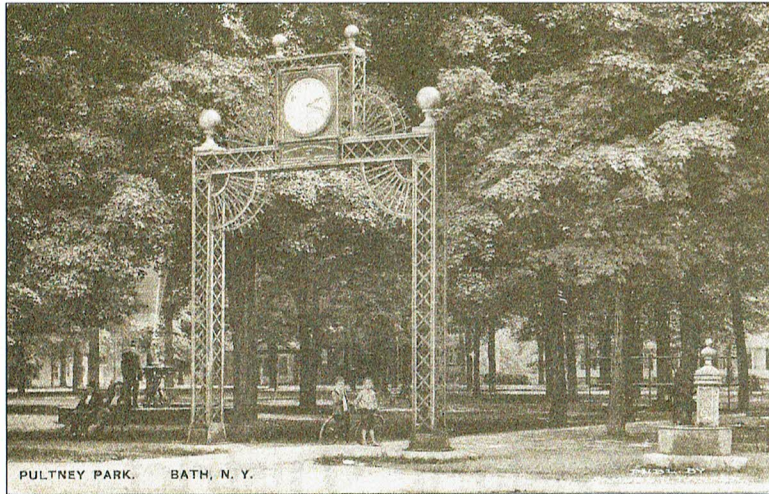


The Steuben County  
Historical Society Presents:

*A Walking Tour*  
*Through*  
*Bath's Downtown*  
*Historic District*



# The Village of Bath

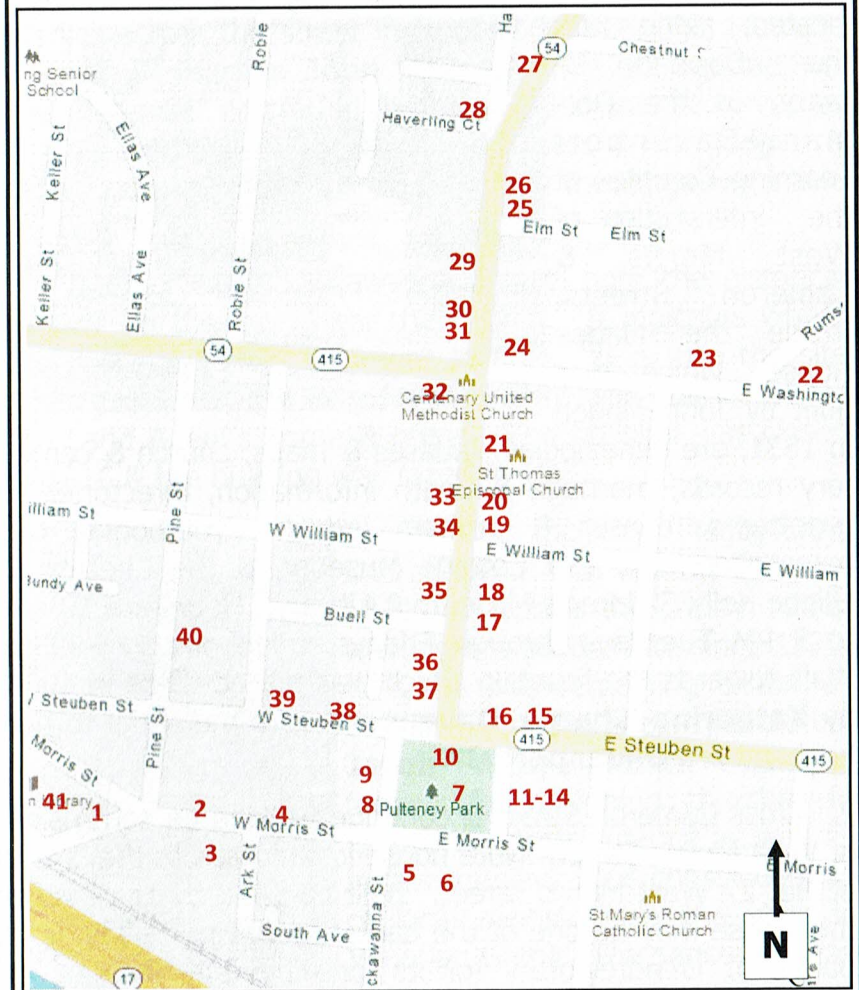


The village of Bath, the county seat of Steuben County, has about 6000 residents. Located on the Conhocton River, it is the southern gateway to the Finger Lakes.

This historic community was founded in 1793 when **Charles Williamson**, land agent for the London based Pulteney Syndicate, settled here and made Bath the headquarters for the Pulteney Estate. The Estate, which **Williamson** held in secret trust for a group of British capitalists headed by **Sir William Pulteney**, consisted of one million, two hundred thousand acres which extended from the Pennsylvania line to Lake Ontario and from Seneca Lake to the Genesee River. As land agent, **Williamson** was responsible for the development of this vast tract of land often referred to as the Genesee Country.

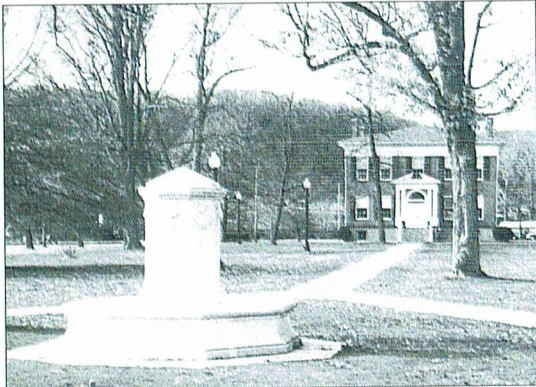
The name of the village and town was selected by **Charles Williamson** to honor **Sir William Pulteney's** daughter **Henrietta Laura Pulteney**, the Countess of Bath, England, who was known as **Lady Bath**.

# The Walking Tour Map



## The Walking Tour

1. The tour begins in front of the Magee House, which is the home of the Steuben County Historical Society & the County Historian's Office. It is the red brick building located, along with the Dormann Library, in the Dormann-Davenport Learning Complex at the intersection of West Morris & Cameron Streets. Inside the Magee House, which was built by John Magee



in 1831, are genealogies, atlases & maps, church & cemetery records, marriage & death information, directories & gazetteers, census & probate indexes, yearbooks, old newspapers, the Elm Cottage Museum, & the Chelsea & Liliane Kelly Children's Museum & Library. Hours are 10 AM to 3 PM Tuesdays through Fridays, telephone 776-9930. Walk towards the fountain which was placed there in 1904 by **Katherine Sharpe Davenport** as a memorial to her husband **Ira Davenport, Jr.**

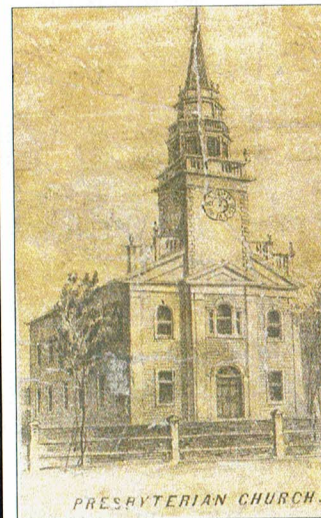
2. Cross Cameron Street & continue walking on south side of West Morris Street. Note house located across the street at No. 22 West Morris Street. Built ca 1810 by **Ira Pratt**, this house may be one of the earliest surviving buildings in Bath. It is noteworthy for its long five-bay façade, its cornice returns, the intact door surrounds with sidelights, & six over six original windows.

3. At No. 23 is the **Beekman** house which was built in 1868 by **Abram Beekman** on land given to him & his wife **Sarah** by **John Fowler**, **Sarah's** father. **Mr. Fowler** had

come to Bath from England to be an agent for the Pulteney Land Office. Look for the third floor windows, wide overhang, & fancy corbel brackets on this Italianate style house, all complemented by the central tower.

4. Continue on West Morris Street & note the historical marker across the street in front of No. 14. The Metcalfe House built there by **John Metcalfe** in 1793 was the first "public house" erected in the new settlement. It served as a place of lodging for land purchasers & for judges & others who came to the area. Town meetings were also held in the tavern.

5. After crossing Lackawanna Street, note the historical marker on the lawn near the church. It indicates where the first hospital in Bath was located. It is also the site where, in 1793, the very first structure was built to house the Land Agent's home & office. The hospital was closed in 1916 & the building was razed in 1920.



6. Next is the First Presbyterian Church which was built in the mid-1870s to replace the church which was located on this site since 1825. It is the only remaining church in the U. S. designed by architect **Jacob Wrey Mould** who was famous for designing churches in Europe & South America as well as in this country. The construction is of local sandstone & the style is Venetian Gothic. The sanctuary was designed by **Louis Comfort Tiffany** in 1895-97 and is one of the very few Tiffany-designed sanctuaries remaining in the U. S. The sanctuary is open for tours on Wednesdays during July & August from 10 AM to 1 PM & at other times by appointment (607-776-6464).

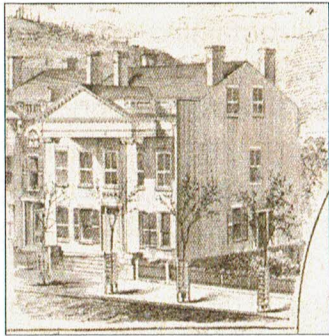


7. Directly across the street is Pulteney Square/Park, the area of the first clearing made in Bath by the pioneers in 1793. Bath started with a few cabins here, some of which were homes for the

new settlers & early businessmen. By 1804 the area had grown into a compact community with Pulteney Square as its hub. During the summer months a Farmers' Market is held here on Wednesdays & Saturdays.

8. As you walk north across Pulteney Square note the house on the left at 16 West Pulteney Square. This is known as the **Barber** House. This pre-fab structure was constructed in 1893 by **Bert Barber** & is what was known as a pattern book house. These houses were usually built near railroad tracks because the sections arrived in boxes on railroad flat cars.

9. Next on the left facing the Square is the large building built in 1832 by **John Magee** (the same man who built the



Magee House in 1831) as the Steuben Bank. After closing as a bank in 1864, it became the home of the Steuben Club, a men's social organization. In 1920 it became the home of the Bath Masonic Lodge & served as such for the next 80 years. It now contains offices & apartments.

10. At the north center of the Square is the Town Clock! (photo p. 2) It was erected in 1905 & was financed with funds donated by local businessmen & public minded citizens.

11. Turn right along the north side of the Square & note the Steuben County Court House on East Pulteney Square. It was built in 1860 to replace the previous courthouse which had burned. It was constructed of brick salvaged from the previous building. On 21 July 1796, the first Court of Common Pleas was held in the original courthouse on this site.



12. Next on East Pulteney Square is the Steuben County Clerk's Office. This was built in 1872 & is a Victorian style natural brick with good strong lines. The tower entrance appears as an adaptation of the Tuscan Villa style.

13. Next is the County Surrogate's Office which was built of natural brick in 1886. Its Romanesque style features arched windows & doorway. Interesting brickwork is exhibited on the second floor windows.

14. The last building on the east side of Pulteney Square is the Balcom House. It was built in 1819 by **Robert Campbell**, one of Bath's earliest & finest builders. One of the oldest buildings in Bath still in its original location, it is one of Bath's architectural gems!

15. Return to East Steuben Street. Directly ahead is the Old National Hotel. It is on the site of the Nichols House that had been built there in 1869 & burned in 1910. The current building of unusual concrete block design with the use of brick for cornice & piers on the ground floor was completed in 1914.



16. At 9 East Steuben Street is an Italianate style struc-

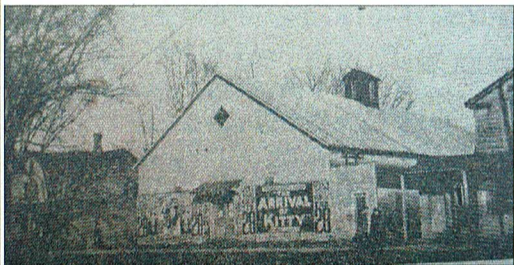
ture built in 1882. Of architectural note are the three chimneys on the west side of the building as well as the window cornices.

17. Proceed west to Liberty Street. Turn right & walk north. Note that many buildings have been replaced or modified in the past century. In the second block is the Five Star Bank. The building, which was built in 1912, was modified in the 1950s & then restored to its more original appearance in the 1990s. The north portion includes the building that held the Babcock Theater for over six decades.



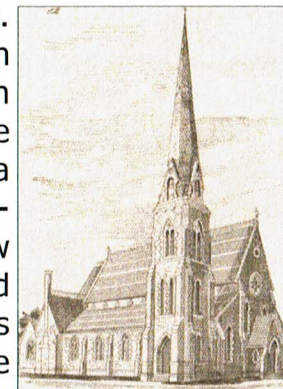
18. At 52-58 Liberty Street is the Shannon Building. It was built in 1898 by **Matthew Shannon**, a local realtor & builder. Above the third story windows is an interesting display of brickwork.

19. At 106 Liberty Street is the Bath Plumbing Supply Company. When Bath's first hospital was demolished in 1920 (see No. 5), some of the bricks, cornerstones & other materials from that building were used in the construction of this building. Originally this building housed a Buick garage & then a potato warehouse before becoming the home of the Bath Plumbing Supply Company. The Casino, which housed a roller skating rink & later on an opera house, was located on this site from 1880 to 1910. It was in the Casino that Bath's first moving pictures were shown.

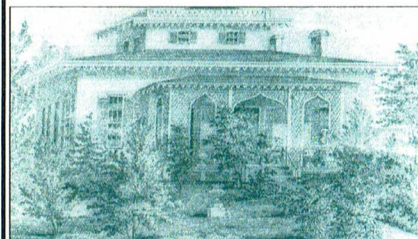


20. Across the driveway at 110 Liberty Street is Bath's Municipal Hall. Construction of this building was completed in 1923. It originally housed the fire station in addition to Village offices. In 1968 the fire station was moved to a building in back, the fire doors were removed & the front façade remodeled. It now houses a number of village & town offices.

21. Next at 122 Liberty Street is St. Thomas Episcopal Church built here in 1869/71 to replace the original church which was erected on Pulteney Square in 1836. Its style is Gothic Revival, a specialty of the architect **Henry Dudley**. Note the large "wheel" window high on the façade. The tiny round window above is called the "Rector's Eye". The red door symbolizes the blood of Christ. To the rear is a large Parish House built in 1904.



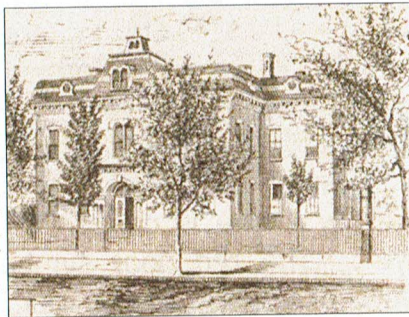
22. Continue walking north on Liberty Street. At intersection turn right (east) and walk east on East Washington Street. Cross East Washington Street opposite Rumsey Street & note house on northeast corner. This house, built about 1850, is an adobe house & is the only adobe house in the county today. Adobe, a mixture of clay & straw, was made by placing the mixture in boxes & placing them in the sun to dry. The "bricks" from the boxes would serve as building pieces for the house. The adobe was covered with stucco to prevent wind & rain damage. This house was built by **Robert B. Van Valkenburg**, a prominent Bath lawyer, who was a mayor of Bath, a Civil War General, a U. S.



Congressman, & who, in 1867, became the first U. S. Ambassador to Japan.

23. On the northwest corner of Rumsey & East Washington Streets is the Steuben County Fairgrounds. Commencing in 1819, this fair is the longest continuously running fair in the U. S. It is held annually during the second week in August.

24. Walk west on East Washington Street & return to intersection with Liberty Street at traffic light. Note the vacant Dana Lyon School building on the northeast corner. This building, which was built in 1923, sits on the location of the Haverling Union School which was built there in 1848. This present building was closed in 2002 when the student population was transferred to the Haverling School District Campus on Ellas Avenue.



25. Walk north on Liberty Street & note house at 220 Liberty Street. This is the **B. F. Young** house built in 1854 for **Edward Church** & sold in 1862 to the **Young** family. In 1882 it was converted to a boarding school for girls & known as "Elmhurst". It is a distinctive example of Italianate style. Notice the ogee shaped brackets on the front portico, the massiveness of the house, the high stone basement, & the wide overhanging eaves.

26. At 226 Liberty Street is the **Underhill** house. This is the best example of Gothic Revival in Bath. It was built in 1857. The multiple gables are filled with scrollwork verge boards. The finials, which



project from the peak of each gable, are unusual for their circular, wedding cake configuration. Notice the octagonal columns & perforated brackets on the porch.

27. At the point where Geneva & Haverling Streets join



Liberty Street there is a small triangular area called Davenport Park in which is located the Soldier's Monument. This monument was erected in 1882 to commemorate the area's brave men who gave their lives for their country during the Civil War. It is made of West-

erly, Rhode Island, granite, weighs 30 tons, & cost \$4000. In 1959, it was moved here from its original location at the center of the intersection of Liberty & Washington Streets.

28. Across the street to the west at 1 Haverling Street is Perine's Castle. One of the most important merchants in

Bath for nearly half a century, **Henry W. Perine** built this mansion in 1862. The front porch of this house presents the Moorish design associated with the architect **Merwin**



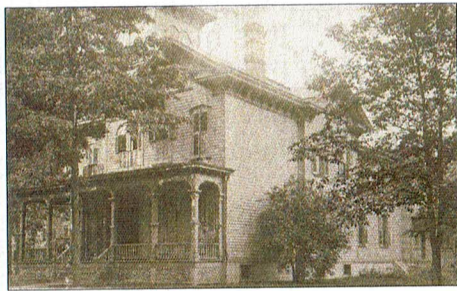
**Austin** of Rochester & is outstanding for its thin columns & gracefully curving brackets.

29. Cross Liberty Street & walk south to the "Three Sisters", the nearly identical houses at 221, 223, & 225 Liberty Street. These houses were built in the 1890s by the lumber firm of **Parker & Jones**. The construction was thought to be a promotion for their business. The late Queen Ann style displays octagonal corner towers & wrap around front porches & windows behind the recessed

balconies. The use of clapboard & cut shingles is eye catching.

30. Breeze Lawn at 213 Liberty Street was built by **A. E. Brown** in 1859. This massive Italianate house was originally a two story building. In the 1930s the roof was razed & the third story was added. Note the low belvedere & the tall & narrow first & second story windows capped with elaborate lintels.

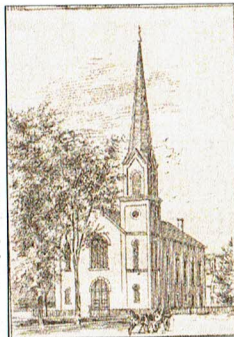
31. The **A. P. Ferris** house, built in 1872, at 209 Liberty Street is a fine Italianate villa style building noticeable for



its tower with concave roof capped by cresting. Also noteworthy is the inserted dormers with round arch pediments & bulls-eye windows. The Italianate style is carried out by the design of the

brackets under the eaves of the tower & roof as well as segmented arches of the first & second story windows.

32. After crossing Washington Street note the Centenary United Methodist Church on the right. It was built in 1976/77 to replace the Methodist Church that had been located there since 1866. Stained glass windows from the 1866 church are incorporated in the present building as is the 1866 church cornerstone.

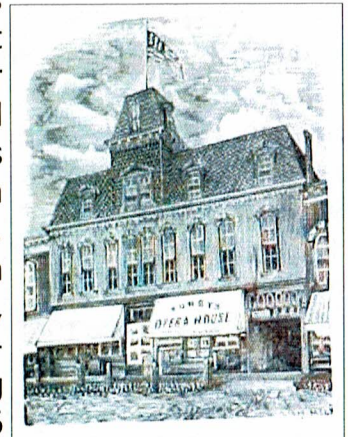


33. At 115 Liberty Street is a large four story brick building that was once the Wagner Hotel. This structure is notable because of its construction. It was built around the 1860s home of former New York State Comptroller **Frank Campbell**. From the back it is still possible to see the old

house. This metropolitan type hotel was opened in 1925 & continued in business for over 40 years. The front steps of the old house were left in place & were used to reach the older portion from the lobby of the new hotel.

34. The next building south of the old Wagner Hotel building is the United States Post Office. This was constructed in 1931 from a design of a Bath native, the **Hon. James Wetmore**, who at that time lived & worked in Washington, D. C. He was the architect for the postal department.

35. In the next block at what was 43 & 45 Liberty Street is a vacant lot marking the site of the former Purdy Opera House. This Second Empire styled building with its tower & Mansard roof was built in 1872 as the Purdy Paint Store. Within six years it became an opera house &, on July 1, 1878, "Uncle Tom's Cabin" was the initial presentation. The building suffered a partial collapse in 2006 & was razed shortly afterward.



36. The building that houses stores at 9 through 17 Liberty Street is of architectural importance because the simple Italianate styled building has an unusual organization of its front elevation. The 5 stores exist in this one building. The different facades give the effect of multiple buildings.

37. In 1862, after a fire destroyed all of the buildings on the west side of Liberty Street from West Steuben Street to Buell Street, **Ambrose S. Howell**, who owned the property at No. 7, decided to rebuild on the site. He chose cast iron for several reasons - it was fire & lightning proof, weatherproof when painted, it was strong & inexpensive, & it required no ornamental detailing since this could be

achieved in the casting process. Note the Venetian Renaissance spirit in the lions' heads & the flat arches on the slender columns as well as the heavily decorated consoles & the profusion of grapevines dangling from the lions' heads on the third story. The building was manufactured in New York City & shipped to Bath by rail in 62 pieces. This historical cast iron building is one of very few such buildings in existence in upstate New York.

38. Walk south to the corner & then proceed west along West Steuben Street. Several of the brick fronts that are seen along here were built in the 1860s to the 1880s. The narrow field stone building with a brick front at the corner of Exchange Street was the Ulrich House, a popular hotel during the late 1800s & early 1900s. The storefronts at 22, 24, & 26 belong to one building which was built sometime between 1873 & 1888.



39. Adjoining the business blocks to the west is the Pioneer Burial Ground. It was Bath's first cemetery. The first burial here was in September 1793 & was that of **Christian Williamson**, the seven year old daughter of **Col. Charles Williamson**, the founder of Bath. The cemetery was in use for 100 years & contains the remains of many of Bath's earliest settlers.

40. Continue walking along West Steuben Street to Pine Street. Turn right on Pine Street. Walk north to 21 Pine Street which is now the Bath Grange building. Originally this was a wooden building which housed a school for black children. In 1867 it became the home of the

African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. To make it look more like a church building the wooden structure was covered with stucco & the windows were painted to look like stained glass. The building served Bath's black population as a house of worship until it was sold to the Odd Fellows ca 1918-20. The sale was necessitated by the decline in Bath's black population & the building's deteriorating condition. The Grange purchased the building from the Odd Fellows in 1937.

41. Turn south on Pine Street, walk across West Steuben & West Morris Streets, & return to the Magee House. As was stated in No. 1 in this brochure, this fine old red brick house was built in 1831 by **John Magee** who, at the time, was the congressman from this district. He & his family lived here for 33 years. In 1864 he sold the house & grounds to **A. S. Howell**, the builder of the cast iron building. The **Howell** family made some changes to the exterior & lived in the house for some 30 years. In the late 1880s the business climate was such that the **Howells** came upon hard times & the property was foreclosed. After that happened, the house & property were purchased by **Ira Davenport, Jr.**, who, in 1893, allowed the Bath Library to move into the house. In 1904, upon his death, the building was bequeathed to the library. From that date until the new Dormann Library was opened in 1999, the old Magee House was known as the Bath Library. After moving to its new quarters, the Dormann Library Board leased the Magee House to the Steuben County Historical Society which immediately restored the Magee House name to the building. With the addition of the County Historian's Office, the Elm Cottage Museum, & the Chelsea & Liliane Kelly Children's Museum & Library, the Magee House is truly the Steuben County History Center!

Total Walking Distance = 2.2 miles



*For more information about Bath and/  
or Steuben County, visit the Historical  
Society in the Magee House. There, in  
addition to the items mentioned in #1,  
you will find driving tours around the  
Village of Bath, to Mossy Bank Park &  
Lookout, and to the  
Veterans Administration Medical Center  
and the Bath National Cemetery.*



We are grateful to the **Bath Rotary Club**  
for their assistance with printing and distributing this  
leaflet.