

# BAUSCH & LOMB RIVERSIDE PARK

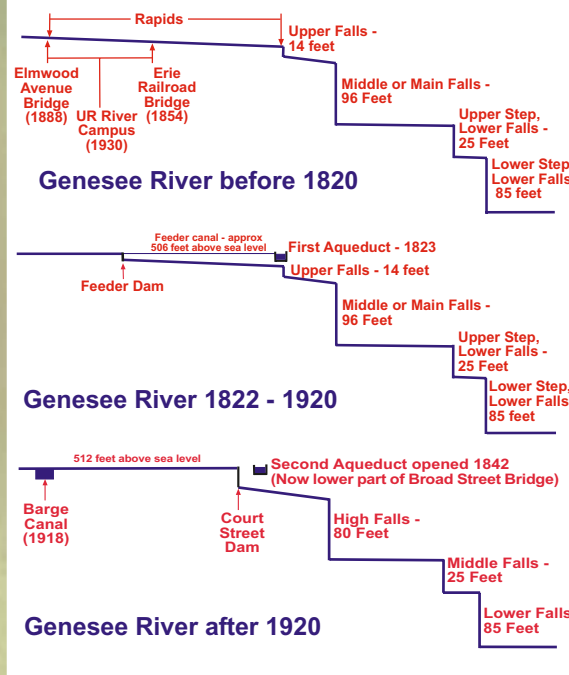


## The Canal and River Meet

Before the settlement of Rochester and the building of the Erie Canal, the Genesee River had numerous rapids and several waterfalls between here and Lake Ontario. After construction of the Erie Canal began in 1817, engineers decided that the canal would cross the Genesee River in an aqueduct located in the tiny village of Rochesterville. The canal was built in several phases and the section east of Rochester opened in 1822. A dam was built across the Genesee River just south of here to divert water into a feeder canal and also allow boats to travel between the canal and river. The aqueduct was opened the following year to carry canal traffic over the river. In October 1825 the canal was completed, allowing boats to travel from Lake Erie to Albany, where they could navigate the Hudson River to New York City.

The poor construction of the original 1823 aqueduct soon became apparent, and the state approved construction of a replacement in 1837, but it was not finished until 1842. The state had also approved construction of the Genesee Valley Canal on the west side of the river and—to ensure that traffic on the canal could not be interrupted if the first aqueduct failed—the feeder canal was connected with the Genesee Valley Canal across the Genesee River. The feeder canal was rebuilt in 1842 to supply additional water for the enlargement of the Erie Canal east of Rochester. A new feeder dam was built about 400 feet downstream of the original feeder dam, but it diverted so much water away from downtown mills that the mill owners obtained a court injunction, and the Monroe County Sheriff dynamited the new dam as a public nuisance. All of the water for the western portion of the Erie Canal was supposed to come from Lake Erie, but continued demands for water from the Genesee River led to construction of a third dam in 1864. Water from the Genesee River became less important as improvements enlarged the canal west of Rochester after the Civil War.

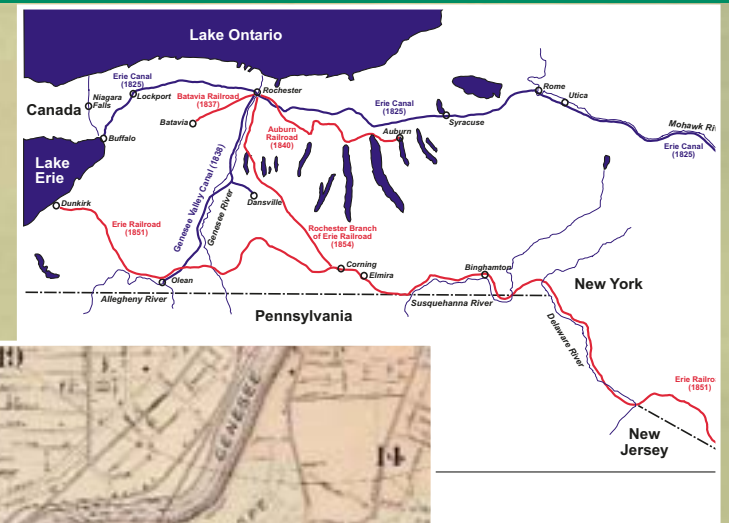
The New York State Barge Canal was opened in 1918, replacing the original Erie Canal with a larger canal about one mile south of here. The Barge Canal project included building a new dam at Court Street (two miles north of here) to raise the river water level to 512 feet above sea level and dredging the river bottom to deepen the navigation channel to 12 feet, allowing barges to reach a new barge terminal in downtown Rochester. Material from the dredging was used to fill in the feeder canal and build an embankment for flood control along the river. After the Barge Canal opened, the original Erie Canal through downtown Rochester and the aqueduct was no longer needed for canal traffic. The Broad Street Bridge was built above it, and the old canal bed was used for the Rochester subway until the early 1950s.



## Railroads on Campus

Rochester's first steam railroad began service to Batavia in May 1837. A line to Auburn began service as far as Canandaigua in September 1840. The Rochester and Genesee Valley Railroad began construction of a six-foot broad-gauge track in 1851 to connect Rochester with the Erie Railroad, which completed its line from the Hudson River to Lake Erie that same year. The railroad ran out of money after connection was eventually completed, and the line later became the Rochester division of the Erie Railroad before being abandoned in the 1940s.

The first rail line here opened in 1854. Along with the rest of the Erie, the six-foot track was changed to the standard 4-ft., 8 1/2-in. gauge in a single day in July 1881. The Lehigh Valley Railroad was built parallel to the Erie in 1892, running along the eastern side of the river to downtown Rochester. The map to the right shows the two railroads on a 1905 map, along with the canal feeder and dam.



The Lehigh Valley line later became part of the Conrail system. It was abandoned in the mid-1980s, and the University built a long narrow parking lot on the former railroad right of way.

## Hope Hospital



The City of Rochester built Hope Hospital here in 1869 to house patients with contagious diseases. This picture was taken around 1900.



A smallpox epidemic broke out in Rochester in 1901, killing 101 people. Patients were housed in tents and temporary buildings at the hospital.



Tents at Hope Hospital during the smallpox epidemic.



Three young smallpox victims at Hope Hospital.



After opening a new municipal hospital on Waring Road, the city burned the old hospital on May 11, 1903, to prevent infection.

