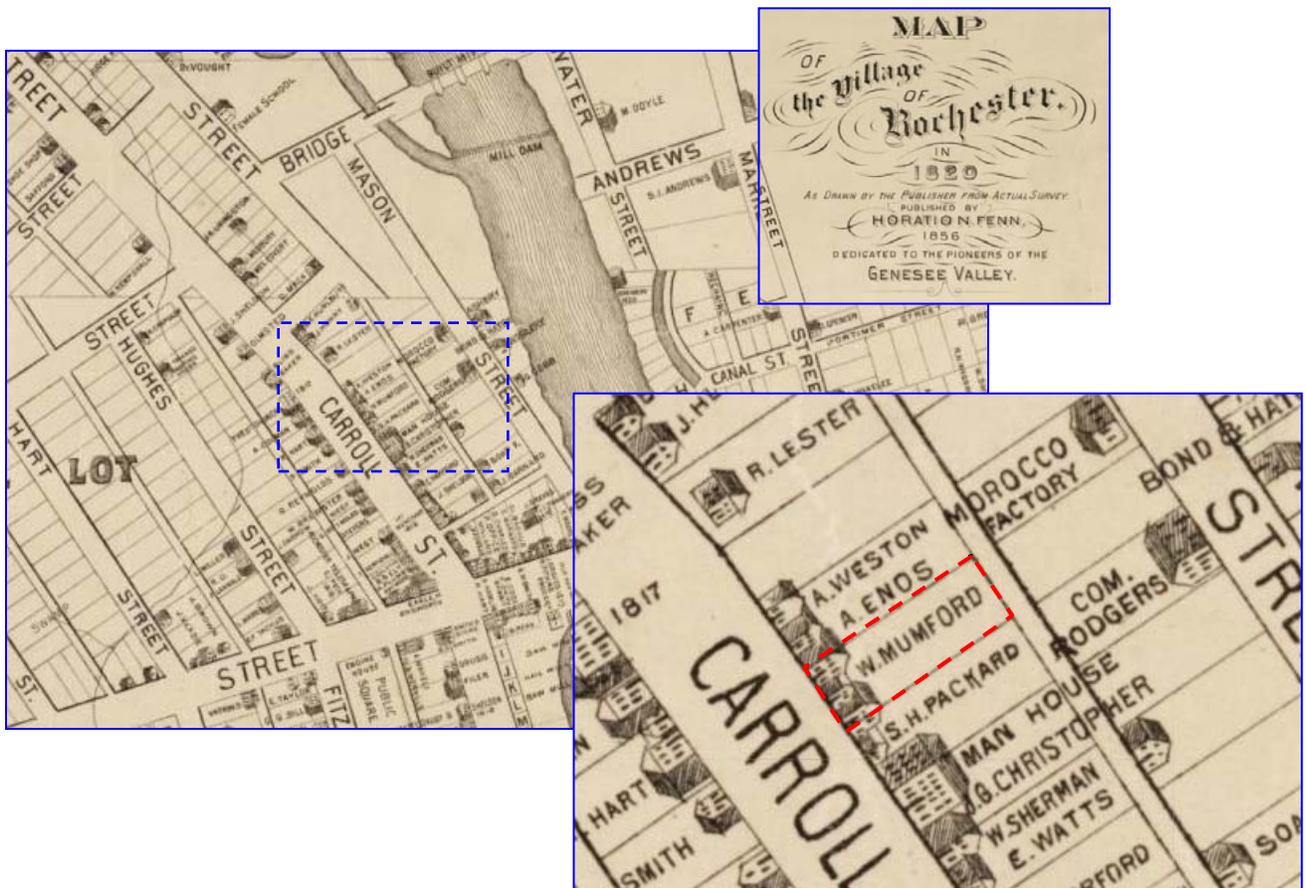


Where is Mumford's Meadow?

The nineteenth-century autobiography of Thurlow Weed contains a passage referencing early base ball in Rochester New York. It refers to "Mumford's Meadow", an early ball ground on the bank of the Genesee River. For some time it has been a matter of conjecture among Rochester baseball historians as to the exact location of this ball ground, a significant place in the history of early baseball. Weed's passage, referencing the summer of 1825, reads:

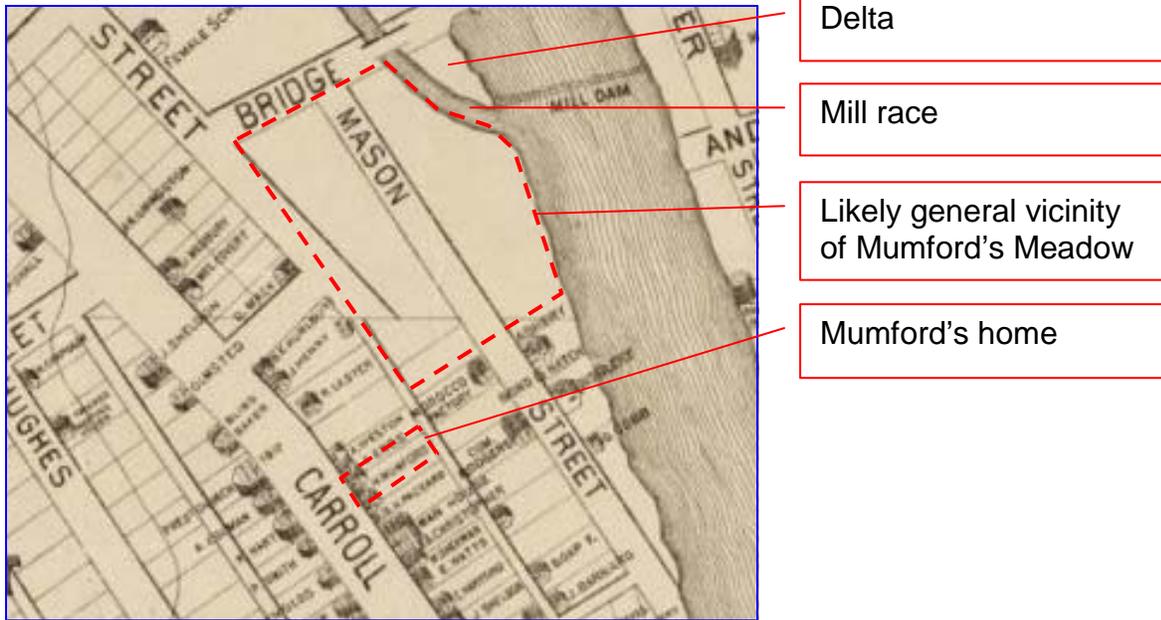
"The ball-ground, containing some eight or ten acres, known as Mumford's Meadow, by the side of the river, above the falls, is now a compact part of the city."

William Mumford was a prominent land owner in Rochester and owned many parcels during that timeframe. Several period maps exist and can be used for reference purposes. The following map, illustrated in 1856, depicts the village of Rochester as it appeared in 1820 (based on survey records). Mumford's home can be seen on Carroll Street (now State Street).

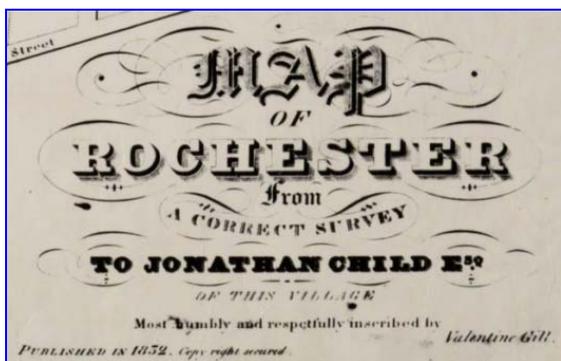


Mumford's Meadow, also known in some works as "Mumford's Pasture", is presumably where his livestock grazed. It can be reasoned that Mumford's Meadow was somewhere near his home, and the written passage claims it to be by the side of the

river. Therefore it can be narrowed down to the general vicinity of his home, near the bank of the river. The area directly between Mumford's home and the river contains another street (Mason Street), and several other houses. The meadow was likely a little farther north, in the open plot of land depicted below, just south of a man-made mill race.



Another period map exists, published in 1832 (pictured below). Some differences appear between the two maps, most notably in regard to the relative location and size of the mill race. While the 1856 reproduction map (depicting 1820) shows the mill race as essentially parallel to the river, forming a small delta, the 1832 map shows the mill race taking a more perpendicular route, forming an "island". Interestingly, this island is labeled as "Mumford's Island".



Legend from 1832 map



Mumford's Island

Mill race

1832 map

The 1832 map depicts Mumford's Island as being bisected by Bridge Street. Although it is possible that Mumford's Meadow could have been on the island, either the north half or the south half, it is unlikely that this would have been a suitable pasture for livestock to graze. It is unlikely that the livestock would have been brought over a bridge to graze. It is more likely that the meadow was south of the mill race, closer to Mumford's home. A street to the southeast of Mumford's Island is labeled "Mumfords Street".



Likely general vicinity of Mumford's Meadow

1832 map, detail

It should be noted that in both depictions above, the extents of the meadow are drawn in a manner that envelops Mason street. In the 1820s and 1830s, the periods depicted

by these maps, “streets” were little more than dirt paths. Horse-drawn wagons were the primary method of conveyance. Therefore, it would not be unreasonable to assume that Mumford’s Meadow could have encompassed the land on both sides of Mason Street. What’s more, the Weed passage denotes the meadow as being “*some eight or ten acres*”. Without depicting the extents of the meadow on both sides of Mason Street, it is not possible to outline a plot of land big enough to fulfill this requirement.

For reference purposes, a scale outline of Frontier Field, Rochester’s current ballpark, can be overlaid on either map, giving a sense of scale. The field surface of the Frontier Field ballpark comprises approximately three acres. On both maps the presumed extents of Mumford’s Meadow are depicted in red, and the Frontier Field outline in yellow.



1820 map

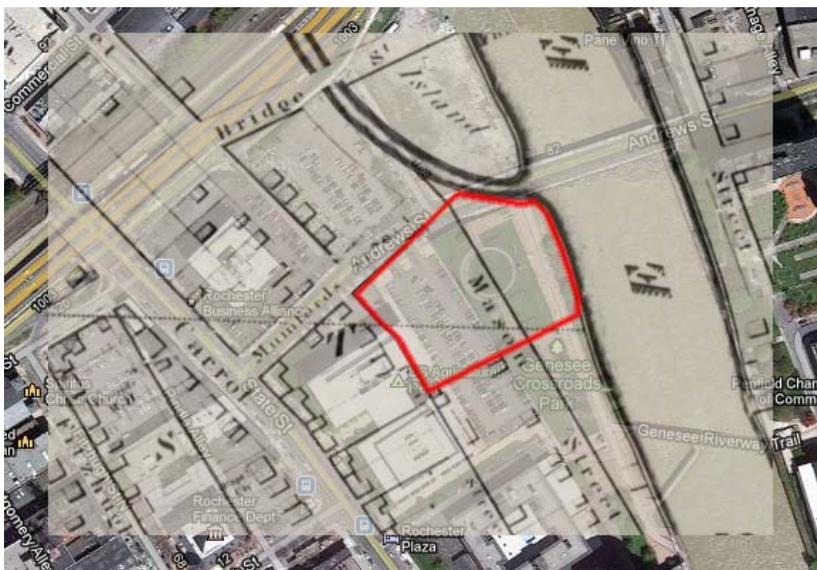


1832 map

When either of these maps are laid over a current satellite image, a clearer picture of the true location of the meadow in relation to the current cityscape begins to emerge.

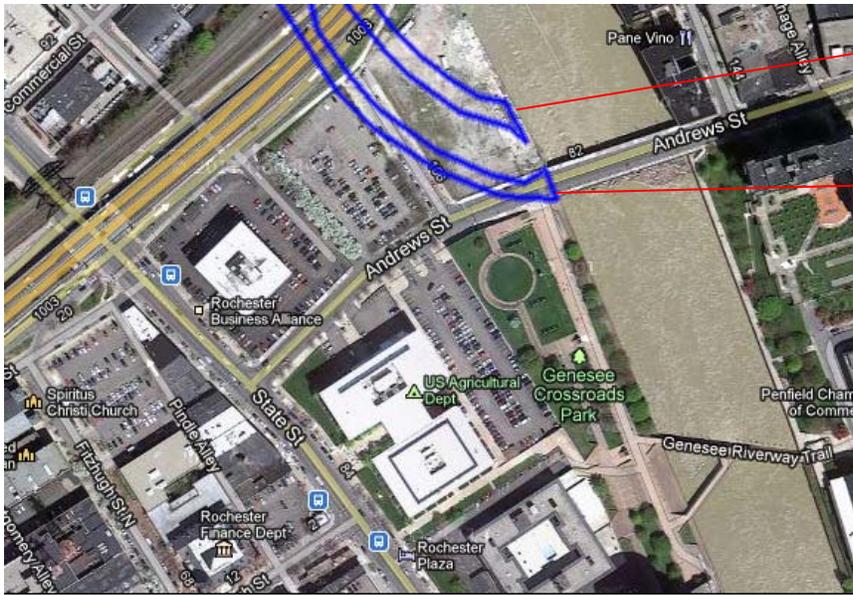


1820 map



1832 map

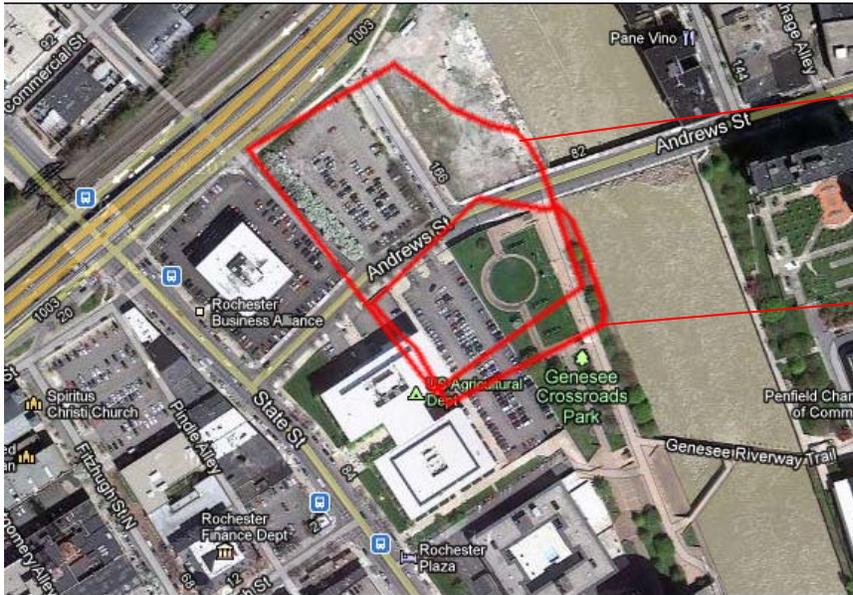
It is not known whether the 1820 or 1832 map is more accurate. Both line up well with current satellite imagery (as depicted above). The primary differences in the maps stem from the mill race, which was filled in sometime around 1845, possibly corresponding with the construction of the Andrews Street bridge. The composite below shows where the mill race would line up with today's geography, depending on which map you believe is more accurate.



Location of mill race based on 1820 map

Location of mill race based on 1832 map

When placed in composite, the depictions of the probable location of the meadow (in red) do not line up exactly, but there is a common area, at the current location of Genesee Crossroads Park.



Possible location of Mumford's Meadow based on 1820 map

Possible location of Mumford's Meadow based on 1832 map

Composite of results of analysis of 1820 and 1832 maps compared with current satellite image

Regardless of which map is used for reference purposes, until more conclusive evidence is available, it can reasonably be concluded that the most likely location of Mumford's Meadow is captured within the red outline depicted above.