

# THE DAILY RECORD

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Clockwise from left: Winfield Grill customers are shown leaving after lunch; deli clerk Tatiana Dubai reaches for the sausages at the Gourmet European Deli on Main Street; the intersection of East Main Street and Winton Road; Naomi McNamara walks her dog, Snickett, in front of Remington's restaurant along Merchants Road; Henry's Market & Deli at the corner of Merchants Road and Garson Avenue.

## NEIGHBORHOOD FOCUS Culver-Winton-Main

BY COLLEEN M. FARRELL

Cynthia Howk likes the Culver-Winton-Main neighborhood so much, she bought a house on Merwin Avenue just a few blocks from the one in which she was raised on Dalkeith Road.

"People are always out, even in winter," she said recently. "It's a walkable, charming neighborhood."

Culver-Winton-Main offers a smattering of businesses and commercial strips along some of its main corridors, making it difficult to imagine it was once filled with farms. Howk, the architectural research coordinator for the Landmark Society of Western New York, said the area once was

very rural. Several of its street names are associated with a former resident, a farmer named Wilson who had Scottish roots. Wilsonia Boulevard is named after him; Merwin and Dalkeith are the names of towns in Scotland.

Most of the roads were laid out in the early 20th century. Development was spurred when the Downtown trolley line was extended to Goodman Street, then Culver Road and, eventually, Winton Road. People followed and built homes in the area so they could be close to their workplaces Downtown, Howk explained.

"It's a convenient neighborhood to



GRAPHIC BY LAWRENCE SEIL

many services," she said. "You're just minutes from Downtown or the suburbs."

Its proximity to the city, the I-490

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expressway and other amenities are cited by residents like Louis Sabo, who runs LRS Images, a commercial and retail photography and photo design business from his home.

"We enjoy where we live," he said. "We're right around the corner from the public library [on Winton Road] and things are within walking distance."

The neighborhood also is a cohesive one, Sabo said, where homeowners take care of their properties and want to maintain a good image.

"People want the community to be nice and they work towards that," he said.

The majority of the neighborhood is comprised of single-family homes, although there are a few double houses. Houses situated closer to Culver Road generally date to the 1910s, Howk said, and typically include woodburning fireplaces and wide front porches.

Homes closer to Winton generally a little newer, having been built in the 1920s or after World War II. Their porches typically are smaller, because electricity made it possible for residents to stay cool indoors during the summer months. Many of those houses also have fireplaces, but they're gas, not woodburning.

A few mid-19th century homes are scattered throughout the neighborhood, Howk said. American four-squares and Colonial revivals, along with a few bungalows, can be found. When building halted during the Great Depression and then World War

II, a number of vacant lots were left. That's why a few ranch- and Cape Cod-style houses stand there today.

Beside the housing stock's affordability, buyers also appreciate features such as gumwood trim and hardwood floors, Howk said.

"I always like to watch the expression on people who are looking and visit the very nice amenity of a full walk-up attic," she said.

Trademarks also include laundry chutes, fruit cellars and coal bins in basements. Howk's Merwin Avenue home has a built-in icebox with drainage pipes that collect the melted ice and run it outside of the house.

While the majority of the homes are nearly 100 years old, Merchants Road predates even that development, Howk said. The street dates back to the late 1700s. Tryon, one of Rochester's first settlements, was a shipping and commerce hamlet in the northern part of what is now Ellison Park. Ships used to come through Irondequoit Bay and up Irondequoit Creek before it was narrowed. At Tryon, materials from the boats were loaded onto wagons and taken up a hill from where Ellison Park is today. Some of that road became Merchants Road, which now ends at Culver but used to continue north and west toward Norton and St. Paul streets. That's where another settlement known as Carthage was situated, Howk said.

The corner of Merchants and Culver continues to house many merchants.

James Brown has been serving home-cooked meals to customers for nearly 11 years. The building at 1356 Culver Road, where James Brown's Place operates today, actually has been a diner since the 1950s, Brown said. When he bought it, he expected it would be a small diner where he'd cook for a few friends and, hopefully, make a living. It's become much bigger than that, Brown said.

"So it just started getting a mind of its own," he said. "I didn't realize there was such a need for it in the area."

During his time there, he's seen some businesses leave, but he said he has no plans to do the same. He'd like to see more businesses locate there, and increase foot traffic near the Merchants-Culver corridor.

The building is going into foreclosure, and Brown said he hopes to buy it and open a sandwich shop or high-end grocery store.

"I've been lucky," Brown said. "I've got good employees, so things are good for us."

As for Howk, she recently sold her home on Merwin Avenue. She held an open house for two hours and found a buyer that day.

"When houses come on the market, the turnover rate is quick and the market for sales is still very strong," she said.

And while she moved, she didn't go far: Soon she'll be back on Dalkeith Road in her family's homestead.

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