

HISTORY OF THE STREETS
OF
NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY

BY
JOHN P. WALL

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To arrive at the development of the streets of New-Brunswick it is necessary to hark back to Colonial days when its only highways were rough trails through the swamps and forests of the old Indian paths which ran over what are now Burnet, Albany and French streets, and the old line of Water street or the River road. Burnet street, being along the water front, was the natural point from which the streets, through the common course of usage, were opened.

In the early minutes of common Council the streets are referred to as "the road running" from the house of a certain owner to that of another and "there to end." No name is given to designate the street.

Burnet street is mentioned in a deed from Enoch Freeland to Thomas Leonard dated June 22, 1726. (Lib. 2 of Deeds 245) This street is referred in many entries in the old records as the Main street or Broad street. It was the one street that ran from the old ferry to the dock at the end of the town. It was opened from the foot of Sonomons hill to Westons Mills in 1810. It was named in honor of William Burnet, Governor of East and West Jersey from 1720 to 1727. He died September 7, 1729.

√ On March 6, 1731 an ordinance was passed for repairing the road and bridges through Burnet street and reads:

Be itt ordained by the Mayor Recorder
Alderman and assistants in common Council,
Convened and by the Authority of the same
itts ordained that the great Road or Street
with Bridges thereon leading from Paul Millers

to William Peacocks house and so on Southwest to Georges Road be made and repaired by the inhabitants of the said City who shall be summoned to Work on the Same by the overseer of Highways and in case of Neglect or refusal shall forfeit three Shills for each neglect to be levied on goods & Chattels of Delinquent with Costs of Suit for the use of the City and every team with cart or waggon and a man to manage the same which the said overseer shall occasion to employ shall be esteemed in the place of three Days labour of one workingman and in case of refusal shall forfeit nine shills for ye use of the City to be levied as abovesaid."

This is the first reference in Council Minutes in regard to the care of the streets.

The first street mentioned by Name in the old Council Minutes is Peace street, which was laid out by an ordinance of Common Council passed May 20, 1741, "Beginning Near ye house of Nicholas Van Dyck thence along Van Cleaves & Garret De Graws & from thence to French Street as it was defined and laid out by Mr. P. Phillip French and by him called Peace street."

In this resolution is found the first mention of French street, which was named for Philip French, a leading citizen of the early time. He owned much land in the first settled area of the city. He was devoted to every interest of the town, He gave the land for the Dutch Reformed Church and the land for the Protestant Episcopal Church. He was an original trustee of Queens College. In the Revolutionary War he was a Loyalist and his property was confiscated. His home was just north of French or Albany street where George street now crosses Washington. Governor William Livingston married his daughter.

When the name was changed from French to Albany is not definitely known. On Frenche's Patent or Mannings Survey, 1790, the earliest known map of New Brunswick, the name appears as "Albany or French street." The Name French disappears after 1835 and Albany takes its place as far as Easton avenue, from there out to the Mile Run Brook the old Name of French has

been retained, The name Albany is said to be given in honor of a band of early settlers who migrated from Albany, N.Y. and settled in that section of New Brunswick, Albany street, from French to Hamilton, is shown on the map of 1829 as Franklin Turnpike.

The next street of which a positive date is known as to when it was laid out is New street, which was in reality, the first step looking toward the development of the town above Neilson street. It was opened from Burnet street to Livingston avenue in 1760, and from there to French street in 1795. At the same time a road was opened from the New street and called Drift lane, because it was to take the drift of travel from the New Road. That part of New street known as Carroll Place has its name from Dr. Edward Carroll, who came from Jamaica, who lived in New Brunswick in this street from 1829 until his death in 1840.

Drift lane was made wider in 1872 and the name changed to Drift street.

Richmond street was originally known as Court street, as the first Court house was built at the southwest corner of Burnet street in 1741. The street was officially opened in 1785, from Burnet to Queen street, and named Richmond in honor of Captain James Richmond, a noted merchant and shipper and also owner of a large tract of land in that neighborhood known as Richmonds Meadows. On May 28, 1830 a petition was presented to Common Council complaining that the Meadows were a nuisance, as the city pound for pigs and other animals was located on Richmond street.

Richmond lived at the corner of Burnet and Richmond

streets, in the building, in later years known as Macom's Hotel.

Paterson Street, first called Barracks street because the colonial barracks was there, was opened from Queen (Neilson) to George street in 1785, and from George to French street in 1810. it bears the name of William Paterson, perhaps the most distinguished in the long list of New Brunswick in the field of political and national affairs. He was born in Ireland about 1745 and lived in New Brunswick from 1783 until 1806, and his most distinguished work was during this residence. His home was in Burnet street, at what is now Commerce Square, the corner now called Paterson Block. The Paterson family coming to this country, from Ireland first settling in Trenton, soon made its home at Princeton. William Paterson graduated there with highest honors and studied law with Richard Stockton. After serving the Provincial Congress in the New Jersey Constitutional Convention, in the Continental Congress, and as Attorney General, he settled in New Brunswick to practice law. Thereafter he was Senator of the United States, and Governor of New Jersey: then, 1793 until his death in 1806, he was Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. His most important service to the nation was, perhaps, his participation in the Convention for the framing of the Constitution of the United States in 1787, his representing of the state sovereignty idea which with the nation centrality idea of James Madison composed the national system then adopted. He was very active in all city life and affairs.

The city of Paterson, New Jersey was named in his honor.

Neilson street was, until after the Revolution, the last street "within the line of houses" and above it was more or less a pine forest, the ^{last} vestige of which stood on the block,

between Guilden and Easton avenue, to about one hundred feet of Mine street, it was in 1785 that the first real effort to establish a street system was undertaken. Neilson street was opened officially to New street in 1785, and from Commercial avenue to Oliver street in 1837 and from New to Oliver about 1870. That part of it known as King street had foot walks laid in 1797. The grade caused the water to flow into "French street, causing great trouble for all sort of travel" so they were ordered to be taken up and in 1801 relaid to a new grade level.

In early days this street bore two names. North of Albany (French) it was called King street and south of Albany it was Queen street. When British rule was cast off it was thought that everything connected with it should take the same course, so on January 21, 1828 a petition asking for a change of street names was presented to Common Council, no action was taken. On March 12, 1830 Council was again asked to change the names of King and Queen streets to Columbia, or some other name.

At the meeting of Common Council held March 26, 1830, King and Queen streets was changed to Neilson in honor of the Neilson family and Prince street to Bayard in honor of John Bayard.

Dennis street was opened from Church to Richmond street in 1804, and named for John Dennis, through whose land it was opened. Dennis was a merchant and noted patriot. He was chairman of the Committee of Safety and it was, without doubt, into his hands that the Declaration of Independence was delivered by the rider who brought it to town, his instructions being to give it to the Chairman of the Committee of Safety, and to no other person, Dennis lived on (Little) Burnet street

and suffered heavy losses during the occupation of the city by the British.

Hiram street from Burnet to Dennis was, in early days, a narrow passage way and remained so until 1872, when it was made its present width, That part from Dennis to Neilson was opened, and the full street named Hiram, in 1804. When the Market was built in 1813, land was purchased at both sides of the street, from Neilson to Dennis, making a square which was known as Market square.

The name was spelled Hyriam until about 1824.

George street in its earliest days ran from Albany to Livingston avenue, In 1809 it was opened from Albany to Somerset through the lands of Phillip French whose house stood at what is now the crossing of George and Washington streets and was razed shortly before the street was cut through, It was officially opened from Commercial avenue to New street in 1803. and what was known as the "Narrow part", from New to Liberty, was opened in 1824. The building on the south side was moved back so that the block was made an even width, it being originally forty feet from Liberty to Schureman and sixty feet at New. The street was named for George Drake, overseer of the road and also of Georges road which entered from Livingston avenue at Suydam and from there in a diagonal line to Hale street where it crossed at Lee avenue and continued on the same line across Remsen avenue to near Powers street, making a round turn into Sanford street and continued out to Commercial avenue in its present line across the Mile Run Brook at the city limits. George street was opened from Somerset street to the Landing bridge at the opening of the

Delaware and Raritan canal and appears on the map of 1836 as Stockton avenue, in honor Colonel Richard F. Stockton, one of prime factors in the establishment of the railroad and canal. The name of Stockton was discontinued and as a matter of convenience, George street was adopted for the entire length of the street.

Hamilton street was named for Colonel Alexander Hamilton, of national fame, He was in command of a battery, on what is now Seminary place, when the British entered New Brunswick in November 1776. It was here that General Washington and Hamilton met for the first time. His son, Colonel Alexander Hamilton, was a resident of New Brunswick for a number of years, His wife died and was buried from the residence of General Mackintosh on Kirkpatrick street. Later he lived at the City Hotel, then removed to New York where he died, at 88 Clinton Place, on August 1, 1875. He was buried in Christ church cemetery New Brunswick on August 4, 1875. He was born in New York May 16, 1786 and served in the war of 1812, as General in command of the old Sandy Hook fort.

That part of the city from Hamilton street to College avenue, up the avenue to the Mile Run brook and down George street to meet at the point of beginning, was laid out into streets when the Delaware and Raritan canal was opened in 1834. The road from the Landing lane to Somerset street, and now known as George street, was named Stockton avenue in honor of General Robert F. Stockton, at the same time what is now Rutgers campus and Buccleuch park was laid out into streets and avenues, the avenues commencing at Hamilton street and ending when they reached Stockton avenue (George street) The one next to Stockton was called Raritan

the next Delaware and the following one College avenue. The cross streets were named Seminary Place, Morrell, Senior, Stone and Huntington streets. These streets were never opened over this tract, with the exception of Stone street, which was re-named Bishop Place, The named streets through Buccleuch Park were Baltimore, Beaumont, Franklin, Staron and Grove streets, which were never opened. A street was laid out through the campus, from Hamilton to Seminary Place and called Bleecker Place in honor of a branch of the Neilson family. In ¹⁹³⁵ later years the roadway was closed and became part of the Campus lawn.

Lafayette Street, named in honor of General Lafayette, was laid out at the same time and later become the last city street and line for Buccleuch park.

Central Avenue was at one time known as Parker Avenue.

Water Street came by its name from the fact that it was river front, it was a part of the original Burnet street, at the river north of French or Albany street. On it were, as time went on, the homes of Colonel John Taylor, later Andrew Kirkpatrick's, Rev. Ira Condict, J. R. Hardenberg, Jr., and Dr. John Cochran, it ran along the river until the canal was built, when it was closed and used for the canal bed above Hamilton street, it was also described as the road to the Landing.

Abeel Street, bears the name of a family of distinction.

James Abeel born in Albany in 1733, lived in New Brunswick, and died in 1825. He married a daughter of Dr. John Neilson. He was captain and then Major in the American army in the Revolution.

This street was opened through the Abeel property in 1837.

Livingston Avenue. An outlet from George street and established as a turnpike in 1804, it was given its present name

in 1869 in honor of the Rev. Dr. John H. Livingston who had lived in the house torn down to make place for the Livingston Apartments. He was of the Livingston family so very distinguished in the history of New York and New Jersey and in the early life of the new nation. He was educated at Yale and at Utrecht. He became minister of the Collegiate Dutch Reformed Church in New York City and a leader in the religious life of the nation. He came to New Brunswick in 1810 as President of Queens College, bringing to the city at the same time the Theological Seminary, the oldest in the country. He lived in Albany street at first, in the house known as the Leupp house. Soon he bought the house on the present Livingston avenue with its farm of over sixty acres and he lived there until his death in 1825. His portrait was painted by Gilbert Stuart, At his grave in the yard of the First Reformed Church a memorial stone was erected by the General Synod of the denomination.

Hardenberg street, bears the name of an old New Brunswick family. The Rev. Dr. Jacob Rutsen Hardenberg came to New Brunswick in 1784 as President of Queens College and minister of the old Dutch Reformed Church. He had been associated with the life of the city in religious educational and political affairs for years before that. He had been forward in the founding of Queens College and its acting president from the start. He died in New Brunswick in 1790;

Suydam Street. This represents by its name and locality a development of new city area which began in 1836. It bears the name of Abraham Suydam who was especially concerned in the development and who was a highly respected and influential citizen whose family name was here from early days. The murder of Mr. Suydam in 1840.

by Peter Robinson who was indebted to him is one of the enduringly remembered events in the record of the city. Abraham Suydam with James Lorimer Graham made surveys of area at the edge of the occupied city and prepared a map of it with actual and proposed streets which is a chief and constantly quoted authority still in the New Brunswick land transactions. They secured many investors in this land, laid out in lots, and in certain sections houses in good number were soon erected. The names of some of these investors interested in the development, not residents of New Brunswick, generally residents of New York, were given the newly laid out streets---Codwise, Redmond, Remsen, Throop, Comstock, Hale, Handy, Delevan, Baldwin, Sanford, Welton, Powers, Townsend, Talmadge, and other streets in this development and have no local association as far as Names are concerned.

Kirkpatrick Street, was named for Andrew Kirkpatrick, born in 1756 and graduated at Princeton in 1775. He took charge of the Queens College Grammar School, and studied law under William Paterson. He became a Justice of the Supreme Court of New Jersey in 1798, serving for six years. He then became Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, holding that office for twenty-one years.

He was a Trustee of Rutgers College and of Princeton Theological Seminary. He married a daughter of Colonel John Bayard.

In 1809 Liberty street was cut through the Dutch burying ground and in resentment for the same it was generally referred to as "Resurrection street" on account of disturbing the graves of the dead.

Schureman Street was named for the Schureman family who lived and conducted a store on south west corner of Burnet and Dutch church streets, so called on account of the Dutch Church being on it. The name was changed to Schureman in Honor of John Schureman, who died July 6, 1795. He was a member of the Legislature, of the Provincial Congress, Committee of Safety, Judge, Treasurer of Queen's College and Mayor, or President of Council, 1790-93. He was the father of James Schureman, noted scholar, soldier, patriot and Mayor of New Brunswick, 1801-13, 1821-24. He died January 22, 1824. This street was opened from Neilson to George and later to Livingston street by Miss Ellis through whose land it was opened.

Easton Avenue, from Albany street to Hamilton, is named in all of the early maps of the city of Niagara street, so called on account of its rough and rock surface which, in rainy weather, gave it the appearance of Niagara Falls. The name of Easton avenue was given when the Easton Turnpike was laid out.

Church Street was among the first of the old passages. It was given official recognition as White Street in 1792 in honor of General Anthony Walton White, of the Revolutionary army. The name did not get public recognition and continued to be known as Church street from the fact that it lead to the church on Neilson street.

Carman Street was opened in 1837 and named for Pjenis Carman one of the organizers of the Bank of New Brunswick in 1810. Hassart street was opened in 1831 at 40-feet and made 10 feet wider in 1837, it was named for

Aaron Hassart, an extensive land owner at that time, Morris street was opened from John to George street, and extended from there to Livingston avenue in 1853, and was named for Hon. Robert Morris a noted legal leader of his day.

The Alley from Peace to Little Burnet street was a public passage from 1747, in 1803 it was made a public alley at 10 feet 4 inches and called Peace Alley on the map of 1829. Commercial avenue from Burnet to George street in 1806 and called Town Lane. The Alley from Bayard to Paterson, back of the Dutch church graveyard, was opened in 1785, at 15 feet and named Church alley, the alley between this and George street was opened about the same time, and on the corner was built the first Roman Catholic church in 1830. Central Wharf or what was later known as Richmonds alley, below Richmond street, from Burnet to the river, was opened in 1812. Bishop street was named for the Bishop family, as was Bishop Place, when David and James Bishop built their homes here. John street in 1813 and extended in 1837, was also called Brewer street, Oliver street, opened in 1837; Somerset street, in 1823, It is shown on Mannings survey of 1790, as a "new street & road to be laid out to ye Mile Run."

Freeman and Woodbridge streets were named in honor of the family of Dr. Samuel Woodbridge; Hartwell, for the family of Judge Woodbridge Strong. Wall street opened in 1903, when the railroad tracks were elevated, and named for John P. Wall. Scott street was so named for Dr. Warren Scott of Revolutionary days, Plum street, in honor of John Plum, one of the most active citizen of the early times, and very active in city politics from before the Revolution until after the war of 1812.

The streets in Lincoln Garden were named, as a rule for noted personage of the World War in 1917-18. This was a United States War emergency housing project. ^{*} ^{**} Wellington, Edgeworth, Stratford. Llewellyn and Stratford Place were names given to parts of Lawrence, Ward Talmadge and Howard streets when those blocks were developed. The streets above this section were laid out and opened in 1908.

High Street, so named as it is about on the highest elevation in the city.

Mine Street, so named because it runs through the ground of the old copper mine of Colonial times.

Elm Row was opened from Paterson to Bayard street when the court house was built in 1841.

Schuyler Street was named for Abraham Schuyler who was President of Council, or Mayor, 1796-1801 and at one time Sheriff of Middlesex County. He was a noted man of Revolutionary times.

Guilden Street was one of the early streets laid out in the upper part of the city. It was opened to Mine street and in 1871 from there to Hamilton street. It was named for the Reverend John C. Guilden who was the pastor of the church in New York City from which came a group of German families to locate in this part of the city and who maintained there for many years the Third Reformed Church.

The original name was Jane street and appears as such in early maps.

The name of Union street was first given to Spring Alley but was not used as the old Barracks spring ran through it and

formed a brook known as Barrack spring brook which ran between Albany and Church streets, and emptied into the river near the Albany street bridge. The next street of the name is shown running direct from Jane (now Guilden) to the Mile Run brook at Hamilton street. This was followed by the present Union street from Mine to Hamilton.

Central Avenue was originally called Parker avenue and appears as such on the map of 1829. Other streets appearing on this map as running from Easton avenue, above Bristol street, to the Mile Run brook, were Emmet, Jenkins, Haven, Cambridge and De Witt. They were never opened.

The total mileage in 1940 was sixtythree of which fiftyone were paved. The ^{was} paved ones being, short streets in new development in the outer limits of the city.

This is a complete-history of the streets of New Brunswick as shown by the earliest available records to 1940.

Residents on each street.

The number of persons dwelling in each of the city streets as shown by the police census of 1919 was as follows:

Burnet 953, Neilson 830, Somerset 798, George 773, Easton Ave. 771, French 701, New 685, Albany 666, Suydam 527, Bayard 512, Church 495, Seaman 492, Throop Ave. 476, Remsen Ave., 475, Townsend 450, Hamilton 445, Commercial ave., 423, Handy 410, Baldwin 380, Redmond 379, Schureman 362, John 358, Livingston avenue 320, Paterson 296, Comstock 278, Welton 231, Codwise Ave. 226, Hassart 219, Guilden 21-, Lea Avenue 209, Hale 200, Railroad ave., 198, College ave. 197, Division 191. Richmond 185, Sanford, 182, Washington 182, Delevan 181, Courtlandt 35, Clifton avenue 34, Duke 32, High 32, Georges Road 29, Jones ave 28,

Howard 27, Bishop Place 25, Schuyler 24, Bethany 28, Bleecker
Place 23, Riverside ave. 23, Scott 23, Spring 22, City Alley 20,
Landing Road 19, Lawrence 16, Nichol ave. 16, Powers 16, Jersey
ave 168, Stone 164, Morris 154, Hiram 145, Delafield 142, Dennis
142, Plum 137, Bishop 134, Central ave 132, Prosper 127, Lewis
125, Oliver 120, Bartlett 119, Mine 107, Prospect 104, James 100,
Sicard 98, Abeel 97, Hardenberg 97, Wyckoff 95, Richardson 94,
Drift 92, Carman 90, Seminary place 89, Morrell 84, Robinson 84,
Talmadge 82, Hartwell 77, Union 75, Peace 71, Huntington 67, Condit
65, Alexander 50, Liberty 48, Kirkpatrick 47, Ray 43, Senior 43,
Water 43, Catharine 39, Harvey 39, Brown 38, College Farm 14,
Outlet Lock 15, Steamboat Dock 13, Fulton 11, Landing lane 11,
Elm Row 10, Ward 9, Little Burnet 7, Wert 7, Schneider alley 6,
Old Road 3.