

## Arterial Scrapbook No. 1

# Traffic Pattern Hasn't Changed Much Since 1807 When James Cushney Drew Map of Little Hamlet

By H. P. DONLON

When James Cushney drew the first map of the little hamlet of Amsterdam in 1807, he was sketching a pattern quite similar in outline to the arterial plans that has been on and off the drawing boards of the Utica District Office of the New York State Department of Public Works for the past 15 years.

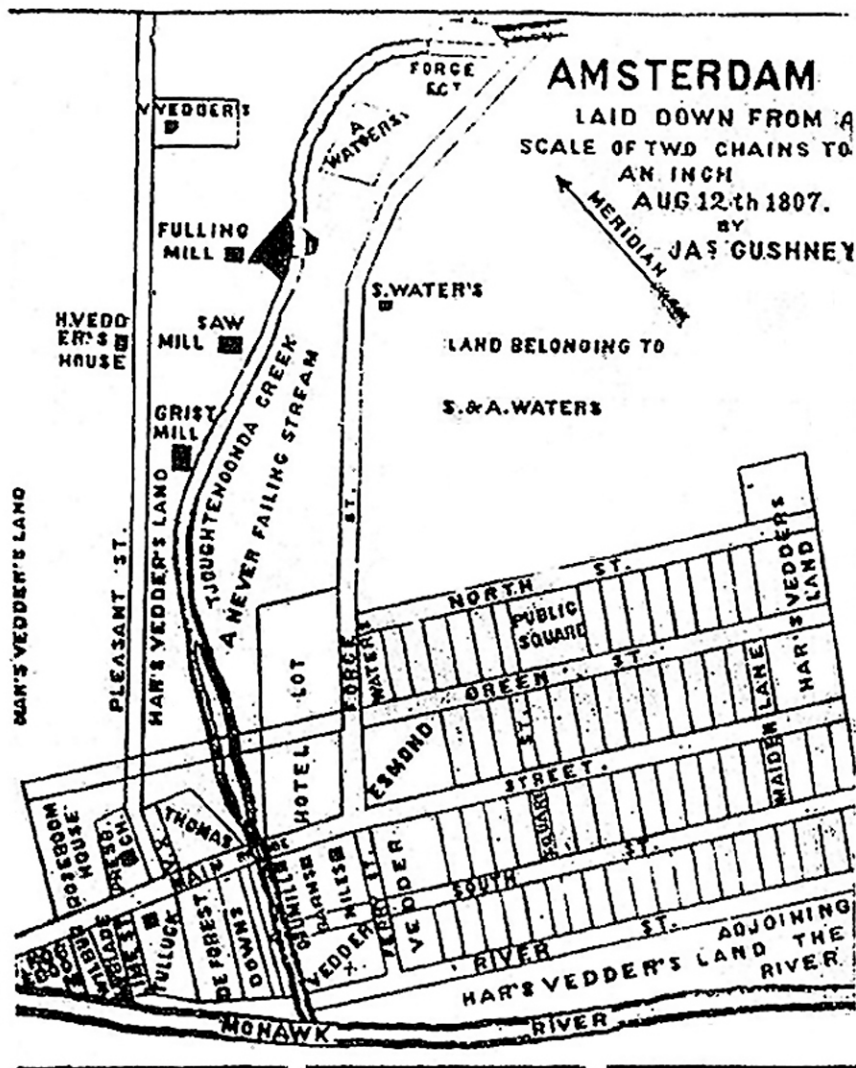
The earliest settlers had designed with fewer problems however. Horse-drawn vehicles could move along a narrow street. Through an alley, even. If two could not pass, on waited. The traffic movement was slow.

Draftsman Cushney was using different street names in some places, but the overall pattern was the same. East-west traffic paralleled the Mohawk River. North-south vehicles were following the general direction of the Chuctanunda Creek. There was a bridge over the creek on Main St. A ferry in the same place where the new bridge is to be built carried travelers to the south side of the Mohawk River.

"Main" Stem Always  
"Main St." has survived as a name for the principle street for more than a century and a half. On June 17, 1891, the members of the Common Council thought that "Broadway" would be more appropriate. A few days later, before Amsterdams could get accustomed to the new name, the mayor had vetoed the idea. Main St. it has remained.

Other differences are readily seen in study of the first map. Market St. was "Pleasant." Grove St. was "Green" and High St. was "North," while Cherry St. was "South St."

There are other features of the old map that are worth a second look by Amsterdamsians.



The numerous parcels of property bearing the name of Vedder shed enlightenment on choice of the original name of "Veddersburg." Evolution of Indian names like Chuctanunda should terrorize modern mis-

spellers who a century and-a-half ago would have been called upon to conquer "Tjoughtenonda."

Three Focal Points  
Other Amsterdam maps of subsequent years and bearing

the dates of 1852, 1868 may be seen in the Montgomery County Department of Archives and the development of the community is easily traced. Principal intersections in

have long been: Main and Market; Main and Church; and Market and Division. They made up the focal areas from the days when the horse car lines were laid out. They are due to undergo major surgery as arterials are constructed to carry motor traffic of the future through the heart of the city.

From the year when the word "arterial" was heard for the first time, there have been those who have maintained (and still do) that the center of the town should be left as is and through traffic should go around.

These dissenters were hopeful until recently. In fact, they were hopeful until Feb. 17 of this year when the State of New York announced award of a contract to the Pelnik Wrecking Co. of Yorkville to demolish 67 buildings, most of them in the heart of the business section.

Starting Over Again  
When these structures are out of the way—their complete disappearance scheduled for December — the community builders will start over again much in the same manner as was done in the early 1800's. There will be new buildings, but erected elsewhere because much of the old business section will be given over to modernized highways for faster-moving traffic.

Even the bridge program recalls problems of a century or a century-and-a-half ago. First needed is a new bridge across the Mohawk. The Chuctanunda Creek, where one bridge sufficed for the Mohawk Turnpike at the beginning of the 19th century, will require the two present crossings and another half-dozen bridges between the river and the Market-Shuler intersection.

Of all the face-lifting changes that the community will undergo, nothing will be more conspicuous than Amsterdam's new and expensive bridgework.