

Greece History by Alan Mueller

Truck Farming on Stone Road - The Thomas Farm

Seventeen-year-old William J. Thomas immigrated to Greece from Cheddar, Somerset County, England, in 1882. The following year, he purchased 11 acres of farmland on Stone Road, not far west of the intersection of Eddy Road (now Mt. Read Boulevard).

At that time, the average size of a Greece farm was less than 100 acres, only rarely exceeding 200 or more acres.

By the late 19th century, Greece farmers were principally raising root vegetables, such as carrots, beets, turnips, parsnips, etc. Some farms with larger acreage had apple and peach orchards as well.

The Thomas farm had a large greenhouse, kept warm by hot water piping,

the heat coming from a coal-fired boiler. Here, early spring crops such as radishes were raised.

A large root cellar (an insulated building, partly underground) stored the root vegetables through the winter. Gradually, these vegetables were taken to market all through the non-growing season.

Several times a week, the horse-drawn wagon (shown in the circa 1912 photo with William at the reins) would be loaded with produce and taken to the public market or several wholesalers in Rochester. The wagon left at 4 a.m. for the market, and the wagon and driver often did not return until early afternoon.

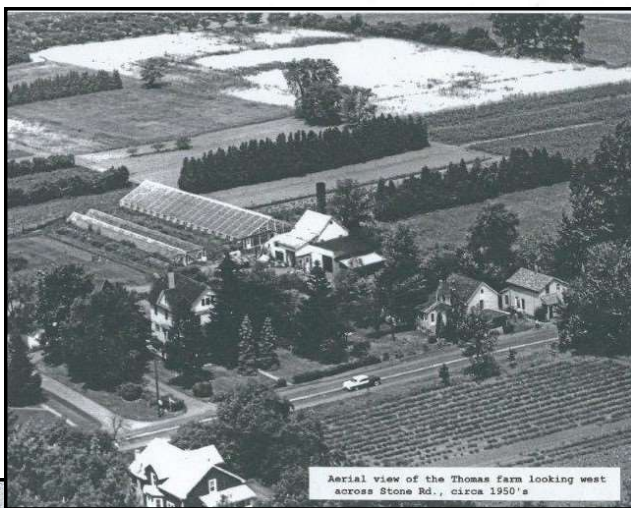
By the late 1930s, tractors were replacing horses

for farm work, and by the 1950s, horse-drawn equipment and wagons were completely gone.

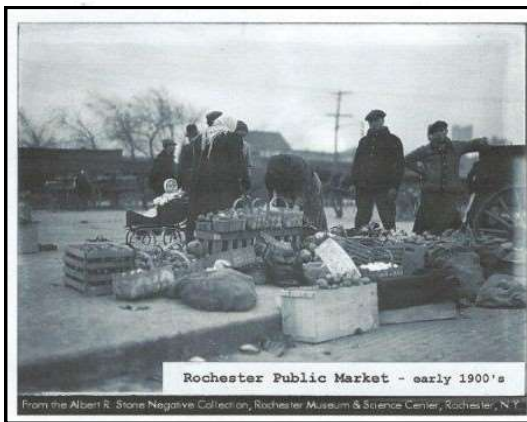
Through the years, more farmland was added to Thomas' original 11 acres, and his three sons continued to operate the farm after their father's death in 1938.

By the 1960s, however, it was apparent that a moderately large-sized farm could no longer be profitable in Greece. After more than 65 years, farming finally ended on the Thomas property in 1960. By 1963, the land had been sold to developers.

Similar to the majority of former farms in Greece, only the sturdy 2½-story farmhouse remains, shielded from the road by tall shrubs. These farmhouses remain as ghosts of an important era in local history. □



Aerial view of the Thomas farm looking west across Stone Rd., circa 1950's



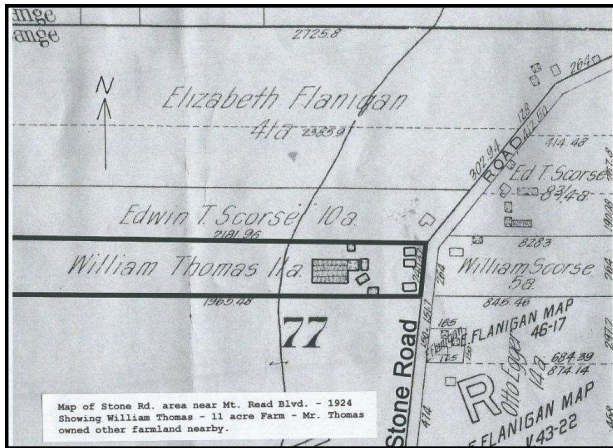
Rochester Public Market - early 1900's

From the Albert R. Stone Negative Collection, Rochester Museum & Science Center, Rochester, N.Y.



William Thomas, circa 1910-20 with a wagon load of produce ready for the trip to the public market in Rochester.

Photos of the Thomas farm from Mr. Frank Thomas, grandson of William.



Map of Stone Rd. area near Mt. Read Blvd. - 1924 Showing William Thomas - 11 acre Farm - Mr. Thomas owned other farmland nearby.