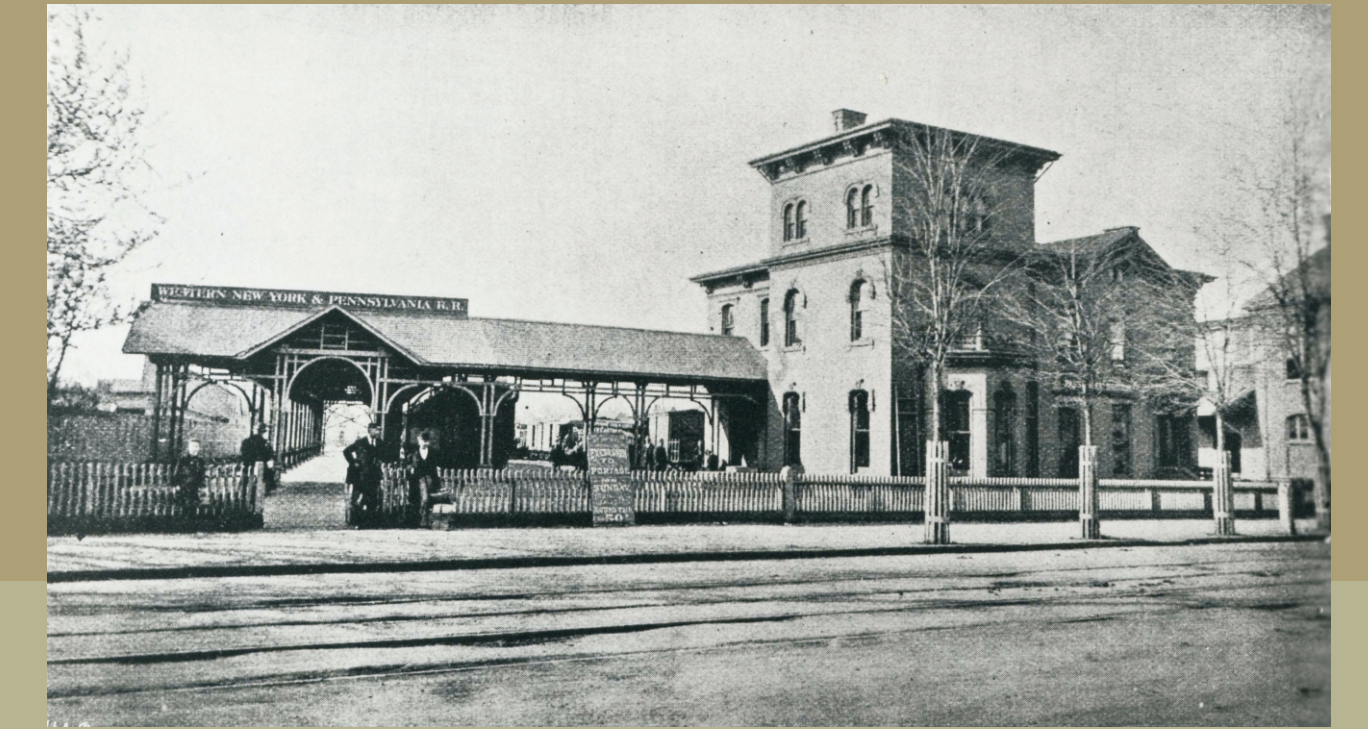


Crossroads of Transportation

Rochester transitions from horse & wagon to canals, railroads, subway, buses and automobiles



Right: Western New York & Pennsylvania Railway station circa 1914. Rochester Images: From the Collection of the Rochester Public Library Local History Division

Canals provide an inexpensive way to move people and goods



1825-Erie Canal

The Erie Canal connects the Hudson River and Lake Erie. The 363 miles of navigable waterway provided a cost-efficient way to transport goods to and from the Great Lakes to New York City and every village in between. Before the canal it cost \$100 to ship one ton of goods from New York City to Buffalo, NY. After the canal was completed the same ton could be shipped for \$10.

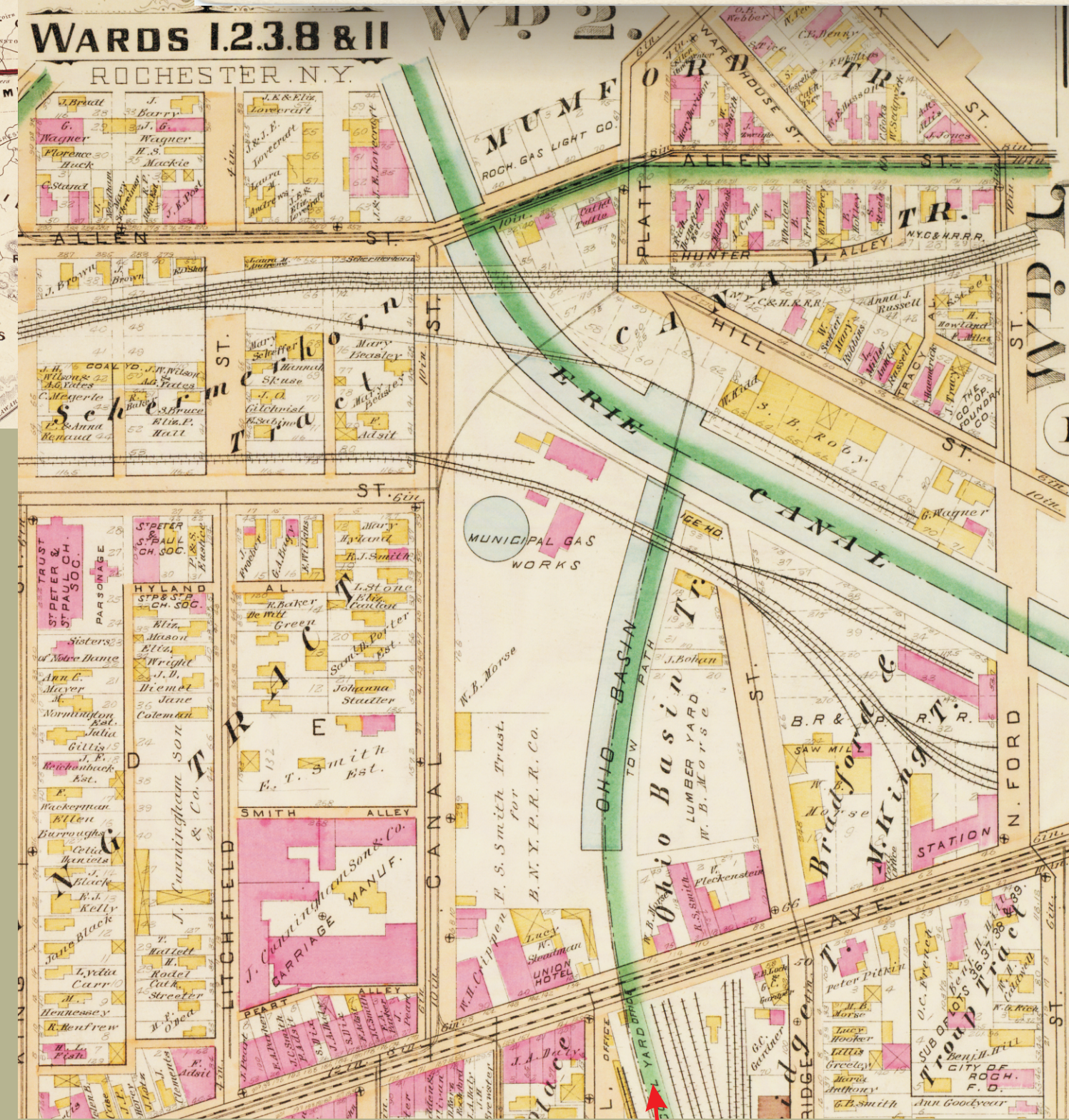
Above: 1858 Map of the canals of New York State. Courtesy of the Canal Society of New York State

Right: 1888 Detail map of the junction of the Erie Canal and the Genesee Valley Canal at the Ohio Basin.

Rochester Images: From the Collection of the Rochester Public Library Local History Division



Below: New York Central Station in Rochester designed by Claude Bragdon. Rochester Images: From the Collection of the Rochester Public Library Local History Division



Genesee Valley Canal



Above: View looking east along Main Street and the Erie Canal. The bridge in the lower right corner was replaced by the lift bridge later called "Old Calamity." Rochester Images: From the Collection of the Rochester Public Library Local History Division

Right: View of the West Main Street bridge or "Old Calamity" prior to its demolition. Rochester Images: From the Collection of the Rochester Public Library Local History Division

Rise of the Railroads

In 1874, the State permitted the sale or abandonment of most of the State-owned canals. Many of the canal beds were purchased by railroads.

- Railroads Listed in Rochester 1890 City Directory:**
- Avon, Genesee & Mt. Morris
 - Buffalo, Rochester & Pittsburgh
 - Genesee Falls Railway
 - New York Central & Hudson River
 - New York Lake Erie & Western
 - Rochester Electric Railway
 - Rochester Railway
 - Rochester & Genesee Valley
 - Rochester & Glen Haven
 - Rochester & Honeoye Valley
 - Rochester & Lake Ontario
 - Rome, Watertown & Ogdensburg
 - Western New York & Pennsylvania



Buffalo, Rochester & Pittsburgh Railroad (BR&P RR)

Built to carry coal from the fields of western Pennsylvania, the BR&P RR operated out of this building that stands today-shown above in a 19th century engraving.

Above: Buffalo, Rochester & Pittsburgh Railway Station engraving circa 1885. Rochester Images: From the Collection of the Rochester Public Library Local History Division

Bridges Over the Canal

Bridges were built over the canal at each cross street as can be seen in the illustration at the left. Lift bridges were constructed to allow boats to pass underneath.

Historical Hiking Trails

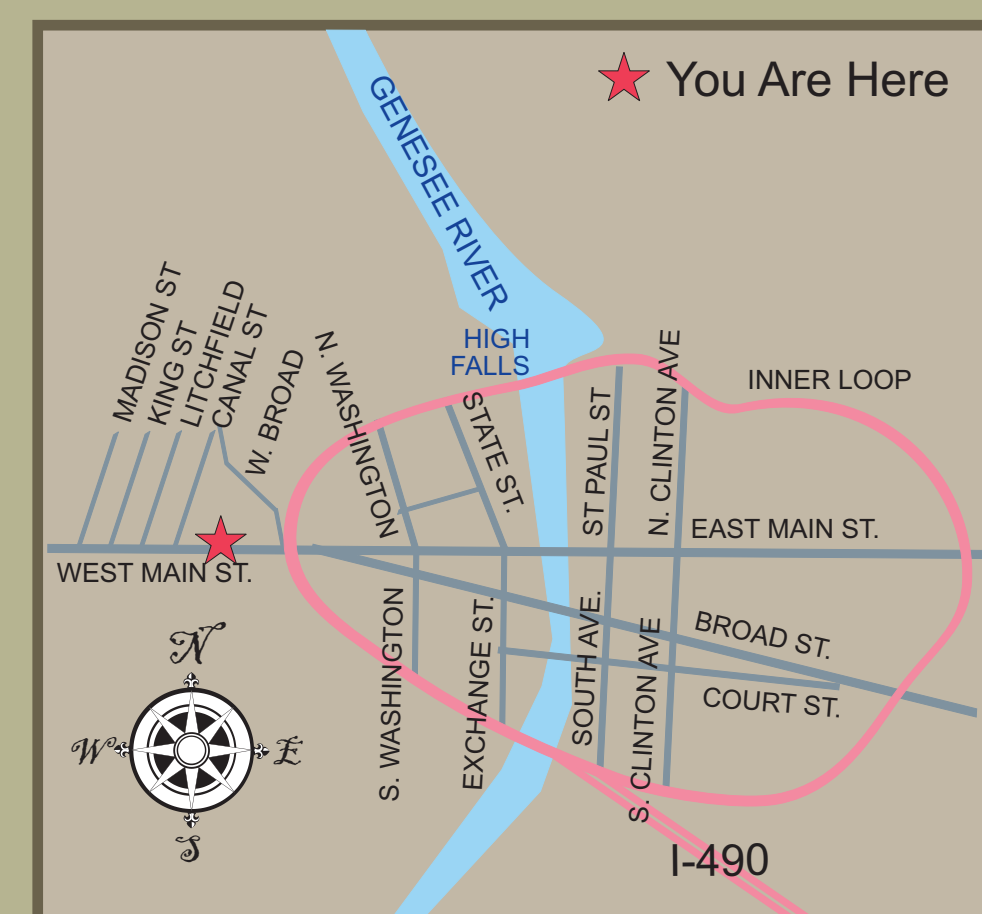
Many of the old canal and railroad beds have been converted to hike/bike trails

1837-1878

Genesee Valley Canal

Built in 1837, the Genesee Valley Canal was to connect Rochester to Pittsburgh, PA. and the rich Ohio River Valley via the Allegheny River at Olean, NY. The junction of the Erie Canal and Genesee Valley Canal completed the east-west/north-south shipping connections and made Rochester an important transportation and shipping center.

Boatyards, lumber mills, ships chandlers, warehouses, dock workers, teamsters, liveries, cooks and farmers all thrived in the heyday of the canals. The first cargo was carried from Rochester to Mt. Morris in September, 1840. The canal closed in 1878, not having realized the market potential of the Ohio River Valley before railroads took over much of the business. The canal bed became the rail bed for the Western New York & Pennsylvania Railroad.



Old Calamity

The lift bridge at West Main Street over the Erie Canal was nicknamed "Old Calamity" for its fitful operation that often tied up road traffic. The bridge was demolished when the Erie Canal was relocated.