



West Avenue Trolley Tracks

The Rochester, Lockport & Buffalo rail line operated as an interurban trolley from 1908 through 1931. The tracks ran on the south side of the canal along East Avenue and West Avenue out to Adams Basin and beyond. The trolley line was an important asset to the western towns of Monroe County since it provided an affordable and relatively fast way for commuters to get to and from Rochester. The trolley ran every half hour from 5:30 am to 9:00 am, once an hour until 4:00 pm, and then again every half hour until past midnight. Men and women rode the trolley into Rochester for business and pleasure, while older students used it as a way to get to the city for classes at Rochester Business Institute. The RLB hooked up with a more complex set of trolley lines that spanned the city from Highland Park to Charlotte. Families could take the trolley into Rochester and with just a switch or two get to Highland Park for Lilac Sunday, or to Charlotte to ride the carousel and enjoy a band concert.

The trolley service stopped in 1931 and the Spencerport depot building was removed from its location on East Avenue. In May 2005, that depot was moved back to East Avenue, where it is being restored and will house a museum and library beginning in 2006. The building will also provide new shower, restroom and laundry facilities for people stopping in Spencerport while traveling along the canal. The Donald and Maxine Davison Museum of Transportation and Communication will house artifacts representing the history of the Erie Canal, railroads, trolleys, and the Ogden Telephone Company. The Ogden Farmers' Library will open a branch library in the building that will offer a reading room stocked with newspapers, magazines, and popular books as well wireless Internet access.



A.E. Weirich & Daughter Mary

A.E. Weirich is shown with his daughter Mary in this 1931 photo taken on the family farm in Adams Basin. The Weirich farm spanned several hundred acres and included parts of what is now Northampton Park. The farm produced more than 20,000 bushels of fruit a year until the area was hit by a killing frost in 1932 which fatally damaged many of the fruit trees.

Ogden's rich soil and generally flat land provided a perfect setting for fruit orchards from the very beginning of the town. Those orchards produced apples, peaches, pears, and cherries well into the 20th century. This produce was processed, stored and loaded in warehouses and plants built in Spencerport and Adams Basin along the Erie Canal in the early and mid 19th century. These plants shipped produce to markets in the East first on canal boats and then by rail, and provided access to a lucrative market for farmers in the town and village.

Other local industry based on the fruit crops included a canning factory, a dry house which produced dried fruit, and a cider & vinegar factory. The town and village suffered along with the rest of the northeast through the depression of 1873-1878, which saw the major crops produced in the area change from fruit to vegetables such as cabbage and potatoes. Despite the change, most area farms kept their orchards going and continued to harvest fruit.



**Southeast corner of Amity and Union Street,
early 1900s.**

Both sides of Union Street south of the canal developed into the commercial district of the village early in the 19th century and continued in that role through the 20th century. Although the purpose of the buildings located in this area has remained the same, the architecture of the district has changed drastically over the years. Fire played a pivotal role in the early life of the village business district and consumed many of the wooden buildings that had gone up in the mid to late 1800s. A disastrous fire in 1876 destroyed the entire block opposite the scene pictured here and threatened to destroy the entire village before it was contained. Resilient Spencerport business owners rebuilt their shops after each fire, continually adding more types of retail to the mix. This stretch of Union Street has hosted blacksmiths, coopers, tailors, milliners, dressmakers, grocers, jewelers, florists, department stores, hardware stores, a soda shop, a telephone company, newspaper offices, insurance agents, pharmacies, butchers, tobacconists, printers, bakers, a livery stable, dentists and doctors, attorneys, and countless other businesses. This photo features scenes typical of small town life in the early 1900s. Gentlemen relaxing in front of the local store on Main Street, a horse and carriage tied up outside another shop, and plank sidewalks covering dry and dusty walkways.

Aerial View of Spencerport



This early 1900's aerial view of Spencerport was taken from the southeast end of what is now the Village Plaza. The Village Building is visible on the corner of Water (West Avenue) and Union, so the picture was taken some time after 1907. The property in the foreground of the photo was owned by the Moore Family, who operated a coal yard and eventually an insurance agency out of their home which is now the Ogden Senior Center.

The landscape of the Village has changed over the years, most notably after World War II when men and women returned from military service and settled down to raise families. The beginning of the "Baby Boom" prompted development of housing and schools throughout the area.

However, the first attempt at subdividing large lots of land into smaller residential plots was, according to former Town Historian Earl White, "a dismal failure." The 1924 plat map of the Village of Spencerport shows a small development north of the canal called "Spencerport Park."

According to Mr. White, the Seneca Realty Company made a deal for the farm of Seymour Curtis on Canal Road, just over the Village line. It was surveyed into building lots so small that it was impractical to build a house on one lot. The Realty Company launched a promotion where they gave out lots at local theaters as prizes, assuming that when the winners came to view their "prize," they would buy an adjoining lot at the going price. The plan didn't work out as the company planned because many people refused to buy the adjoining lots and refused to give up the lot they had won. Most of the lots were never developed and the land was allowed to go wild. The area involved is currently part of Pineway Ponds Park, which has been developed and maintained by the Town of Ogden into a lovely park featuring sports fields, a splash area for children, a pond, comfortable lodges and picnic areas.

*Town Pump General Store, corner of Washington
and Whittier in south Ogden, early 1900s.*



The general store has been a fixture in Town Pump for more than 150 years. George Howard sold the property to Silas Dole in 1853, and from Dole it passed through many hands over the next century. The store was a natural gathering place for locals and provided supplies needed for every day living on the farm. The farmers could get feed and seed, as well as items such as rope and fuel, while their wives could purchase staples such as flour, sugar, thread, and fabric. The store also housed a post office until 1903, and has been rumored to have also housed a small library. As the 20th century progressed, the store began to sell gasoline for the new motor cars appearing on the roads of Ogden. Road travelers could gas up their car and put air in their tires for the sometimes long ride home. The building operated as a store and gas station into the 1990s, when it closed for a short time. However, it was re-opened for business in 2004 and residents of Town Pump once again have a general store to call their own.

Old Stove Round Up



Milford & Foster Spencer are pictured here during a gas stove roundup promotion sponsored by Spencer's Hardware and Rochester Gas & Electric in the early 1930s. The Mobile Gas Company collaborated with local gas and electric companies and provided a way for homeowners to get rid of their old stoves and buy new ones, preferably from local sellers like the Spencers. Although the hardware store collected the stoves, there was no guarantee that homeowners would buy new ones and Milford Spencer's son, Dana, recalls his father telling him that stocking new gas stoves in the early Depression years put the hardware store in debt. Gas stoves were found in many households by the end of the 1920's. These stoves provided a cleaner way of cooking than coal or wood burning stoves and took up much less space in the kitchen. The gas stove was usually a vertical cylinder made of thin steel with a window, up to four burners and an oven. The flames on the gas stove burners had to be watched closely because if they turned from blue to red and yellow, black smoke would fill the room and leave a greasy residue on everything. Gas stoves were also more expensive to use, which changed the way people heated their kitchens. In the past, coal and wood burning stoves were frequently used to provide heat during the winter; gas stoves could not be used in the same way so, necessity being the mother of invention, many homeowners began installing central heating. Despite some drawbacks, gas stoves were embraced by cooks everywhere for the level of control they offered in cooking.

Shoe Store in Spencerport, circa 1930. The wooden benches in front of the chairs were used to measure feet.



The shoe industry in Spencerport and in the Rochester area in general enjoyed great success from the days of the first settlers through the first three quarters of the 20th century. The 1869 Monroe County Business Directory lists three makers of boots and shoes in Spencerport and one in Adams Basin; by the first decades of the 20th century, however, these shoe makers had morphed into shoe sellers. In the early 19th century, the city of Rochester hosted more than 100 shoemakers, with many hundreds more located in the smaller villages and hamlets throughout the region. The shoe industry flourished well into the latter half of the century despite fierce competition from bigger shoemakers in the east, who began shipping their products west on the Erie Canal. The Shoe Dealers Association, formed in 1844, attempted to slow the influx of eastern-made shoes, but it was the quality of the shoes made in the Rochester area that kept the local industry from faltering. The advent of machine-made shoes in the latter part of the century eventually forced the smaller shoemakers to change from makers to sellers. Big factories such as the notable Hatch & Churchill and Sage & Pancost prospered through the inventiveness of their founders, who were responsible for adapting the Singer sewing machine to sew through tough leather uppers, and for inventing a die that cut out soles, thus speeding up the process of making shoes. The sheer number of shoes put out by these factories made it nearly impossible for the independent shoemaker to survive, so those businesses gradually changed into something else or simply closed.

New York Central Railroad Station, 1905; left to right: Earl Austin, Station Master Edwin Austin, and John Payne



The first railroad line came through Spencerport in 1852 and solidified the village's role as the center of long-distance transportation in Ogden. The first railroad station in Spencerport was the Falls Branch of the New York Central Railroad. The Falls Branch was created in 1853 when the Lockport and Niagara Falls Railroad, which was established in 1834 and extended to Rochester in 1852, merged with the New York Central. The line had stations in both Spencerport and Adams Basin. Transporting freight by railroad had several advantages over canal shipments, including faster service and year-round availability. The railroad tracks ran through the village east to west, south of the canal and just north of Lyell Avenue. Even though the railroad offered a more efficient and expedient means of transporting Ogden's regular supply of produce to distant markets, neither Spencerport nor Adams Basin became major railroad centers, and both continued to rely on the canal to transport the bulk of their goods. However, the railroad provided other advantages to the village. When the disastrous fire of 1876 broke out, the railroad brought fire fighters from points east to Spencerport to help fight the huge blaze that nearly destroyed the entire village. The New York Central office pictured here still stands at 131 Martha Street.

Elwood and Irving Parmele carving Jack O' Lanterns on the family farm in Adams Basin in 1906.



Carving Jack O' Lanterns is a Halloween custom that dates back to ancient Ireland. The first Jack O' Lanterns were commonly made of turnips other hollowed out root vegetables. When the custom was brought to the United States by Irish immigrants, larger squash like pumpkins became the vessel of choice for old Jack. One Irish tale about the origin of the Jack O' Lantern tells the story of a man called Stingy Jack, who invited the Devil to join him for a drink. When it came time to pay, Jack convinced the Devil to turn himself into a sixpence. Instead of paying for the drinks however, Jack put the sixpence in his pocket next to a silver cross, which kept the Devil from changing back. Before he let the Devil free, Jack made a deal that the Devil could not harm him in any way. Jack died the next October, close to All Hallows Eve. His soul was turned away from the Gates of Heaven, but when he went to the Gates of Hell, the Devil honored his bargain and told him to go away. Jack did not know where to go because it was dark and he couldn't find his way. The Devil took pity on him and tossed him a glowing piece of coal, which Jack put inside a turnip. Ever since that night, Stingy Jack's lonely soul has been roaming the Earth, lighting the way with his "Jack O' Lantern."

Irondequoit Melons



Bernard & Francis Schur inspect some fine Irondequoit melons grown on their farm in south Ogden. The Irondequoit muskmelon, first cultivated by Irondequoit farmer William Sutton and improved upon by Rochester seedsman James Vick, is fondly remembered as the juiciest, sweetest melon ever grown in these parts. Vicks seed catalog described the Irondequoit as "All faded and sandy outside, like a disappointed pun'kin but inside, Oh Boy! a luscious, globular ooze of gay Persian orange, shading away to deepest, most enticing sea green at the edges. A symphony of color to the eye, a rhapsody to the taste, as each festive, melting morsel goes trickling down a surprised and delighted gullet." Although the melons were prized for their sweetness, they also rotted easily. Melons taken to market at 8:00 am that weren't sold by noon weren't sold at all. The Irondequoit met its demise in the 1930s due to a soil infestation called fusarium wilt. The fungus infected the soil for years and prevented the growth of the melons. In the early 1940's, Henry Munger, a young graduate student from Cornell University doing field research in Spencerport developed a melon similar to the Irondequoit that would resist fusarium wilt. The Iroquois melon was released in 1944 and was the first muskmelon ever produced with resistance to the fusarium fungus.

Interior of the Matheos Brothers Ice Cream and Confectionary, early 1900s.



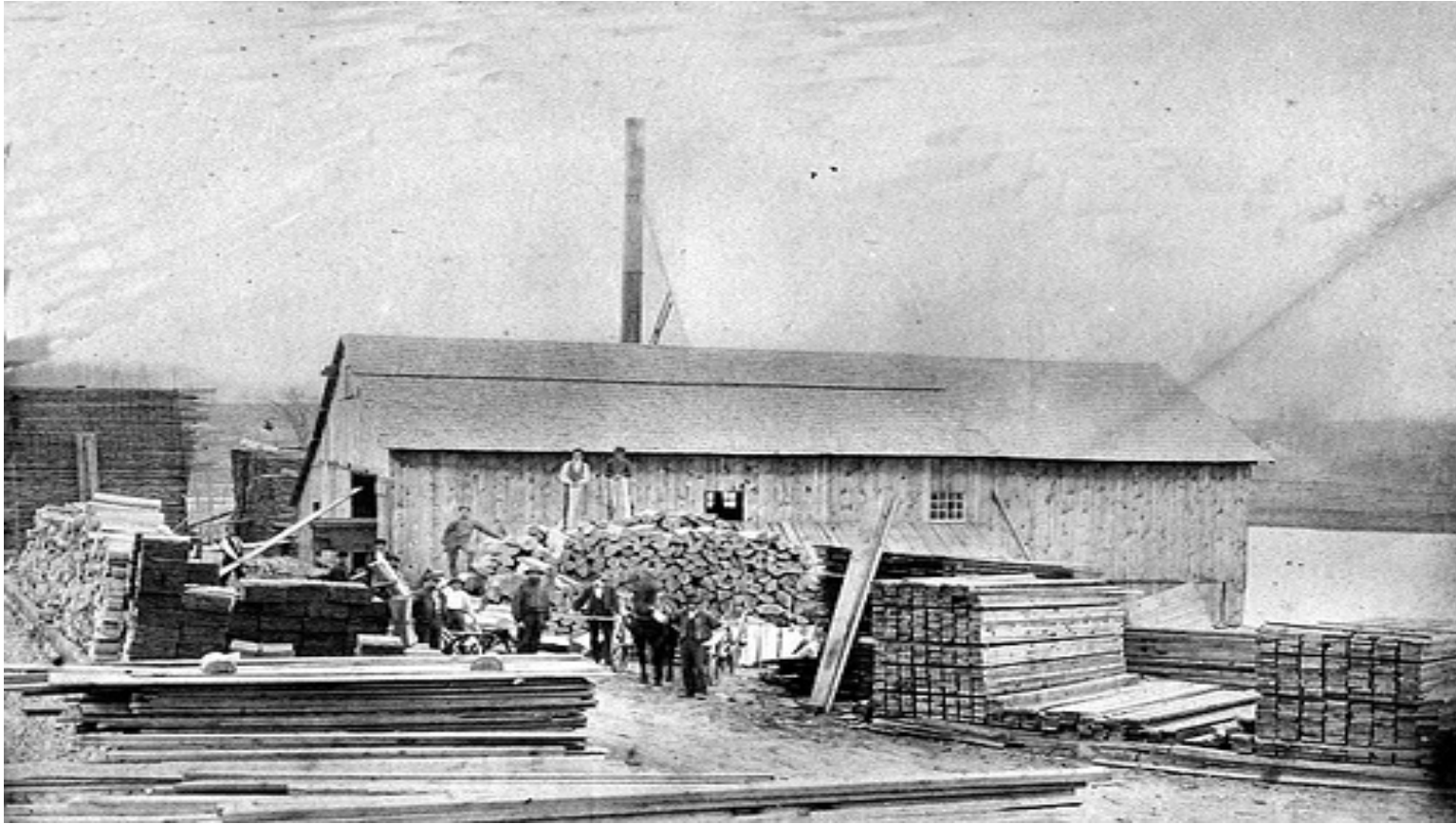
James Matheos, a Turkish immigrant, bought a confectionary business from Peter Mirras and opened Matheos Ice Cream on property at the corner of Amity and Union in the early 1900s. His brother Chris arrived in Spencerport in 1917 and joined the family business, which became so successful that, in 1926, the two brothers tore down the existing building and built a new candy store and soda fountain, with manufacturing capabilities in the rear. This building is currently occupied by Splatters Pottery Studio. The enterprise was so successful that the brothers formed a corporation in 1932 and purchased additional property to expand their production capabilities. "Matheos Velvet Ice Cream" was known throughout western New York, as was their trademark "OO-La-Las," chocolate covered ice cream bars on sticks. There was a time when every town had an old-fashioned ice cream parlor with curvy metal chairs grouped around glass-topped tables, and more private booths where young men took their young ladies to share a soda. Ceiling fans turned lazily above sparkling glass cases filled with mouthwatering candies and confections. Opposite the candy cases was the soda fountain with pyramids of shiny silver cups stacked on its marble top, with row upon row of crystal clear glass dishes and bottles of syrups in countless flavors lining the wall behind, all attended by a member of the Matheos family dressed in a fancy striped shirt and pristine white apron. The candy cases and glassware are gone now, but many sweet memories remain.

Machine Shop



The industrial revolution that occurred across the United States in the latter half of the 1800s created the need for establishments such as the F. J. Curtis Machine Shop, which was located at the corner of Water Street (now West Avenue) and Union Street. According to the sign on the front of the building, this shop manufactured engines & boilers, power and hand pumps, and also sold machine, engine and cylinder oil, as well as gas pipes and fittings. As more industries became mechanized, machine shops prospered by providing skill labor to fix machines and manufacture the parts needed to make the machines run. Farmers, canal boat captains, railroad workers, and well drillers relied on these early ancestors of the modern tool and die shop for their equipment and parts. Machine shops multiplied into the thousands in the Rochester area during the 1880s and 1890s, and the area became known as a manufacturing hub in the northeast. Area shops produced a variety of patented machines such as Gordon Grain Binder, the Howe Scales, the Sunningham Carriages, the Gleason Gears, and, in Spencerport, the Hoy Potato Digger.

McCabe's Lumberyard is shown here around 1910. The Village Plaza stands in this location today.



The lumber industry was a thriving one in 19th century Rochester and Monroe County. The heavily forested land in Ogden was being cleared by settlers as early as 1802, and as the population grew, enterprising businessmen recognized the value of an organized method of processing raw wood into smooth planks and boards that could be sold for use in building homes, carriages, wagons, furniture and even wooden legs. Several lumberyards and sawmills existed in Spencerport throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries. Local businessman Joel Millener owned a yard in Rochester that produced wood used primarily for building canal boats. During the mid-19th century, Rochester and the surrounding region became known for the quality of canal boats built here, so much so that a newspaper in Buffalo claimed that Rochester-built canal boats were "fairy palaces in miniature." At the time this photo was taken, it is likely that McCabe's yard was producing a tremendous amount of wood used for the reconstruction of the Erie Canal.

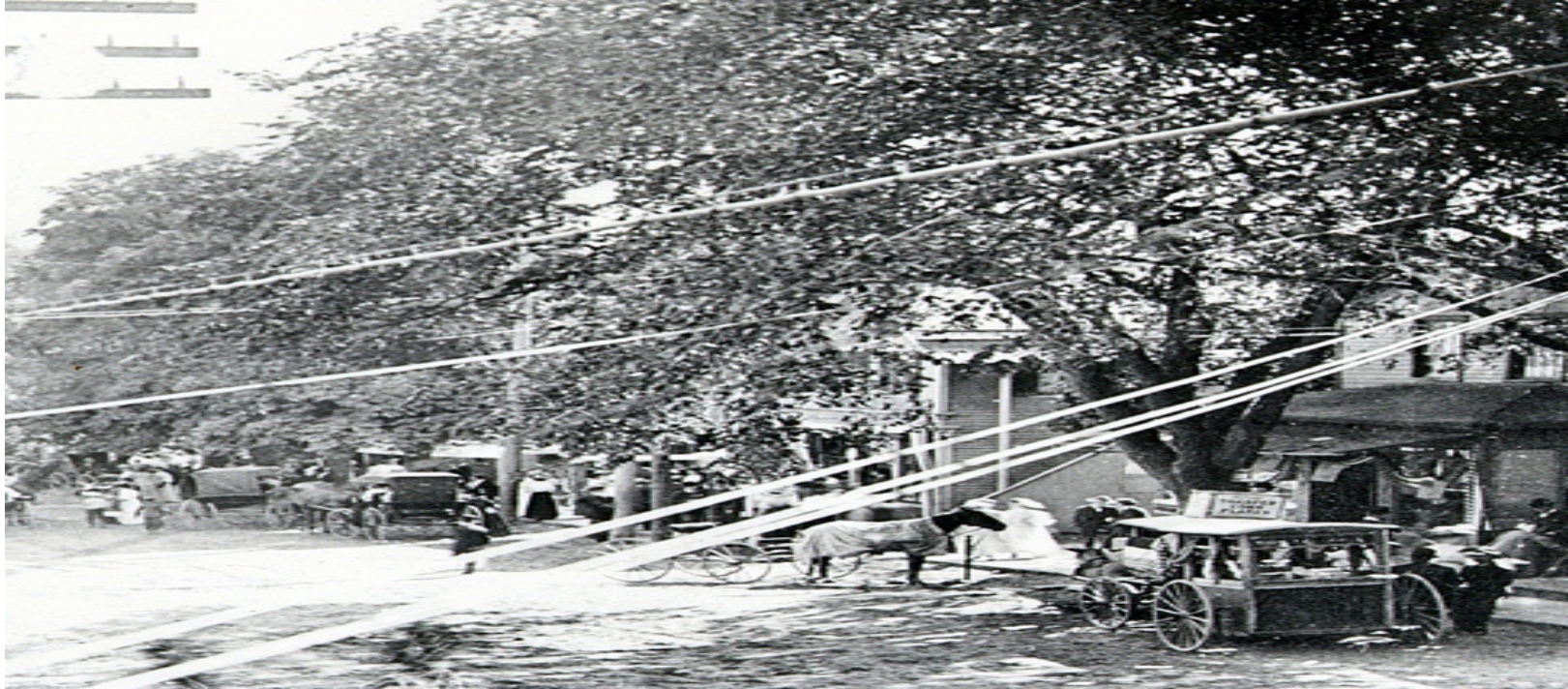
John Leonard's Protectives, 1898



left to right: Jack Riley, Jene Ladd, Henry Helfrich, George Helfrich, John Kedian, Lewis Wellman, Thomas Kedian, Walter Post, Joe Osbourn, Andrew Kedian, George Culver, Fred Addie. Front seat, facing rear, near side: John Leonard, Henry Harmon; facing Leonard is David Walker. Second seat, near side: Mark Welch, Charles Waters (with derby).

John Leonard was a local businessman and owner of Leonard's Cottage Inn, which was located on the northwest side of the canal. Leonard once served as Fire Chief in Rochester, and, in the 1890's, helped organize the Spencerport Fire Department. "Leonard's Protectives" was a company of the Spencerport Fire Department formed in the late 1890's. By the time this photo was taken in 1898, the Fire Department had four companies: the Protectives, the Engine Company, the Hook and Ladder Company, and the C.S. Upton Hose Company. Each Company had its own job at a fire; the Protectives job was to safeguard and salvage property. The Engine Company transported the pumper and holding tank full of water, to which the Hose Company would attach their equipment to spray water on the fire. The Hook and Ladder Company was responsible for transporting and setting up ladders, providing lanterns, buckets and axes, and pulling down burning rafters. Taken together, these companies made up the core of the early Spencerport Fire Department.

Labor Day in Spencerport around 1917



The first Labor Day holiday was celebrated on Tuesday, September 5, 1882, in New York City. In 1884, the first Monday in September was selected as the holiday and the Central Labor Union urged similar organizations in other cities to follow the example of New York and celebrate a "workingmen's holiday" on that date. The idea spread with the growth of labor organizations, and in 1885 Labor Day was celebrated in many industrial centers of the country. The recommended form that the observance and celebration of Labor Day took included a street parade to exhibit to the public "the strength and esprit de corps of the trade and labor organizations" of the community, followed by a festival for the "recreation and amusement of the workers and their families." This became the pattern for the celebrations of Labor Day. Speeches by prominent men and women were introduced in the 20th century, as more emphasis was placed upon the economic and civic significance of the holiday. The men and women of Spencerport are shown here decked out in their best clothes and arriving in town in their fanciest carriages. On the street is a vendor selling "toasted corn flakes," the invention of the Harvey brothers in Battle Creek, Michigan. The company gave free samples of their corn flakes to women who would "Give the Grocer a Wink" in the early 1900s

Spencerport Union School No. 1, located on the corner of West Avenue and Church Street, early 1900s.



The first school was established in the Town of Ogden shortly after the first settlers arrived in the early 1800s. The wife of George Willey conducted classes in her home, which was also used for a time as the town's first library. As more children populated the town, small one-room school houses came into existence in all parts of the town. In 1875, there were 14 school houses teaching more than 1,000 students ranging in age from 5 to 21. The school pictured here was a graded school in the 1890s and was one of the finest in the area. In 1902, the State Education Department of New York awarded it the status of high school. A new wing was added in the early 1900s to accommodate the increase in students, who came from as far away as Rochester to attend classes. Adjoining property was purchased a few years later and converted into an Agriculture and Home Economics building. Despite the additions to the original structure, the student population outgrew the location. In 1926, property on Lyell Avenue was purchased from James Gott and a new high school was built. The school was named after Ogden author J.T. Trowbridge. It now houses apartments and businesses.

Grocery Store Interior



Hart's and Red & White operated grocery stores in the same building at different times during the first part of the 20th century. Located at the corner of Union and Amity, the building also housed the Independent Order of Odd Fellows Lodge Number 199. The building burned to the ground in the early 1990s. Grocery stores developed out of the general stores common in the 1880s, where the merchandise was generally kept behind a counter and the proprietor had to fetch items for customers, and measure exact amounts of things like sugar and flour. This method of sale was time consuming and labor intensive, and in the early 20th century, entrepreneur Clarence Saunders opened the first self-service grocery store, the Piggly Wiggly. Buffalo businessman S.M. Flickinger developed the Red & White brand to compete with A&P, the dominant grocery store chain in the northeast in the 1920s and 30s. These stores employed "stock boys" who would fill the shelves at night; during the day, the store opened to customers who selected their items from open shelves and went to the front of the store to pay.

Garden Club Exhibit



The interior of the Genesee Valley Union Trust Company is shown here, decorated by the Spencerport Garden Club around 1934. Genesee Valley Trust operated in what is now Ritchie Family Hardware, recognizable for its remarkable stone façade, which was transported to Spencerport from a former bank building on State Street in Rochester in the 1920s. The Genesee Valley Trust Company building in the City of Rochester was part of the battle for architectural pre-eminence in the Rochester skyline during the skyscraper building phase in the 1920s and early 30s. The 13-story building at the corner of Broad and Exchange, topped with the Art Deco sculpture "Wings of Progress," prompted George Eastman to add three more floors and a gothic spire to Kodak's State Street offices in 1931, thus making Kodak the tallest building in Rochester.

The Spencerport Garden Club was founded in 1934 by Gertrude Austin and has continued to the present time as an active civic beautification organization. Members of the Garden Club meet regularly and maintain several public gardens in Spencerport and Ogden, most notably the garden in front of the Ogden Community Center. The group was honored by the Spencerport Chamber of Commerce with a Civic Beautification Award in 2003.

WCTU Fountain, located in front of the Village Building at the corner of Union Street and West Avenue, around 1910.



The Women's Christian Temperance Union was active in Rochester and Monroe County from the first half of the 1800s through the mid-20th century and used every opportunity afforded them to promote the cause of temperance and eradicate the use of liquor and spirits. To that end, the local chapter of the WCTU worked with the Woman's Civic Club to install this impressive water fountain in the early 1900s. One side of the fountain provided a trough for horses to drink from, while the other side provided a fountain for people to quench their thirst. The WCTU encouraged chapters all over the country to install these fountains to promote the consumption of cool, clear water over liquor and beer. Temperance was a hot issue in Rochester and Monroe County going all the way back to the early days of settlement. Rochester's first mayor, Jonathan Child actually resigned from office rather than grant liquor licenses to tavern owners in the city. The Volstead Act, passed in 1918 and more commonly known as Prohibition, didn't have much impact on Spencerport and Ogden because both had been voted "dry" by referendum a few years earlier. The three saloons operating in Spencerport fell on hard times, and one tavern owner, John Leonard, moved his business to Manitou Road, just over the Greece town line, and opened the Red Onion.

The fountain was removed in the last half of the 20th century when the Village Building was expanded. The basin and other parts of the fountain reside in the backyard of a local family, and rumor has it that the lion's head and other decorative elements of the fountain were buried somewhere near the electrical substation on East Avenue.

Clearing land for running electric lines in Ogden, early 1900s.



By the 1880s, three companies offered electric service in Rochester, with others offering service to the west. Incandescent lights required direct current and more wires than the older arc lamps, and utility companies ran the wires from building to building across roofs. Eventually, the City of Rochester ordered the wires be carried on poles to avoid fires. The poles to hold those wires were cleared from forest and farm land around the city. Large swaths of land had to be cleared to make way for the electric lines connecting villages like Spencerport to the sources of power. To the east, Rochester provided one source of power through several electric companies operating on the Genesee; to the west, Buffalo offered another source provided by companies drawing hydroelectric power from Niagara Falls. Electricity came to Spencerport in 1916, with power originally supplied by Niagara-Hudson Power Company.

Village Electric was formed in 1916 and facilitated the delivery of electricity to the capacity of 1200 KVA to the area. The power capacity was enlarged to 1500 KVA in 1956. Spencerport got a first glimpse of electric lights on the dredgers used to dig out the old Erie Canal bed beginning around 1910. The dredgers operated continuously, and were lit up at night to guide the work, providing residents with an awe-inspiring sight.

The Charles Church building just prior to its complete demolition in the early 1960s.



Charles Church was one of the first merchants to arrive in Spencerport and built this once impressive structure. "Church's Store" became one of the most recognizable buildings in Spencerport and was located right on the southwestern bank of the Erie Canal where today you will find the parking lot for Spencer's Landing and the Clyde Carter Memorial Gazebo. The building came to be identified with the Upton family which owned and operated the location later in the 19th and early 20th centuries. It also provided meeting space for the Masonic Lodge members before their temple was built on Union Street. Its prominent location on the canal made this brick building with the cupola easy to spot by those traveling by boat. The building changed hands often in the 20th century and eventually fell into great disrepair. In a bout of urban renewal, the building was demolished in the early 1960s. This picture shows an early stage of the demolition process.

Memorial Day



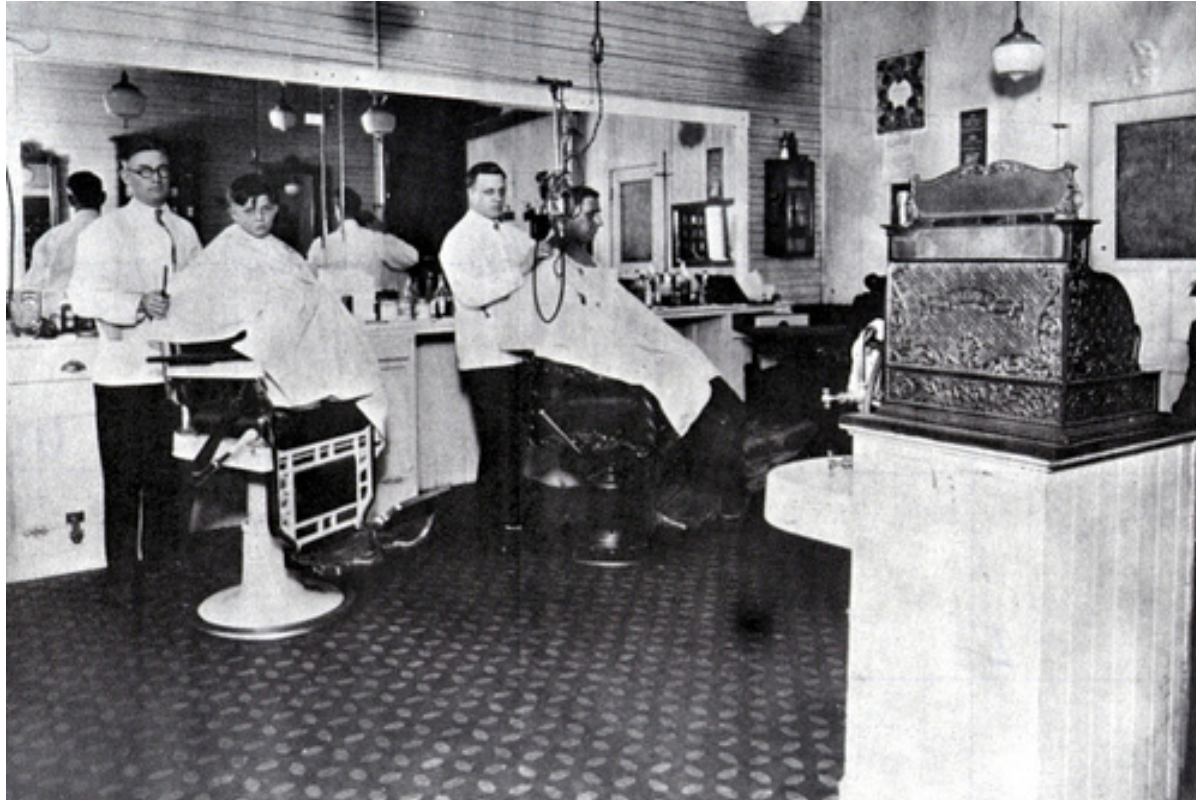
The Adams Basin Methodist Protestant Church welcomed the Grand Army of the Republic to Memorial Day services on May 27, 1906. Memorial Day was originally called Decoration Day and was begun in Waterloo N.Y. in the 1860s as a day to honor the war dead. Memorial Day was officially proclaimed on May 5, 1868 by General John Logan, a national commander of the Grand Army of the Republic, and was first observed on May 30, 1868. On that day, flowers were placed on the graves of Union and Confederate soldiers at Arlington National Cemetery and at smaller local cemeteries around the nation. The tradition of placing flowers on the graves of veterans on Memorial Day has changed to placing small American flags on the graves. Veterans Associations around Monroe County maintained log books of the locations of all veterans' graves in the county through to the early 1980s; those books are now available for the public to use for research at the Ogden Farmers' Library at 269 Ogden Center Road.

L.F. Spencer, daughter Hattie and wife Anna, pictured in front of their home at 127 Water Street (now West Avenue), around 1872.



Lebbeus Foster Spencer was born in Spencerport in 1833, just two years before the death of his father, Daniel Spencer, the founder of Spencerport. Instead of following his father and brother, Joseph, into the family farming business, "L.F." or "Foster", as he was called by friends, became a local businessman, notably a coal dealer, with coal yards on both the Erie Canal and New York Central & Hudson River Railroad. He became a local politician, serving two terms as Ogden town supervisor, 1878-80. Active in Democratic politics, he secured an appointment from President Cleveland in 1885 as U.S. Indian Agent on the largest Sioux agency in Dakota Territory, called Rosebud. He returned to Spencerport shortly before the Wounded Knee massacre in December, 1890.

Charley's Barber Shop



Spencerport has always hosted a number of barbershops; some early records show as many as eight shops operating in the Village at one time. In 1893, A. B. Moler established the first international school for barbers in Chicago. It established itself as the primary source for instruction in the tonsorial arts, and was rapidly followed by branches in nearly every major city in the United States. These schools taught the practical work of shaving, haircutting, and facial treatments; scientific treatments of hair, skin and scalp would follow later. The barbershop was the place where men gathered to hear and talk about the latest local news, debate politics, share farming advice, and often to discuss that most perplexing topic – women – all the while getting a hair cut and shave. At least one barbershop in Spencerport offered more than just barbering and provided a billiard table for the men to use while waiting for a chair. Barbershops also are rooted in small-town history as the source of a music style: the Barbershop Quartet. Norman Rockwell's 1936 illustration of a Barbershop Quartet established the form as an American institution, although the roots of Barbershop have been traced to African American gospel quartets that arose out of barbershops in the deep South in the early 1900's.

Interior of Austin's Drug Store around 1925.



Ray Austin is pictured in the dark coat, while Earl Austin appears in the white shirt.

Austin's Drug Store operated in Spencerport for many years and was located on Union Street in the building now occupied by Spencerport Floral Design. In response to a need expressed by a local doctor for a pharmacy in Spencerport, Eugene Austin searched out a man named Smith, who came to town and opened Smith and Austin Drug Store. Mr. Smith left the business after a year or so, and Mr. Austin was left without a pharmacist. He convinced his two sons, Ray and Earl, to pursue pharmacy as a career. At the time, there were few formal training courses for pharmacists; Earl Austin took a six month course and passed a test to become a pharmacist, while Ray took a full two year course of study and was among the first graduates of the Buffalo Pharmacy School. He returned to Spencerport as a "chemist" and continued working in the store even while serving as a New York State legislator. Over the centuries, medicines have come in many forms and been dispensed by men and women known variously as apothecaries, chemists, druggists, and pharmacists, who have been challenged to manufacture these preparations in forms acceptable to patients. Ancient medicine consisted mainly of plant and animal extracts prepared by soaking in water or wine. Sweet substances would be added to flavor them and make them more palatable. In modern times, forms such as pills, tablets, and capsules have rendered medicines virtually tasteless and at the same time removed the responsibility for actually making the preparations from the pharmacists and transferred that process to drug manufacturers.

Adams Basin Post Office, looking south along Washington Street.



Adams Basin was first settled in the early 1800s by the King and Adams families. The hamlet was known as Kings and Adams Basin after Moses and Bradford King and Abner Adams who started a business there bearing their names. In 1827, Myron and Marcus Adams came to the Basin and started their own businesses. When the Adams brothers arrived in the Basin, they found a dry dock, a boat yard, a pail factory, and a sawmill. The Adams brothers built upon those existing businesses and established a thriving community centered at the intersection of Washington Street and Canal Road. Marcus Adams was appointed postmaster and served in that capacity for about 20 years. Mr. Adams was an adventurous businessman and was constantly trying some new business venture. One of his more exotic ventures was the establishment of a silk worm farm. Along with two other men, Adams ordered a supply of silk worms, planted 5 acres of mulberry trees, on which the worms cocooned and fed, and proceeded to manufacture silk. The business was successful for a time, until a multicaulus epidemic swept through the area, killing the worms and trees. As time went on, Adams Basin became home to the Adams Basin Methodist Church and to a school. The post office, the church and the school still stand at the crossroads in the Basin.