

Canandaigua Reconnaissance-Level Survey
Draft, April 2019

A couple of notes about this draft:

- I am trying to avoid the problem of an “info dump” and keep this document both 1) limited to the scope of a reconnaissance-level survey and 2) focused on themes that relate to extant historic resources. I found myself wanting to include every piece of information I’d gathered about everything and having to remind myself of the goal here: laying the groundwork, in terms of broad and significant themes and patterns of development, for identifying specific resources in phase 2. I will definitely want your help in phase 2 in identifying those specific resources. In this phase it’s helpful to cite a few notable examples, but not necessary to list everything (that’s the purpose of Phase 2).0
- I’m still working on ensuring that there’s not too much overlap between Section III, which is the chronological history, and Section IV, which is the discussion of themes. Some information will likely shift from III to IV or vice versa.
- I am reconsidering how I want to handle the section in my original outline for “Transportation.” A lot of what I originally intended to cover about transportation in Section IV is now in my chronological narrative in Section III, and I think that’s the appropriate spot for that information, both because transportation is so central to the town’s physical development that it belongs in (and actually really shapes) that narrative, and because it’s not represented by many extant historic resources the way other themes in Section IV are.
- Photos and maps will be included. It’s easiest to insert these once the draft is done. I am collecting them and have started marking spots where I want to refer to maps or other illustrations.

Contents

I. Introduction and Purpose.....	3
II. Methodology	4
III. Historic Overview	5
A. Geography and Natural Features.....	5
B. The First Residents of Canandaigua: The Seneca.....	6
C. The Creation of Ontario County and Canandaigua.....	7
1. The Phelps and Gorham Purchase	7
2. Creation of Ontario County and the Town of Canandaigua	9
D. Canandaigua in the Pioneer Era, 1788-1820s	9
1. Preparing Canandaigua for Growth	9
2. European-American Settlement	10
3. Hamlets in the Town of Canandaigua.....	12
E. Canandaigua in the Rail and Steamboat Era, 1830s-1890s	13
1. The Erie Canal and the Railroads	13
2. Steamboats on Canandaigua Lake	13
3. Industry in Canandaigua	15
4. The Ontario Orphan Asylum	16
F. Early Twentieth-Century Canandaigua, 1890s-1940s.....	16
G. Canandaigua in the Late Twentieth Century.....	18
IV. Historic Themes and Resource Types	19
A. Community Planning and Development	19
Associated Resource Types	20
B. Agriculture	20
Associated resource types	20
C. Education.....	21
Associated Resource Types	22
D. Recreation	23
Associated Resource Types	27

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 Project Team, which consists of co-chairs Saralinda Hooker and Town Historian Ray Henry and other volunteer members.

The Local History Project 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 would 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.

[May include required Preserve NY grant language here and/or on title page]

¹ Local History Project 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 March 2019. We began by meeting with representatives of the Town of Canandaigua and the Local History Project 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 subsequently met with Town Historian Ray Henry, who shared books, articles, and a video he had prepared, and shared knowledge about important themes in town history based on his many years of researching and writing. Subsequent research 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 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 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, but 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 reflect 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 formed by 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. 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 15 ½ miles long and averages about 1.1 miles wide.² North of Canandaigua Lake, the town's terrain is more level and rolling.

Forming the east boundary of most of the town, Canandaigua Lake is the town's most distinctive natural feature. Historically, the lake was valuable to the early Native American and European 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.

A secondary, related 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

² W.H. McIntosh, *History of Ontario County, New York* (Philadelphia: Everts, Ensign & Everts, 1878), 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.

early twentieth century to carry treated wastewater into the Outlet. The two channels merge north of County Route 46.³

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 city manages the outflow to ensure adequate flow through the Feeder Canal for wastewater management, and to maintain the level of the lake.⁴

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 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 resources proved highly significant to its settlement patterns and economy. The rich farmland in Ontario County attracted westward migrants, primarily from eastern New York and New England, once these areas became available to European-American settlers after the Revolutionary War. These new residents established farms 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

B. The First Residents of Canandaigua: The Seneca

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

³ Canandaigua Lake Watershed Council, pp. 10, 104.

⁴ Canandaigua Lake Watershed Council, pp. 9-10.

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.

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 to have been ancestors of the Seneca.⁷ The site in Canandaigua is the oldest known site associated with these predecessors of the later Seneca.

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 along with their crops and orchards. The site was never re-occupied. For years a sign marking the village destroyed in the Sullivan expedition 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 in the town. Although archaeological resources are beyond the scope of this survey, these are not the only remnants of the Seneca; several major roads in Canandaigua, including Routes 5 & 20, originated as Seneca trails, and still follow a more or less similar alignment, as described below.

C. The Creation of Ontario County and Canandaigua

1. The Phelps and Gorham Purchase

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.⁸

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

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, 2018), pp. 43-47.

⁸ O. [Orasmus] Turner, *History of the Pioneer Settlement of Phelps and Gorham’s Purchase and Morris’ Reserve* (Rochester, NY: Erastus Darrow, 1851), 105-106.

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.⁹

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 pre-emption 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.” 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 Figure ____]. Phelps and Gorham sold much of the land to speculators, who often resold their land quickly. They reserved two townships for themselves: Township 10, Range 3, which is now the north part of the town of Canandaigua as well as the city of Canandaigua, and Township 8, Range 7, which is the town of Geneseo.

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 therefore not part of their purchase. They therefore selected the current site of the city of Canandaigua as the seat of their land office.¹⁰

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 as part of this transaction that the Phelps & Gorham Purchase was resurveyed, and the error in the Pre-Emption line was discovered; the survey corrected the location of the line, and brought Geneva within the bounds of the Phelps & Gorham Purchase.¹¹

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ George S. Conover, ed. *History of Ontario County, New York* (Syracuse: D. Mason & Co., 1893), p. 200.

¹¹ Turner, pp. 246-247.

2. Creation of Ontario County and the Town of Canandaigua

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, the state created Ontario County, 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.”¹²

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).¹³

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 Figure ____). There was no distinction between town and village at that time; both the present town and city were 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 the 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.

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

1. Preparing Canandaigua for Growth

Oliver Phelps moved to Canandaigua (Nathaniel Gorham never did so, although his son did) and was directly involved in encouraging the settlement’s growth. He 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.”¹⁴ 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.

¹² Conover, p. 203.

¹³ Conover, p. 113.

¹⁴ James W. Darlington, “Peopling the Post-Revolutionary New York Frontier,” *New York History* 74, no. 4 (October 1993), p. 348.

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, to encourage views, and soil, to direct it away from the marshy area in the southeast part of the village. The orientation of Main Street anchored the rest of the village grid plan, which in turn extended out into the surrounding town, with the rest of Township 10 divided into lots along a grid system oriented at the same angle. The alignments of early roads in the north part of town such as Thomas Road, North Road, and Andrews Road were determined by this grid system.

When Phelps and Gorham chose the north end of Canandaigua Lake as the future village site, there were no roads suitable for wagon travel to and from the site, only trails and paths used by the Seneca. 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 and from the village site to facilitate travel to and within the territory. The first road he laid out led from Flint Creek 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, improved and adjusted many times, eventually became present-day Routes 5&20. Next Phelps opened 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 also generally followed a Seneca trail.¹⁵

2. European-American Settlement

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 from about 1789 to 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 settled.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

Outside the hamlet (now city) 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. The first documented wheat crop in Ontario County was harvested in

¹⁵ Irving W. Coates to Dr. J.H. Pratt, 1 July 1901, Ephemera Collection, Ontario County Historical Society.

¹⁶ Darlington, "Peopling the Post-Revolutionary New York Frontier," *New York History* 74, no. 4 (October 1993), p. 346.

¹⁷ Conover, p. 202.

1790 from a site now in the city of Canandaigua. Wheat quickly became the staple crop of the first residents. Early farmers also grew rye, hops, grapes, and fruit, and raised merino sheep as well as dairy cows.¹⁸

Although the soil was ideal, particularly in the rolling terrain in Township 10, farmers found their prospects hampered by the high cost of transportation. The east-west road established by Phelps was incorporated into the State Road (largely corresponding to present-day route 5 & 20), which was opened from Utica to Canandaigua in 1790. Through most of the 1790s, the State Road remained a rough path, much of it cleared by newcomers as they traveled west; it was not until 1797 that the state provided sufficient funding to improve the road into a reliable, year-round thoroughfare, known either as the State Road or the Great Genesee Road.¹⁹ With completion of the 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 important hub of multiple stagecoach lines until the railroad overtook the stagecoaches as the fastest, most reliable form of year-round transportation.²⁰

Investors based in Canandaigua and Geneva were among the local promoters of the construction of turnpikes crisscrossing the state; 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. 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.

Even as the road network improved, the trip to major markets such as Albany took many days. Farmers conveyed produce to Albany via sleigh in the winter, or boats and wagons in the summer; those raising cattle could walk them to Albany. The high costs associated with the lengthy trip “left little to encourage the producer.”²¹ The rise in grain prices during the War of 1812 temporarily increased the profitability of farming in Ontario County, but with the close of the war prices fell again, only recovering once the Erie Canal opened.

The limited options for transportation within and beyond the region meant that most people produced what they needed themselves or could sell within the region. Industrial facilities in the pioneer era were limited to those that processed raw materials into forms useful to the residents: 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.²² 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 shows a grist mill on Menteth Creek just west of Menteth Point, and a saw mill on Beaver Creek.

¹⁸ 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.

¹⁹ Conover, pp. 202-203.

²⁰ Richard F. Palmer, “Canandaigua: A Stagecoach Town.” *Crooked Lake Review*, September 1992.

²¹ McIntosh, p. 48.

²² 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.”

Not all industrial production happened at mills; Ontario County produced much of its cloth, for example, from in-home looms.²³

3. Hamlets in the Town of Canandaigua

The village of Canandaigua was the only sizable population center in town, but a few other hamlets also developed in the early nineteenth century. One such cluster of early residents was Centerfield, at the present-day intersection of Route 5 & 20 and McCann Road. 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), but by the end of the century the hamlet had already declined. A surviving cluster of early buildings remains today.

The largest early nineteenth-century hamlet outside the village of Canandaigua was Cheshire, located on present-day Route 21. 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. In the early nineteenth century Cheshire had its own church (built in 1840; a new church was built in 1870 and still survives) in addition to 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.

At the south end of the town, Oliver Phelps donated a 3,000 acre tract in 1804 to aid the Canandaigua Academy. Phelps had the tract surveyed and divided into lots of 150 acres each, with each 150-acre lot divided again to create 75-acre parcels. He initially intended to have the parcels rented, with the rental income funding the school; instead the parcels ended up being sold. The general opinion among residents of Canandaigua was that this section of town had the poorest soil and was not suitable for agriculture. As a result, sales proceeded slowly in comparison to the more desirable north part of town, with the first residents not arriving 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. Within the Academy tract, a hamlet developed at the intersection of Route 21S, Monks Road and Dugway Road, although today there is little evidence of the former cluster of buildings at this site. South of this irregular intersection Academy residents built a pioneer schoolhouse, which burned and was soon replaced; this building also functioned as a church until a separate church was built in 1832.²⁴ A post office was established at the small hamlet of Academy in 1850, operating until 1909.

Outside the village and hamlets, there were a few taverns and inns along the major thoroughfares. 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

²³ McIntosh, p. 59.

²⁴ Conover, pp. 209-210; and Charles F. Milliken, *A History of Ontario County, New York, and Its People* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1911), pp. 264-265

wife looked to the interests of the tavern.”²⁵ Tupper had purchased his property on the south side of the road to Geneva east of the village in 1811; the property was identified in 1878 by McIntosh as “the Cooley place,” which was not one of the Cooley family’s properties on the road of the same name, but is shown on the 1874 map near the east town line as belonging to Mrs. N.N. Cooley.²⁶

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

1. 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 until the mid-1850s” as growth was outstripped by that in the towns and villages along the canal’s route.²⁷

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), and the Canandaigua and Niagara Falls (organized in 1851; completed to Niagara Falls in 1853; commonly known as the “peanut branch”). 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. 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.

2. Steamboats on Canandaigua Lake

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

²⁵ McIntosh, p. 115.

²⁶ Ontario Repository, May 25, 1819; and 1874 Atlas of Ontario County.

²⁷ Linda McCurdy Hotra, *Canandaigua 1850-1930: A Photographic History of the Village and the Lake* (Canandaigua: Ontario County Historical Society, 1982), xi.

were launched over the years, many lasting just a few years due either to financial failure or physical mishaps that destroyed the boats.

The first economically successful steamboat on the lake was the “Joseph Wood,” which was launched in 1855. In the late 1860s, two rival steamboats, the “Canandaigua” and the “Ontario,” began vying for passengers and freight; the two competed for two decades before coming to something of a truce. Steamboat service remained a mainstay of local transportation until cars and trucks became the preferred modes of transportation for passengers and produce; passenger steamboat service ended in 1935.

The link between rail and steamboat service was at the City Pier, which began as the city’s steamboat landing and over time became an intermodal transportation hub serving the city and town of Canandaigua. 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 1887.²⁸ In 1903, the Rochester and Eastern Rapid Railway, which was an electric interurban line between Rochester and Geneva, 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 such 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 the experience of rustic living in cabins or tents with their peers.

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.”²⁹ Connections beyond the immediate region allowed farmers to diversify their production beyond what they needed for their family, while increasing prosperity allowed farmers to take advantage of technological advances that improved their farming methods. In his

²⁸ 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.

²⁹ Lee, “The Story of the Lake Steamboats,” 16 August 1922

1878 *History of Ontario County*, W.H. McIntosh described the improvements in agriculture and farm life in the county in the canal and railroad era:

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.³⁰

This rise in prosperity was reflected in illustrations of successful farms in McIntosh's book, showing the stylish houses and ample barns and other outbuildings that made up some of the most prosperous farmers' households.

3. Industry in Canandaigua

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.³¹

Canandaigua was not totally devoid of industrial facilities in the nineteenth century; in addition to mills located in both the village and the town, the village had a prosperous 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.³² 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. The company operated for a couple of decades. Buildings associated with this company do not

³⁰ McIntosh, p. 48.

³¹ Conover, p. 242.

³² Catherine Hayes, "General location, good transportation brought many industries to Canandaigua in early days," *Daily Messenger*, 9 December 1947.

survive; Artisan Meats is located on the same site but in a modern building. This general area immediately north of the village became a more heavily developed industrial and commercial area in the late twentieth century.

4. The Ontario Orphan Asylum

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. 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.³³

F. Early Twentieth-Century Canandaigua, 1890s-1940s

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 both the growth and sophistication the former village had already achieved in the railroad era.

Meanwhile 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 remained 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.³⁴

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. The Cheshire Meeting Hall was the focal point for entertainment and gatherings. This building was constructed in 1898 as a meeting hall for the Knights of the Maccabees, a fraternal organization, and became particularly significant to the farm community as the home of the Academy Grange, which began meeting there in 1899. The Academy Grange eventually purchased the building in 1920.

The Grange movement, which began in the late 1860s, was significant in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century for its efforts on behalf of American farmers; the national organization lobbied on their behalf particularly on issues related to transportation. The movement also focused on educational and social events that brought farmers together and helped them stay up-to-date on modern farming methods. At the Cheshire Meeting Hall, the Academy Grange held

³³ "Ontario Children's Home," 1982, pamphlet at Ontario County Historical Society; and Nancy Yacci, *Around Canandaigua* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 1996), p. 88.

³⁴ 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.

educational lectures, dinners, dances, plays, and other events. Other local groups also used the space, including the Cheshire Amusement Company and the Charles R. Lilly Post #303, Grand Army of the Republic.

Farmers and summer visitors alike benefited from continued improvements in transportation infrastructure in the town of Canandaigua. Around the turn of the twentieth century, the biggest change was the improvement to rural roads, an area in which Canandaigua was at the forefront regionally. 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” the 1890s.³⁵

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. In addition to a more practical surface that facilitated transportation, the process had aesthetic benefits:

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.³⁶

Cribb continued to advocate for public expenditures on road improvements while serving as town supervisor from 1898 to 1906, and as State Supervisor of Highways in the Town Highway Bureau.³⁷ 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. The prevalence 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. Roseland Park in the city of Canandaigua opened in 1925, anchoring what became an area oriented to family vacationers and day-trippers traveling by car.

[VA Hospital]

³⁵ Henry, *Memories of the Heart II*, pp. 48-50; and 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.

³⁶ Cribb, p. 15.

³⁷ Henry, *Memories of the Heart II*, pp. 48-50.

G. Canandaigua in the Late Twentieth Century

- a. Canandaigua in the Post World War II Era
 - i. Economic: Rise of trucking as main transportation method reduced importance of railroad and railroad centers like Canandaigua
 - ii. Post-war government and banking policies encouraged new residential development in the suburbs – visible in rise in residential development in Canandaigua after WWII – especially after ~1980
 - iii. Suburban auto-oriented development (subdivisions, strip malls, big box etc) also began appearing outside villages
 - a. Bypass: east side 1950s, west side 1970s; reshaped approaches to the city; new auto-oriented development in both city and town
 - b. Canandaigua also becoming bedroom community for Rochester – Route 332
 - iv. Changes in farming – mechanization, industrialization, larger farms – decline in number of farms and total acreage, rise in farm size
 - a. 1954 new county fairgrounds – need more info
 - b. Nurseries, poultry farms, Guernseys
 - v. Education:
 - a. School district centralized 1954; elementary schools on West Lake Road and in Cheshire initially remained open after centralization but closed in 1969 and 1962, respectively
 - b. 1968 FLCC
 - vi. Recreation the 2nd largest industry in Ontario County by 1989 (“Come to Finger Lakes Country” 1989)
 - a. Tourism
 - b. Second homes

IV. Historic Themes and Resource Types

A. Community Planning and Development

1. The Seneca
 - a. Location of village is known, other archaeological sites exist – important part of the history of Canandaigua but above-ground sites do not survive [archaeology is outside the scope of a historic resource survey]
2. Phelps & Gorham Purchase and Pioneer Era Development
 - a. Street layout of Canandaigua extended to lot configuration in the north part of town
 - b. South part of town conformed to more common orthogonal arrangement of lots
 - i. Lot sizes and layout visible on early maps – influenced early density
 - ii. Rate and locations of settlement
 1. Hamlet (Village) of Canandaigua: center of commerce, limited industry, transportation
 2. Limited industrial or commercial facilities outside the village
 - c. Locations associated with earliest settlers
 - i. Sites close to village
 1. Area southeast of village was one of the earliest to develop – road access, proximity to outlet and to downtown
 2. Along early roads
 3. Near water power
 4. Hamlets
 - a. Academy Tract
 - b. Cheshire
 - c. Centerfield
 - d. Padelford [RR era]
3. Railroad and Steamboat Era
 - a. Prosperity led to upgrades; houses replaced, remodeled or expanded
 - b. Building materials available by railroad
 - c. Enlargement of farms / addition of second houses for second generation
 - d. Development of the points along the lake [cross-reference to Recreation]
4. Early 20th Century
 - a. Early subdivisions (not all succeeded) reflecting national trends – auto ownership, early suburbs
 - i. Canandaigua Heights 1897
 - ii. Tichenor Point – “Silver Springs” 1920s
 - iii. Canandaigua Country Club subdivision 1920s
 - iv. Edgewater Farm 1930s
5. Late 20th Century
 - a. Pace of suburban / exurban growth accelerated – bedroom community for Rochester; typical mid/late 20th-century subdivisions
 - b. More year-round houses on the lake

“The oil embargo and constantly increasing taxes forced many families to decide between a summer home and their year-round home. Thus began the conversion of cottages along Canandaigua Lake to year-round home.”

(Memories of the Heart I p. 2)

- c. c. 5&20 / Lakeshore Drive reconfiguration
- d. Auto-oriented / truck-oriented commercial and industrial development along Route 332

Associated Resource Types

- e. Farms: See Agriculture
- f. Hamlets (as potential districts?)
- g. Hamlets – as a potential District
- h. Churches
- i. Commercial buildings
- j. Cemeteries
- k. School houses: see Agriculture
- l. Residential subdivisions
- m. Public infrastructure (1895 municipal pumping station, others?)

B. Agriculture

1. Seneca era agriculture – [would be archaeological]
2. Initial European settlers attracted by region’s agricultural potential
 - a. Early subsistence farming
 - b. Transition to cash crops
 - i. Wheat the first main crop
 - ii. Per 1860 Gazetteer: “coarser grains,” fruit, and stock growing becoming more common; also wool
 - iii. Change over time in crops grown
 - c. Agricultural organizations
 - i. 1819 Ontario County Agricultural Society formed
 - ii. 1874 first Grange in Ontario County at the Academy school house
3. Changes in mid/late 19th century
 - a. Multiple generations dividing or adding to property
 - b. Mechanization
4. Twentieth century agriculture
 - a. Farmland converted to housing
 - b. Size of farms up, number of farms down

Associated resource types

- c. Farmhouses, barns, outbuildings
- d. Mills at water power sources [don’t think any survive]

- e. Agricultural infrastructure – processing, transportation (any outside the city?)

C. Education

Education was also a priority for Phelps and Gorham, who recognized 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, or private high school. This tract in the south part of Canandaigua became known as the Academy Tract (see ____). 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, and remained private until 1900 when it merged with 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 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 even 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.³⁸

In accordance with state law, the town of Canandaigua was divided into school districts, each of which had its own school house.³⁹ 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 Figure ____.) 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.⁴⁰ 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

³⁸ *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.

³⁹ Conover, p. 213.

⁴⁰ 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 other uses. Those who wanted to continue their education 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 of the 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 it continued to be used for other educational programs for several years. It was subsequently converted to commercial use, and remains a commercial building today.⁴¹ The West Lake Road School was the last of the town's rural schools to remain open. This building, constructed in 1906 and hailed in a 1913 report by Cornell University as a model rural schoolhouse, closed in 1969. It subsequently housed a Montessori School, but was later converted into a community facility and its grounds became a park.⁴²

Associated Resource Types

1. Rural School Houses

Typical locations: Nineteenth-century school houses were dispersed throughout the town with one built near the center of each district. They were situated on main roads, often at intersections. 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.

Typical architectural characteristics: Rural school houses typically had brick or clapboard exteriors (one in Canandaigua was built of stone), and usually had a symmetrical primary façade. Most had front-facing gable roofs although some had side-gabled or hipped roofs; some had a secondary side wing. Some had a cupola containing a bell. School houses were often marked with an exterior sign affixed to the building indicating construction date and district number.

⁴¹ "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>.

⁴² Ray Henry, *Memories of the Heart II* (Canandaigua: Ontario County Historical Society, 2013), pp. 123-147.

Period of significance: The first school houses were built in the 1790s, although none that old survive. School houses that survive in Canandaigua were built from the early nineteenth through the early twentieth century. The period of significance for individual rural schools will generally extend from their construction date until they were closed, which is 1954 for all rural school houses except the West Lake Road school.

Comments: Rural school houses are significant historic resources representing an important aspect of nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century life in the town of Canandaigua, when most of the town was sparsely settled. These buildings evoke the experience of thousands of children who were educated in mixed-age, one-room school houses in the days before school buses transported them to modern school facilities in the city of Canandaigua. Some that survive have been converted to new uses; most retain at least a few distinguishing features that help to identify their original use.

2. Union School

Comments: The former Cheshire Union School is the only example in 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.

D. Recreation

Early nineteenth-century residents of Canandaigua, who by necessity were focused on establishing their farms and providing for their families, 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.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, a few year-round houses were built along the west shore of Canandaigua Lake just south of the village. These include the elegant cobblestone home of Isaac Parrish, built in 1837, the house now occupied by the Canandaigua Yacht Club, built in 1848, and a handful of other early houses. Living farther south was not feasible for most people due to the lack of reliable roads; according to town historian Ray Henry, “Ontario County maps as late as 1920 show West Lake Road as an ‘improved highway’ only from the City limits to Tichenor Point.”⁴³ Even as it was gradually improved, West Lake Road remained winding, steep and narrow.

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 having psychological benefits. Meanwhile, the growth of the national train network made it easier for people to travel away

⁴³ Ray Henry, “The West Shore of Canandaigua Lake,” *Memories of the Heart II* (Canandaigua: Ontario County Historical Society, 2013), p. 118.

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. Travelers could take the street railway (trolley) to the City Pier in Canandaigua, where the steamboats picked them up and transported them to docks and landings along the lakefront. The steamboats stopped at all the points that jutted out into the lake; these 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. While some of the steamboat sites had docks, such as at hotels (see below), 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.⁴⁴

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, 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.⁴⁵ Other nineteenth-century clubs on the lake included the Seneca Nation, the Waltons, the Vine Club, and the Last Man's Club.

Dr. Cook noted that the growth of cottages accelerated after 1890, and even more so once the automobile facilitated travel to lakefront property. Residents of the city 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."⁴⁶ 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

⁴⁴ Cook 1931 – get full reference; page 14

⁴⁵ Cook, p. 19.

⁴⁶ Conover, p. 295.

to Whiskey Point or Vine Valley, it meant for him a less hasty breakfast or one more griddle cake or cup of coffee.⁴⁷

As of 1891, there were 75 lakefront cottages on the entire lake, including both sides in both the town of Canandaigua and adjacent towns.⁴⁸ By 1900, there were 160 cottages on the entire lake, and by 1905 there were nearly 300.⁴⁹ 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).⁵⁰ 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.’”⁵¹ That number has continued to grow; meanwhile many early cottages have been replaced by larger summer and year-round houses.

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 house that had been expanded or converted into a small family-run hotel offering rustic accommodations and outdoor activities.⁵² Examples of steamboat-era hotels along the west lake shore were the Walterita Hotel, Red Cedar Lodge, and Main Top, all near Menteth Point. The Park-Hurst Resort, later called Shale Glen, had more extensive grounds with a dance pavilion, snack bar, tennis courts, and tourist boats.⁵³ Some early hotels have been converted into private residences, often with extensive alterations.

The summer camp movement emerged in the last quarter of the nineteenth century out of the same concern that fostered the movement to create urban parks and preserve wilderness areas: that in an increasingly urbanized, industrialized society, people (specifically children, in the case of summer camps) were losing touch with nature and with the types of character-building outdoor experiences that had defined previous generations in agrarian and frontier settings. 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

⁴⁷ James S. Lee, “The Story of the Lake Steamboats,” [Part 2 of 3], *The Ontario County Times*, 16 August 1922.

⁴⁸ *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.”

⁴⁹ “Home Matters,” *Advertiser-Gazette* (Geneva, N.Y.), 6 July 1905.

⁵⁰ 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=>.

⁵¹ “New boat sanitation rules set for lake,” *Democrat and Chronicle*, 1 October 1958.

⁵² Ray Henry, in *West Lake Legacy: The Road to Onanda* (The Ontario County Historical Society, 2011).

⁵³ *West Lake Legacy: The Road to Onanda*.

responsible for providing their own food and shelter.⁵⁴ By 1900, there were fewer than 100 camps in the United States; this number grew to over 1,000 by 1918.⁵⁵

One of those first 100 camps was the Natural Science Camp on Tichenor Point in Canandaigua, founded in 1890 by Professor Robert L. Arey of the Free Academy and the Mechanics' Institute (precursor to the Rochester Institute of Technology). 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 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 Eggleston Point. (The guest house and horse barn were not moved.) The former site of the Natural Science Camp was used briefly as a YMCA camp, then a Boy Scout camp, before being subdivided. The former horse barn was converted into a private house [still there?], and other substantial houses were built on the former camp grounds.⁵⁶

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. The YWCA purchased land on the north side of Point Rochester (also known as Foster Point, and by other names as well) in 1911, and opened Camp Onanda as a girls' camp in 1919. Camp Onanda remained a YWCA camp until 1982, when it became Camp Good Days and Special Times, a camp oriented to children with cancer. When Camp Good Days moved to a new site, 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. A near exact 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.

Camp Graynook at Menteth Point - ?

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

⁵⁴ 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.

⁵⁵ Smith, p. 77.

⁵⁶ 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.

taking a train or boat to a location and staying there for an extended period of time, with the freedom of the automobile, “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.”⁵⁷ 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 the northeast part of town, near 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 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.”⁵⁸ Nearby Kershaw Park opened in 1936 and offered public access to the waterfront, also within city limits. New motels opened along 5&20 near those two attractions, both in the city and town, offering convenient lodging to travelers visiting Canandaigua or continuing across the state via automobile. While Roseland Park is gone, and the reconstruction of Route 5&20 as well as extensive redevelopment has significantly changed the entire corridor leading into the city of Canandaigua from the east, a few motels from the mid-twentieth century survive on Lakeshore Drive, as does one on Route 332.

Several social and sports-oriented clubs have historic origins in 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.⁵⁹

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 portion of the property along the lake was subdivided and lots were sold to finance the purchase and development of the property.⁶⁰ 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.

Associated Resource Types

1. Steamboat-era cabins, cottages, and hotels

Typical locations: On or near the points that project into the lake, or on other flat sites that were accessible by early road and/or steamboat

⁵⁷ Thomas Weiss, “Tourism in America Before World War II,” *The Journal of Economic History* 64, No. 2 (June 2004), 289-327: pp. 312-313.

⁵⁸ Alan Morrell, “Whatever Happened to ... Roseland Park?” *Democrat & Chronicle*, 26 April 2014.

⁵⁹ *Club History*, Canandaigua Yacht Club, <https://www.sailcyc.com/about.cfm?subpage=529360>, and Pierce, “Historical Tour.”

⁶⁰ Pierce, “Historical Tour.”

Typical architectural characteristics: Rustic architecture; originally not winterized

Period of Significance: 1850s-1930s or later

Comments: 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. 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.

2. Summer Camps

Typical locations: On the points that project into the lake, or on other flat sites

Typical architectural characteristics: The first summer camp on the lake, the Natural Science Camp, had a few buildings but most campers stayed in tents, which were ephemeral seasonal dwellings. Later camps incorporated rustic sleeping cabins and communal buildings for meals and activities.

Period of significance: 1890s-1980s

Comments: Camp Onanda, which was used continually as a summer camp from its opening in 1920 until it closed in 1989 and was repurposed as a town park, retains many historic features. Other camp sites have been redeveloped and are unlikely to retain historic features associated with their use as a summer camp.

3. Sports Clubs

Comments: 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.

4. Auto-Oriented Motels

Typical location: Along major highways (Routes 5&20, Route 332).

Typical architectural characteristics: Usually one story, with a linear footprint. Doors to individual rooms open to the exterior. Ample parking adjacent to the building. Sometimes display an architectural theme (e.g. the Georgian, which has a “Colonial” / Mt. Vernon style).

Period of significance: 1940s-1970s

Comments: 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 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.