



*Sibley, Lindsay and Curr Co.*



*Grape Arbor, George Eastman House*

## J. FOSTER WARNER

BY ELIZABETH BRAYER

**J**. Foster Warner (1859-1937) was one of the area's leading architects of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He also represents the third generation of a family of distinguished architects. His father, Andrew Jackson Warner (1833-1910), was the leading Rochester architect of the 19<sup>th</sup> century—designer of the Powers, Academy, and Wilder buildings, city halls for Rochester and Buffalo, and many churches and homes in Western New York. His maternal uncle, Henry Austin, was the leading architect of New Haven, CT in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, while Uncle Merwin Austin came to Rochester in 1845, where he became the architect of the first city jail, the county's second courthouse, and introduced the English cottage style popularized by Andrew Jackson Downing to Rochester. Foster Warner's brother, Pete, and two cousins, Frederick and William Brockett, were architects too. All four apprenticed in A. J. Warner's office and in 1884, Foster Warner opened his own office.

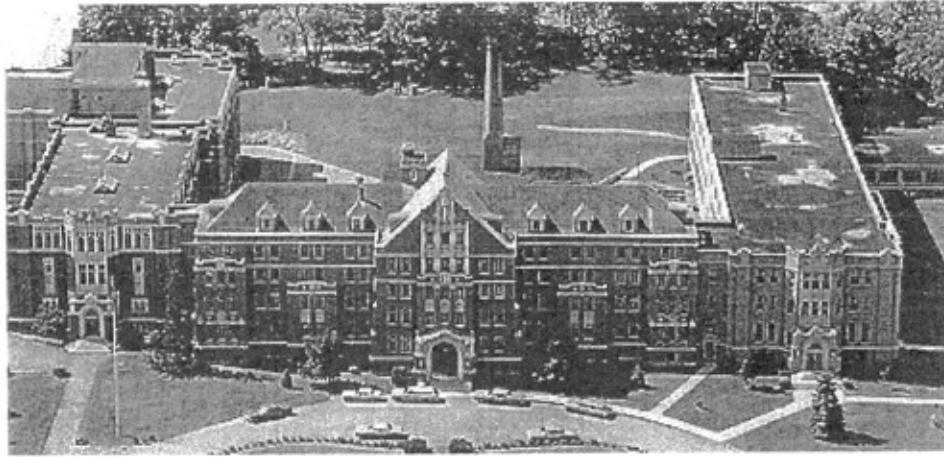
16 Foster Warner was elegant, dashing, tough, stubborn, contentious, and generous—a bon vivant, a ladies man, and a lover of fast cars. New York license plate number "5"—first on a steam car, then a Marmon—signified that he was fifth person in New York State to own a car. His favorite diversion—in goggles and duster with terrified passengers in tow—was to race the crack Empire State Limited along the corduroy roads between Buffalo and Syracuse. Each winter, he motored to New Orleans for Mardi Gras. His unique formula for measuring the worth of a car by the amount of steel used to fabricate it translated into architecture measured by the amount of marble, granite, brass, and precious woods.

Clients were as much in awe of the architect as the Marmon passengers were. Helen Ellwanger, a founder of the Landmark Society, recalled that "when Foster remodeled our house, he assigned each family member the bedroom *he* thought most suitable. It was years before we decided that we could choose our own rooms."

A perfectionist who supervised the smallest job as if it were Eastman House, Warner had a favorite phrase: "Get the maul, Leo." This was the signal for Warner's colleague, Leo Ribson, to retrieve the five-pound maul from the trunk of the Marmon so that Warner could hack out the poorly installed marble before the eyes of the offending craftsman.

His long friendship with the Rev. Frank L. Brown, pastor of St. Simon's, began when Warner saw the black minister gazing longingly into an automobile showroom. The architect took the minister inside, bought him a car, and paid for its gas and maintenance from that moment on. Later he presented Mr. Brown with architectural plans for a new church on Oregon St. In 1937, Mr. Brown officiated at Foster Warner's funeral. A friend read a poem:

*Gone is our friend the architect,  
From his drawings, stone and steel;  
His loves were his home, the country roads,  
And the sound of the automobile.*



*Our Lady of Mercy High School*

By Mary Jo Lanphear

The educational and religious buildings of the Sisters of Mercy at 1437 Blossom Rd. comprise one of the largest, non-commercial complexes in the town of Brighton. Designed by a famous architect and erected on historic land, the complex is one of great importance to the town. On May 25, 2002, the Brighton Historic Preservation Commission designated it a Brighton Landmark.

J. Foster Warner was the architect of the original building completed in 1928. Three stories high, it housed the Sisters on the third floor and the school on the first two floors. In 1931, the Sisters moved into the new Motherhouse, freeing the third floor for additional classrooms. Leo Ribson, of the J. Foster Warner firm, signed the Motherhouse blueprints with Warner.

In 1941 the auditorium and gymnasium wing was added to the east side of the complex. From 1941 to 1945, civilian air raid wardens gathered on top of the school, the tallest building in Brighton, to watch for enemy aircraft. Since its completion, the auditorium has opened its doors to the community for a

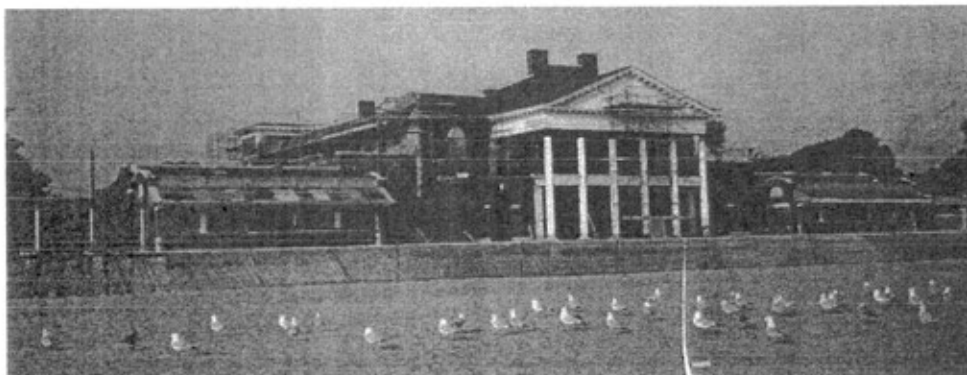
variety of educational and cultural events. The name of the architect for this part of the complex has not been determined.

In 1951 John Flynn and H.H. Bohacket are the architects of record for the chapel that was added to the south side of the Motherhouse. Terence O. Dugan of Boston designed the stained glass windows that warm the marble interior.

The most recent addition is the Catherine McAuley Junior College wing on the west side of the complex. The college opened in 1951 in the Motherhouse as a three-year junior college, predating Monroe Community College's Brighton campus and making it the first college-level institution in Brighton. The college wing was completed in 1959 under the direction of architect Walter Nugent.

The campus includes two important historical features: the stone grotto on the hill behind the complex and the 1935 marker commemorating the 1679 construction of a bark church, the first worship site in the Rochester area.

*Mary Jo Lanphear is Town of Brighton Historian.*

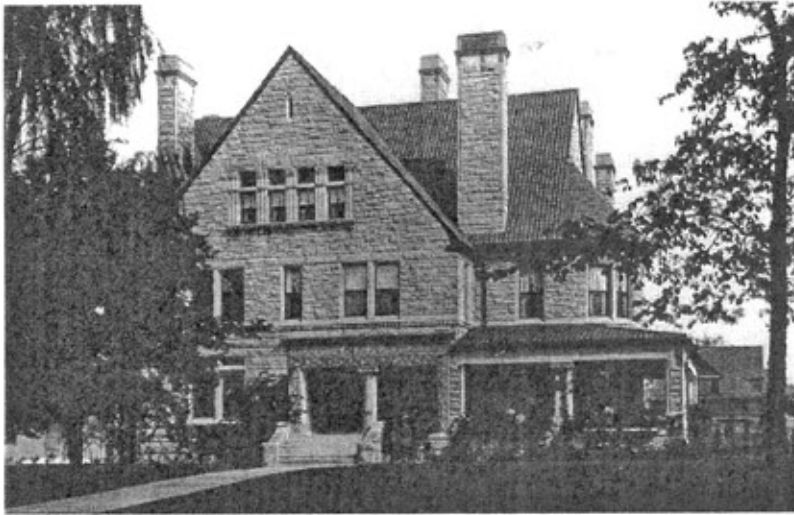


*Bathhouse at Ontario Beach Park by J. F. Warner, recycled by Frank Grosso*



*The original Mercy building*

# J. FOSTER WARNER SCRAPBOOK



*House for Wilson Soule, 1892*



STABLES FOR G. E. EASTMAN, ESQ., ROCHESTER, N. Y.  
J. Foster Warner, Architect

*Stables for George Eastman*

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The Osborn Hotel addition, opened in 1890



The Granite Building, built in 1892



The Store, erected at Main and Clinton Streets in 1905



The Store, including the Mansfield Building addition



*Eastman Laboratory for University of Rochester*

A picture history of "Rochester's Largest Retail Institution"

**SIBLEY, LINDSAY & CURR CO.**

*Sibley's first home was the Osborn Hotel by A. J. Warner. The rest are by Foster Warner*



*Hillside Children's Center*

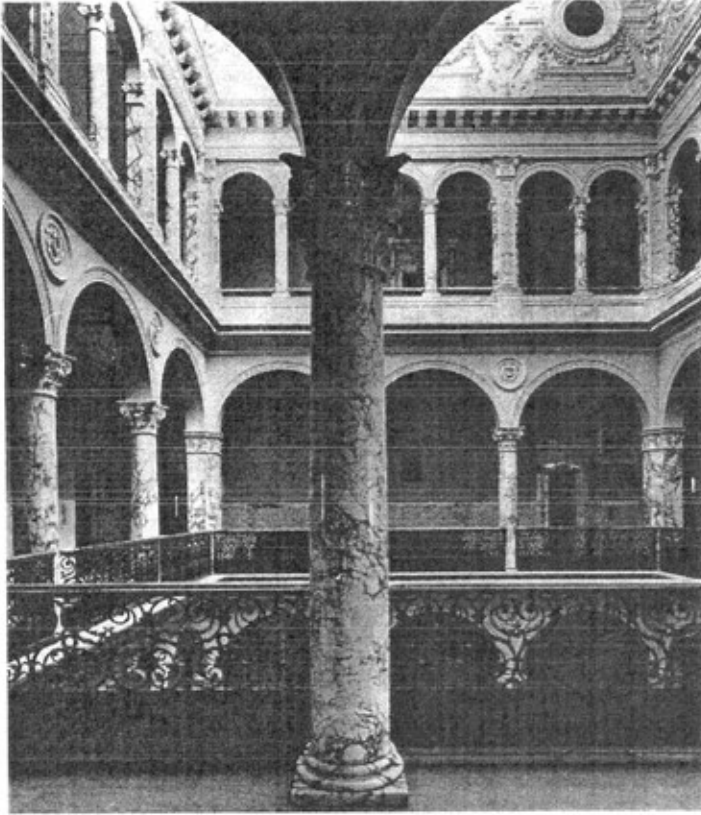


*Granite building*



*Ford Hotel*

# J. FOSTER WARNER SCRAPBOOK



*Foster Warner's Third Monroe County Courthouse, 1896, was the first public building in the United States to be modeled on the French Renaissance Revival style.*



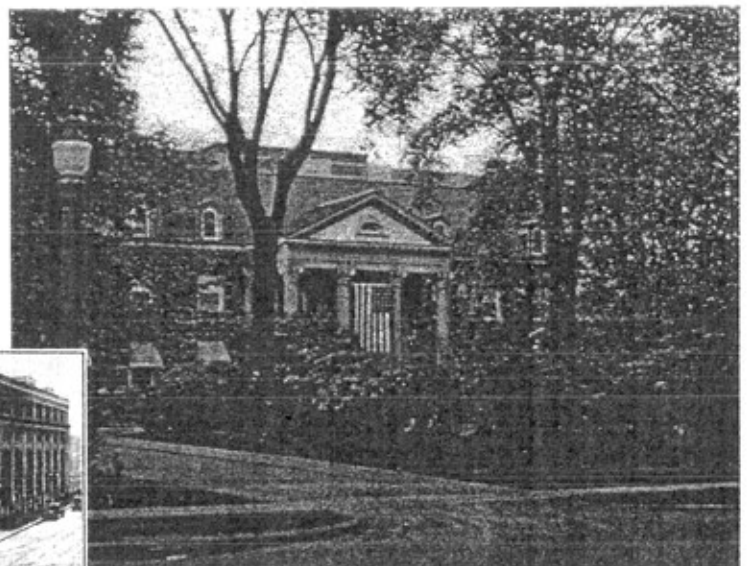
*Cobbs Hill Gate House*



*Where Susan B. Anthony was tried in 1872: Canandaigua County Court House, 1910*



*Rochester Savings Bank with McKim, Mead and White*



*George Eastman House with McKim, Mead and White, the area's prime Country Place Era estate*

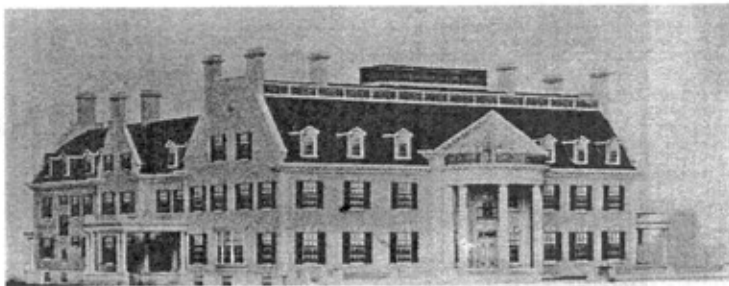
# J FOSTER WARNER HOUSES (TWO IN BRIGHTON)

Photo by Sally Harper

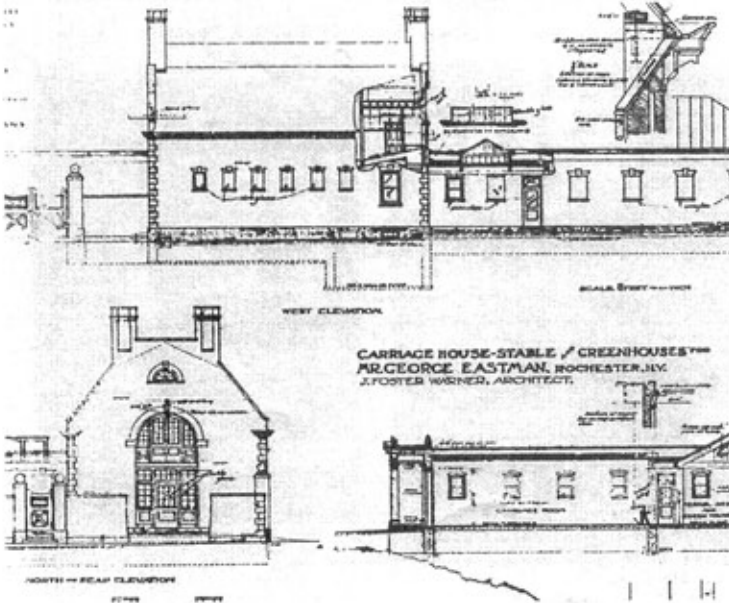


*A house for Frank Ellison, donor of Ellison Park, is located on East Avenue in Brighton*

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Above: J. Foster Warner's model for Eastman House  
Below: J. Foster Warner's plans for Eastman carriage house



*Finucane house on Clover Street in Brighton*



*51 Westminster Road*

*Plans for the Country Place Era estate for Mr George Eastman by J. Foster Warner, model of the house by the Camera Works at Eastman Kodak Company*

# THE WARNER HERITAGE: 19TH CENTURY REVIVAL BUILDINGS BY A. J WARNER AND MERWIN AUSTIN



*2nd Monroe County Courthouse  
by Merwin Austin, 1850*



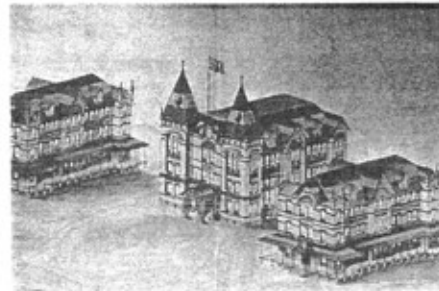
*City Hall, 1872*



*Powers Building, 1865, 1880,  
1891*



*Rochester Free Academy, 1872*



*Soldiers and Sailors Home, Bath  
NY*



*Holy Sepulchre Cemetery, 1875-  
1886*



*Eire County Municipal Building,  
1871-75*



*Corning City Hall, 1893*



*Mount Hope Cemetery  
Gatehouse, 1874*



*Christ Church Episcopal,  
Pittsford, 1869*



*1st Presbyterian Church, 1871*



*Wilder Building, 1887*



*St. Bernard's Seminary, 1893*



*Richardson Bates House Museum,  
Oswego, NY 1890s*