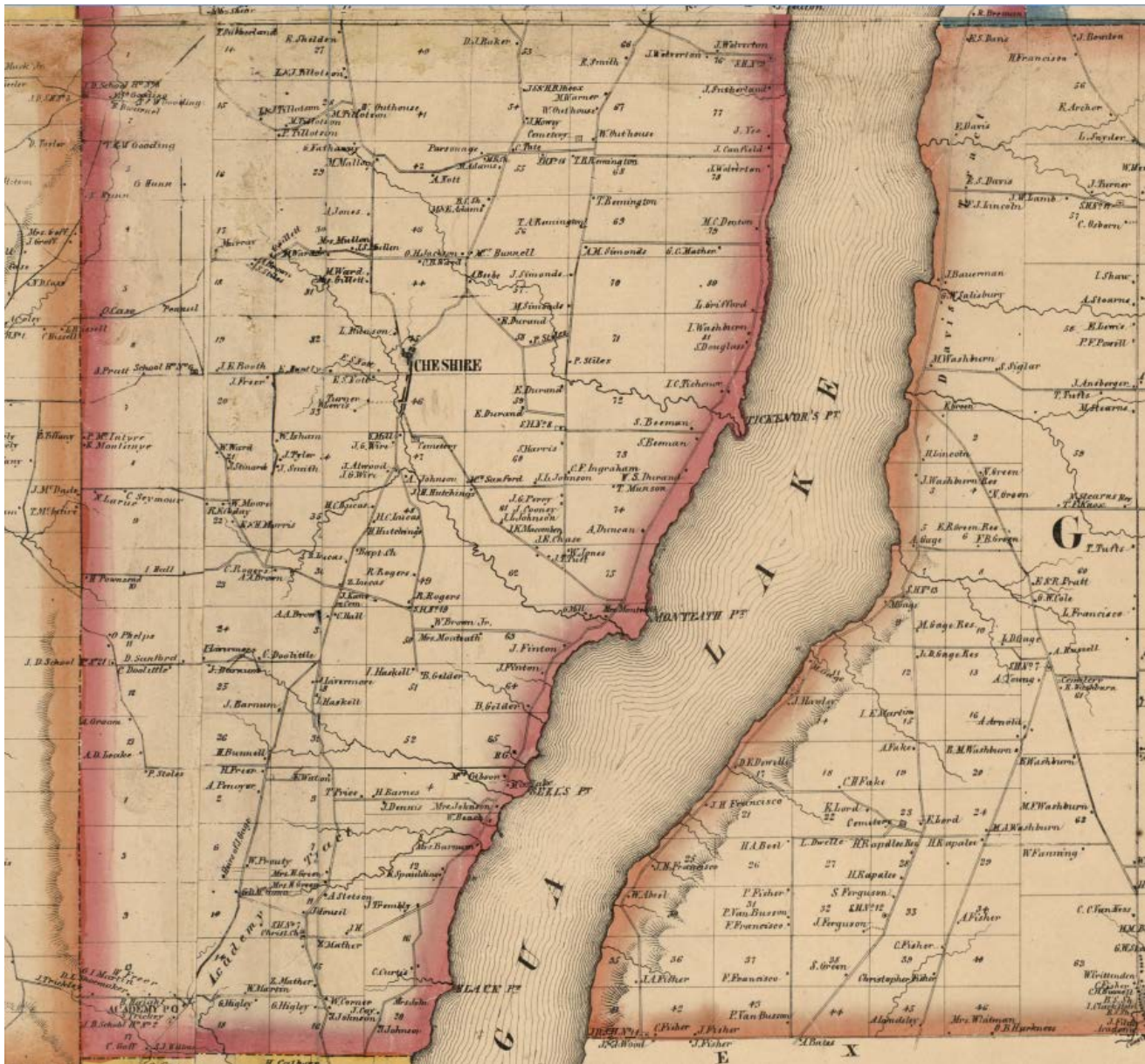
Map 13a. 1859 Map of Ontario County, New York. Library of Congress.

Town of Canandaigua Reconnaissance-Level Survey

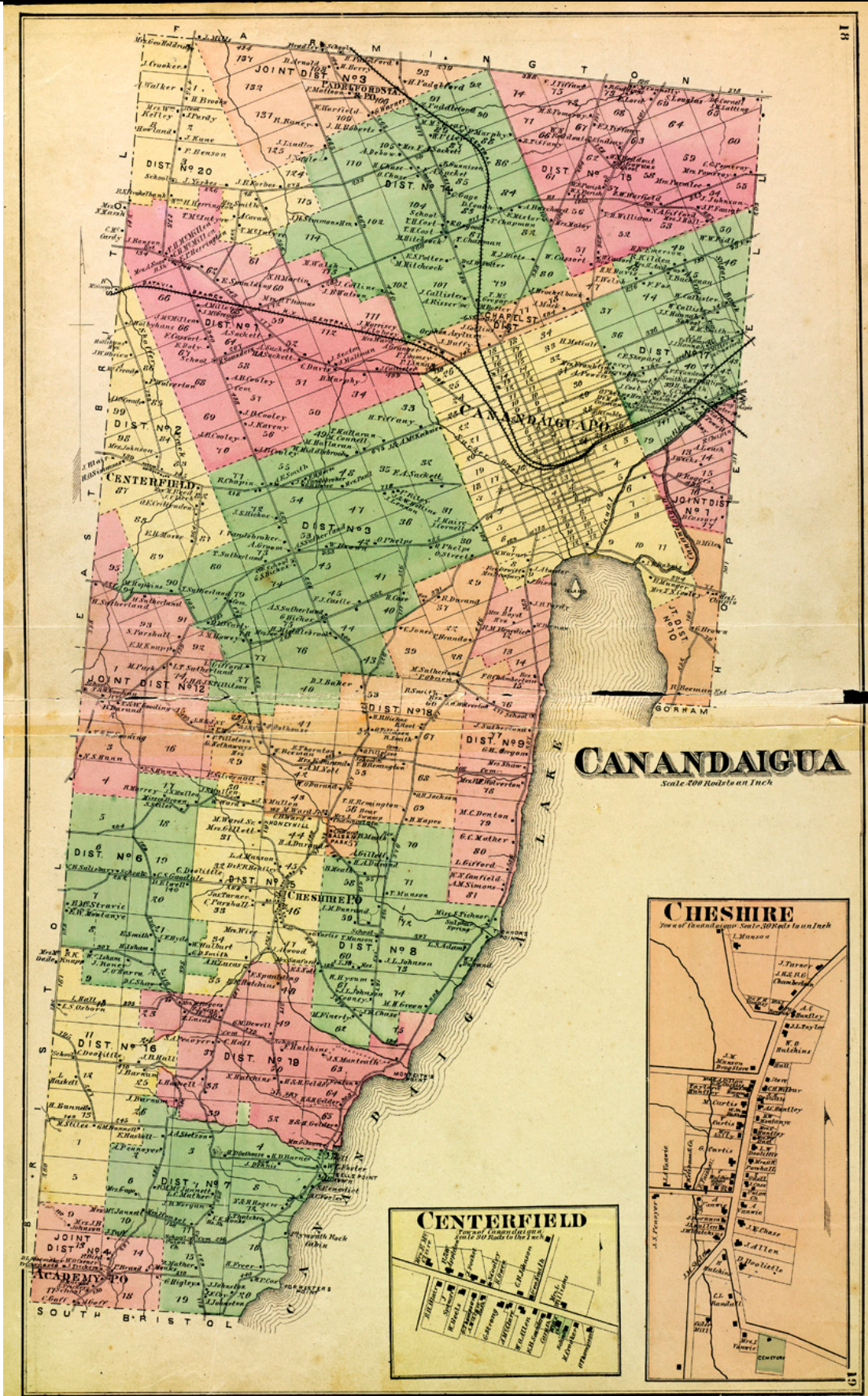


Map 14b. 1859 Map of Ontario County, New York, north part of town. Library of Congress.

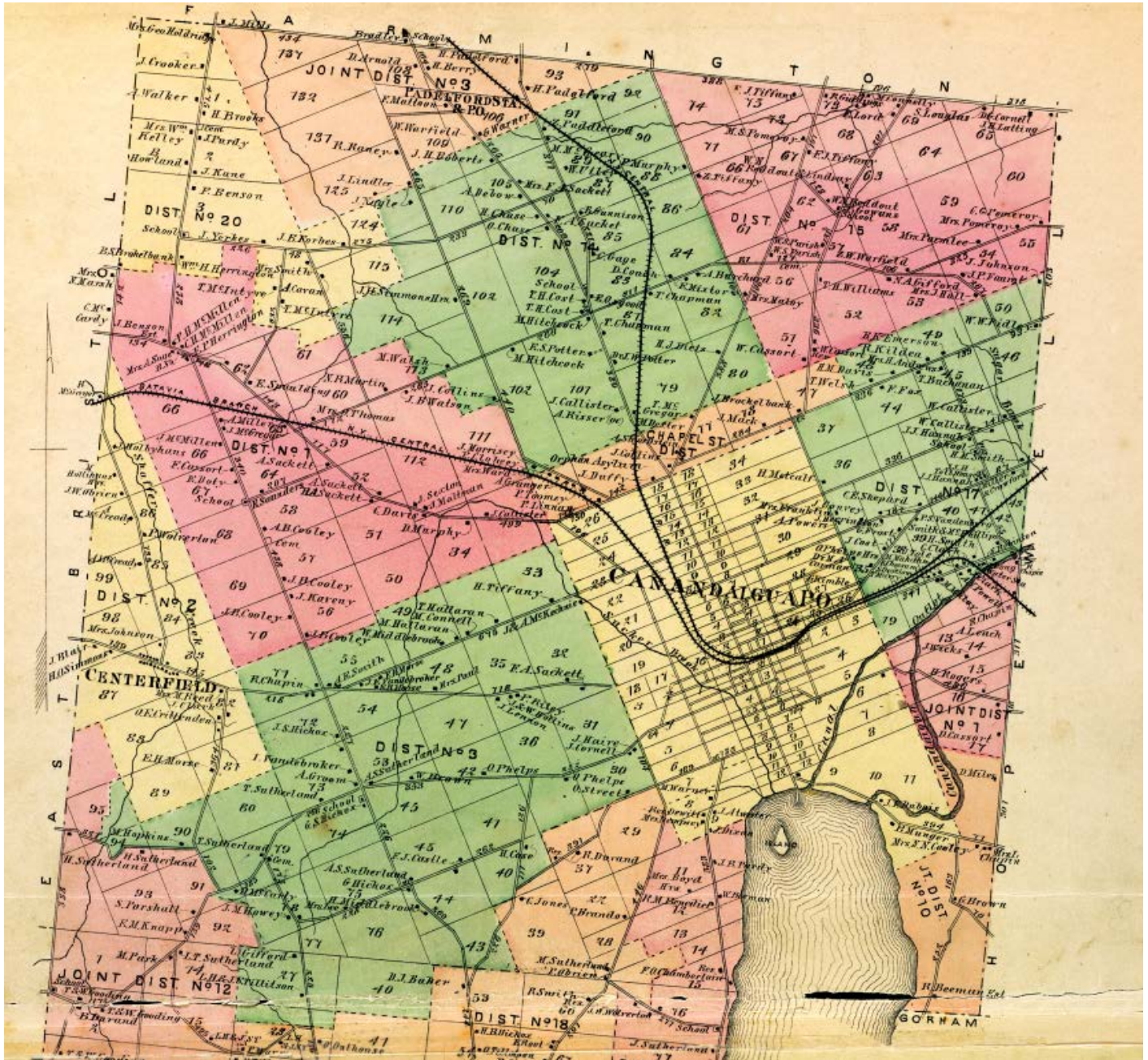
Town of Canandaigua Reconnaissance-Level Survey



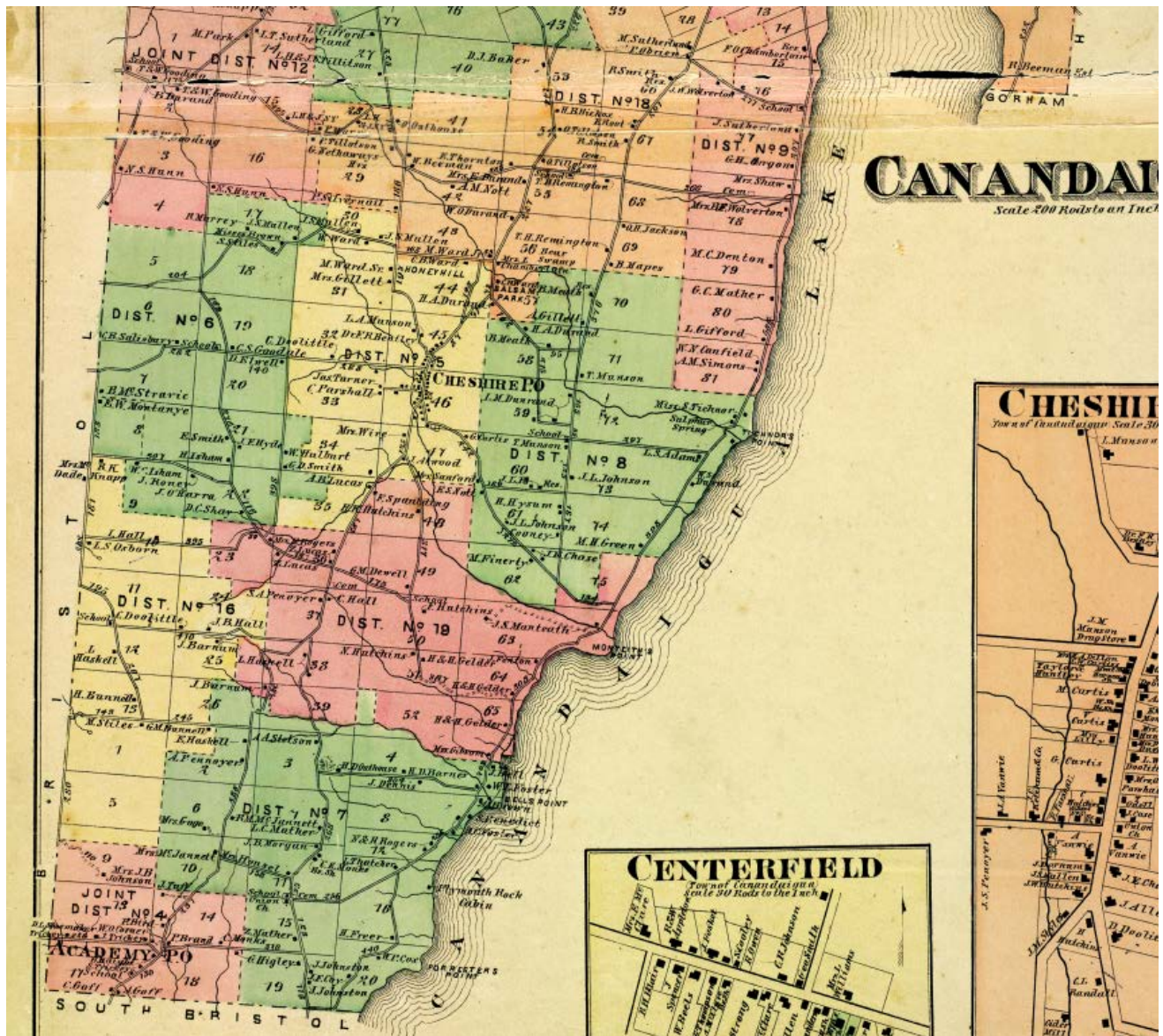
Map 15c. 1859 Map of Ontario County, New York, south part of town. Library of Congress.



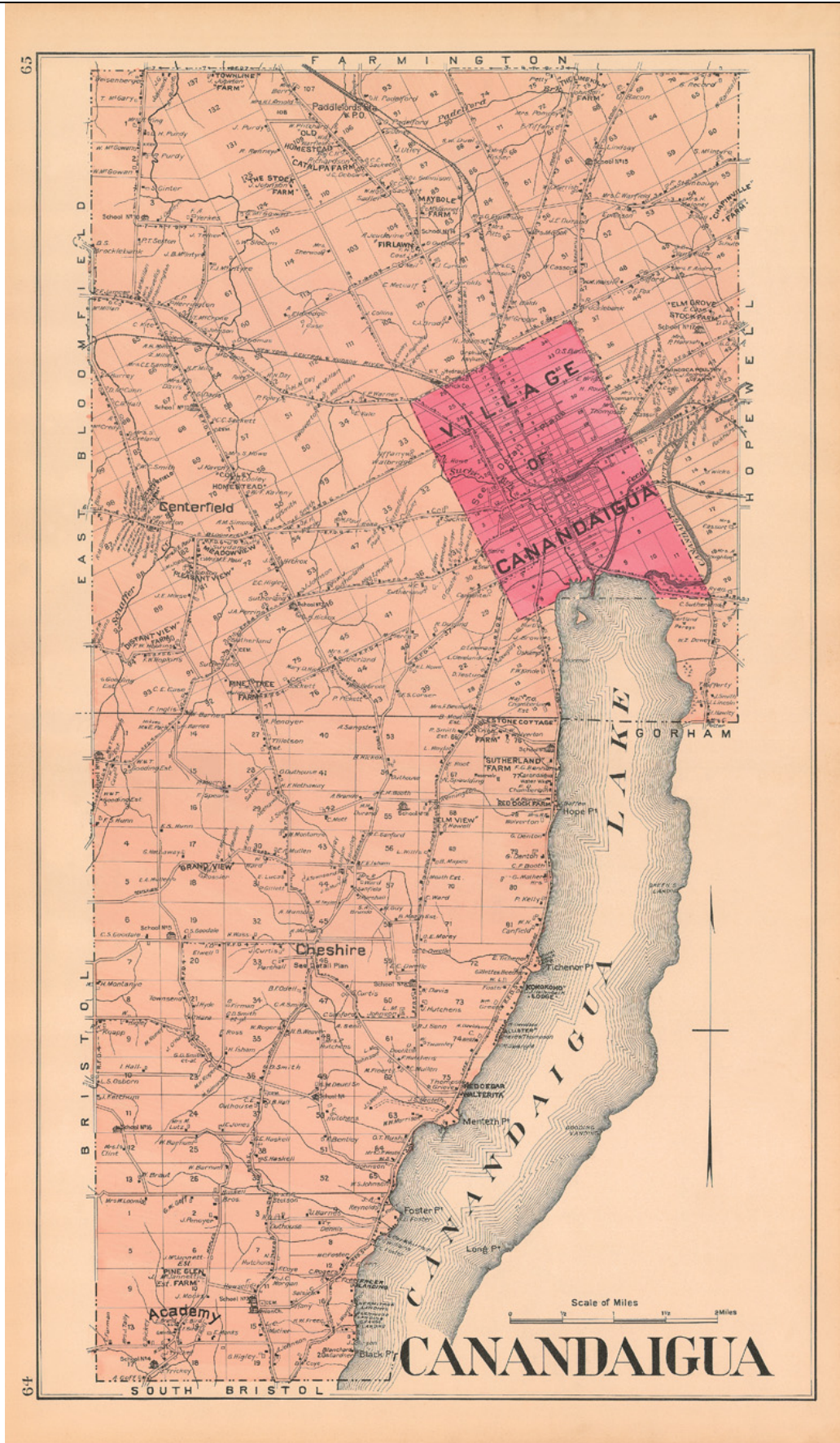
Map 16a. 1874 Ontario County. Whitman Pomeroy & Co. From historicmapworks.com.



Map 17b. 1874 Ontario County, north part of Canandaigua. Whitman Pomeroy & Co. From historicmapworks.com.

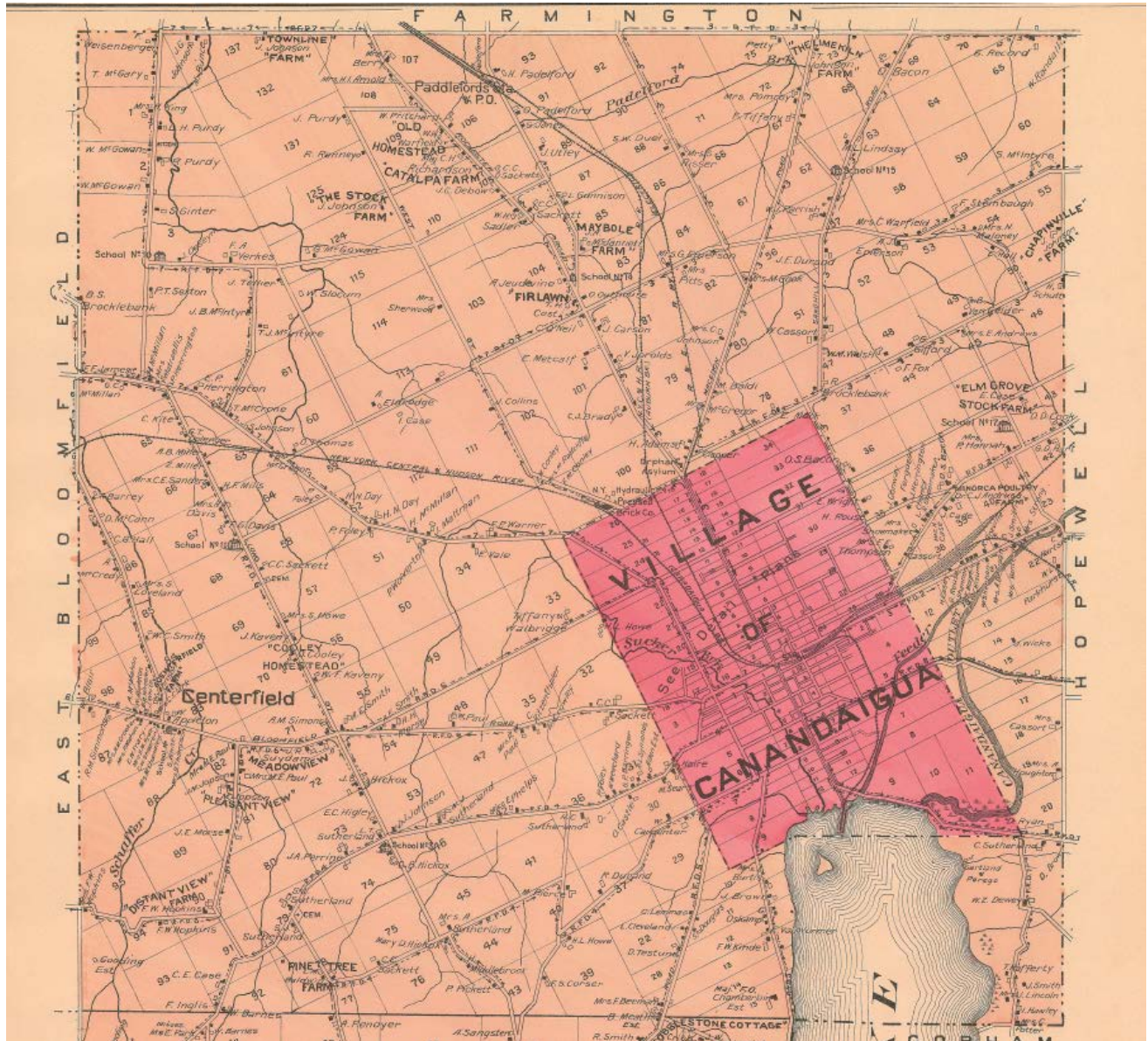


Map 18c. 1874 Ontario County, north part of Canandaigua. Whitman Pomeroy & Co. From historicmapworks.com.



Map 19a. 1904 Canandaigua. New Century Atlas of Ontario County, New York. Historicmapworks.com.

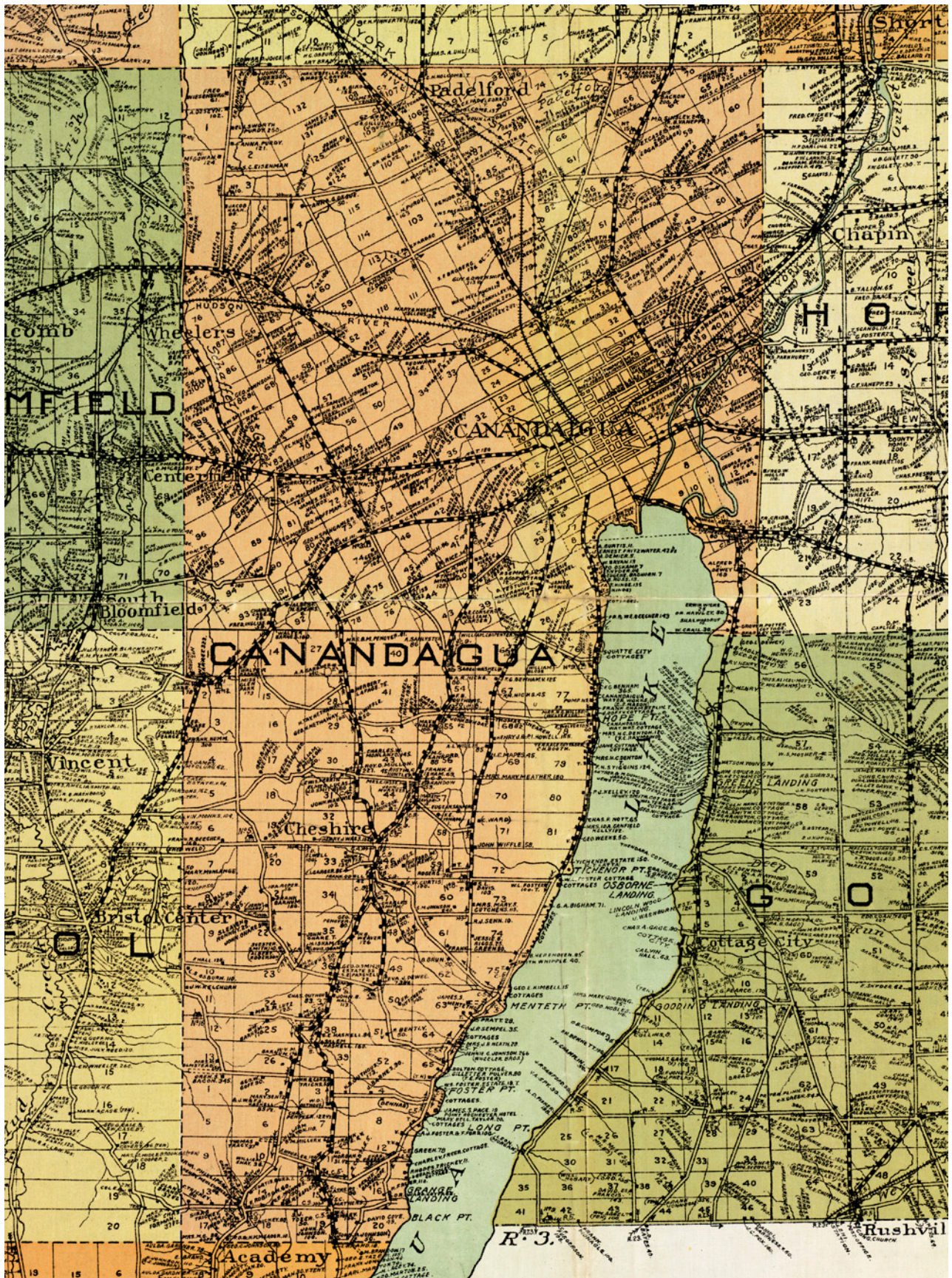
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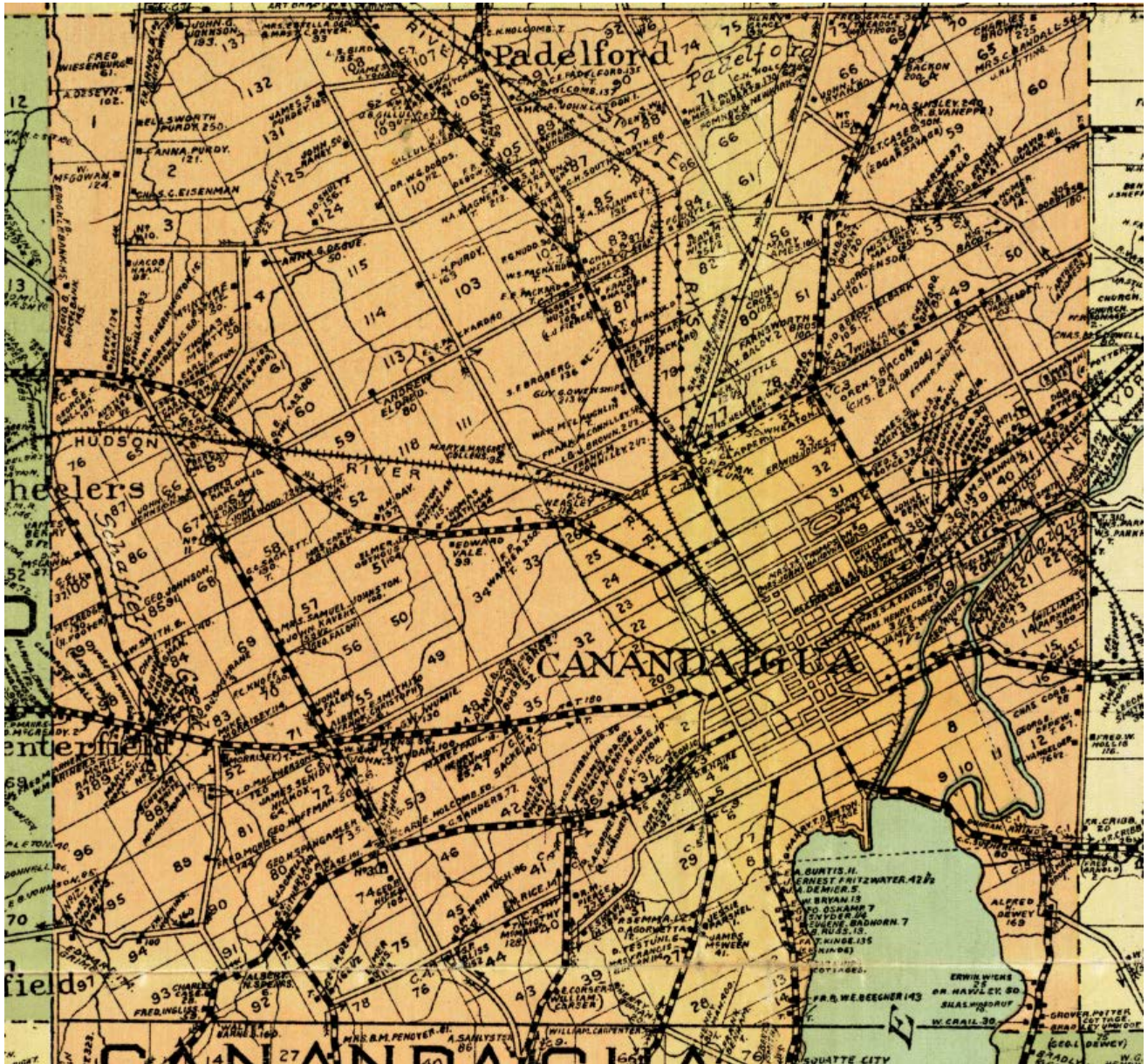
Map 20b. 1904 Canandaigua. *New Century Atlas of Ontario County, New York*, north part of town. Historicmapworks.com.



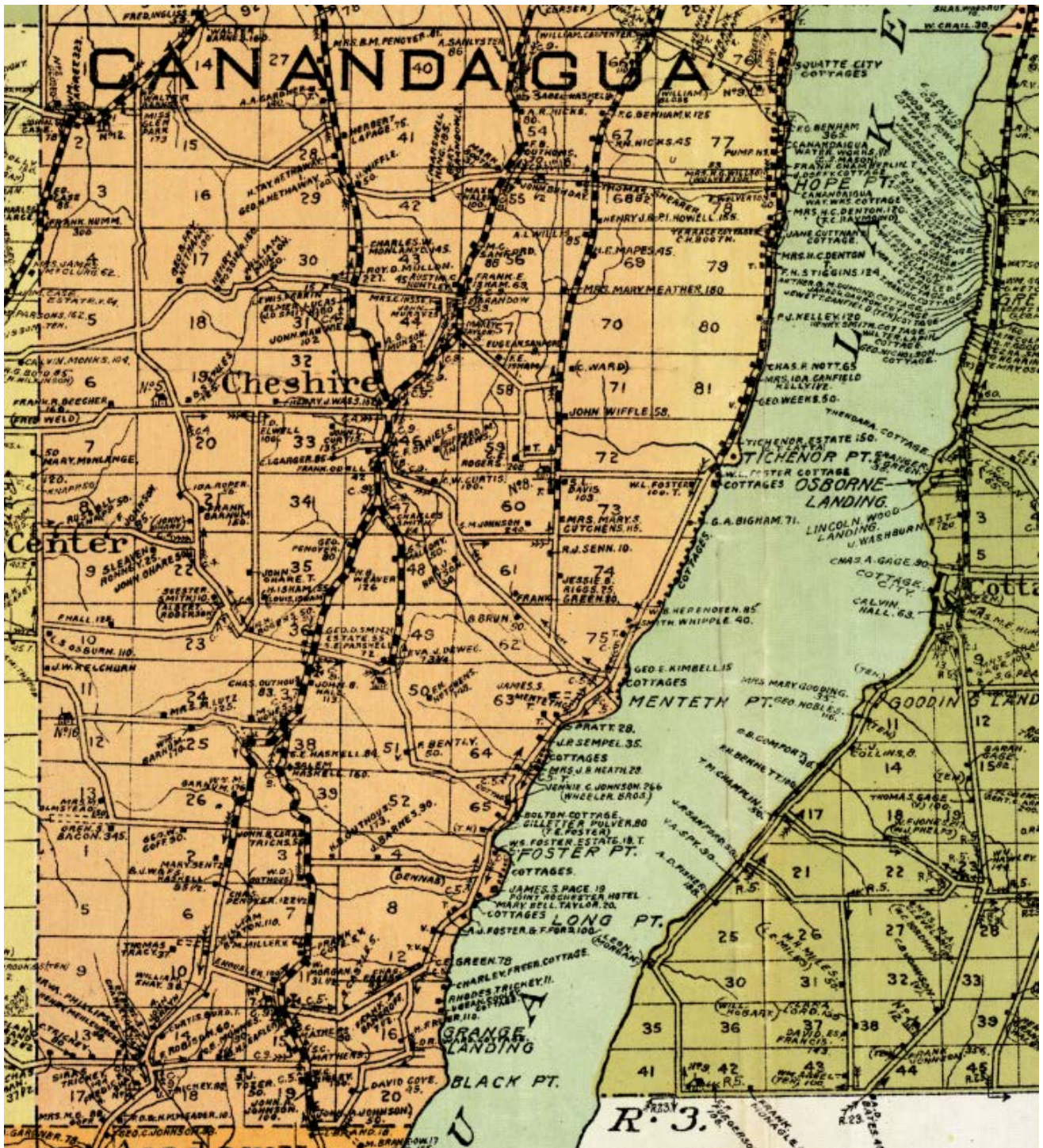
Map 21c. 1904 Canandaigua. New Century Atlas of Ontario County, New York, south part of town. Historicmapworks.com.



Map 22a. 1916-17 Ontario County Map. Rand McNally. Ontario County Historical Society.

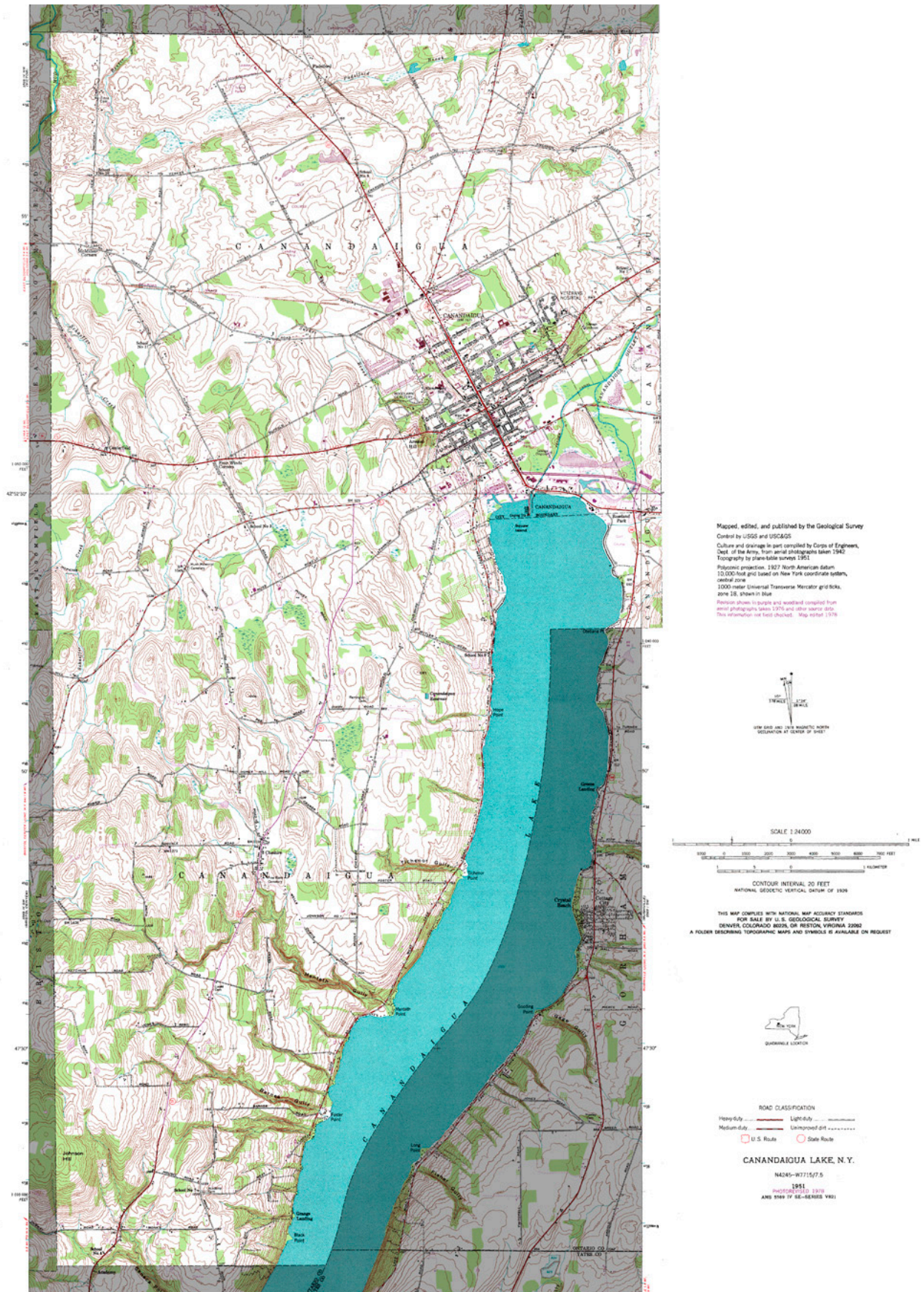


Map 23b. 1916-17 *Ontario County Map*, north part of town. Rand McNally. Ontario County Historical Society.

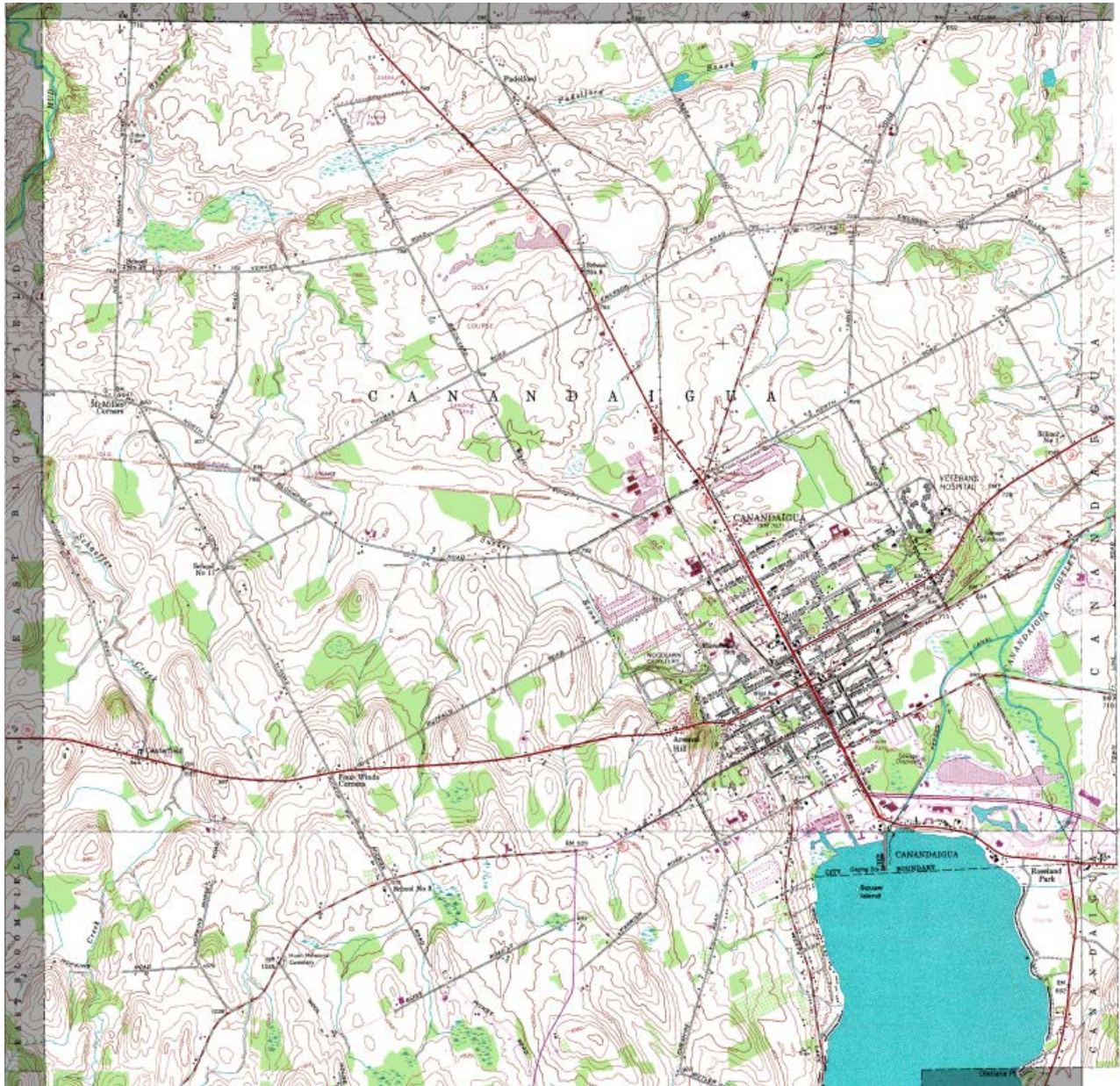


Map 24c. 1916-17 *Ontario County Map*, south part of town. Rand McNally. Ontario County Historical Society.

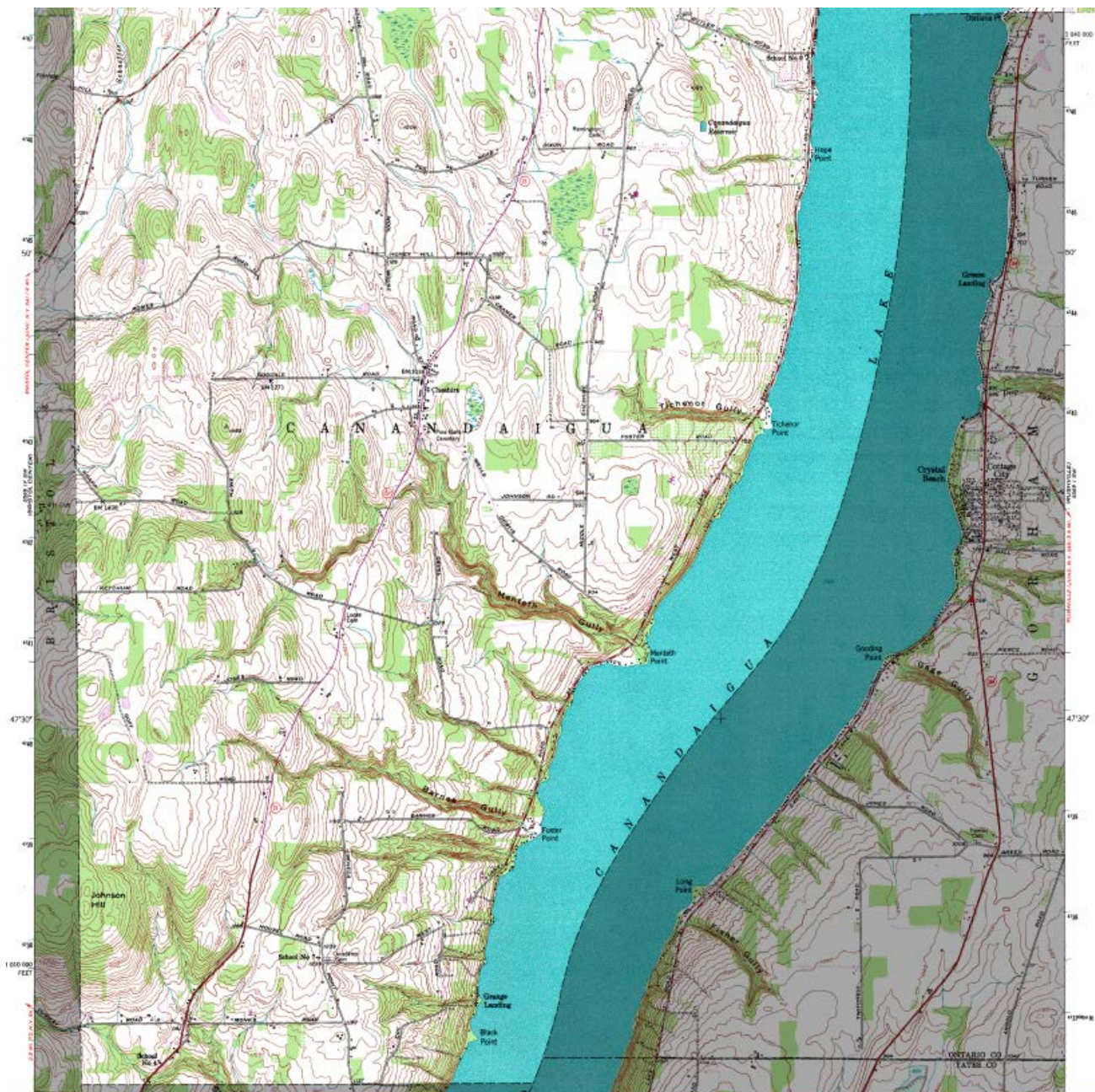
Town of Canandaigua Reconnaissance-Level Survey



Map 25a. 1978 USGS Topographical map of Canandaigua.



Map 26b. 1978 USGS Topographical map of Canandaigua, north part of town.



Map 27c. 1978 USGS Topographical map of Canandaigua, south part of town.