

Dove's Geneva

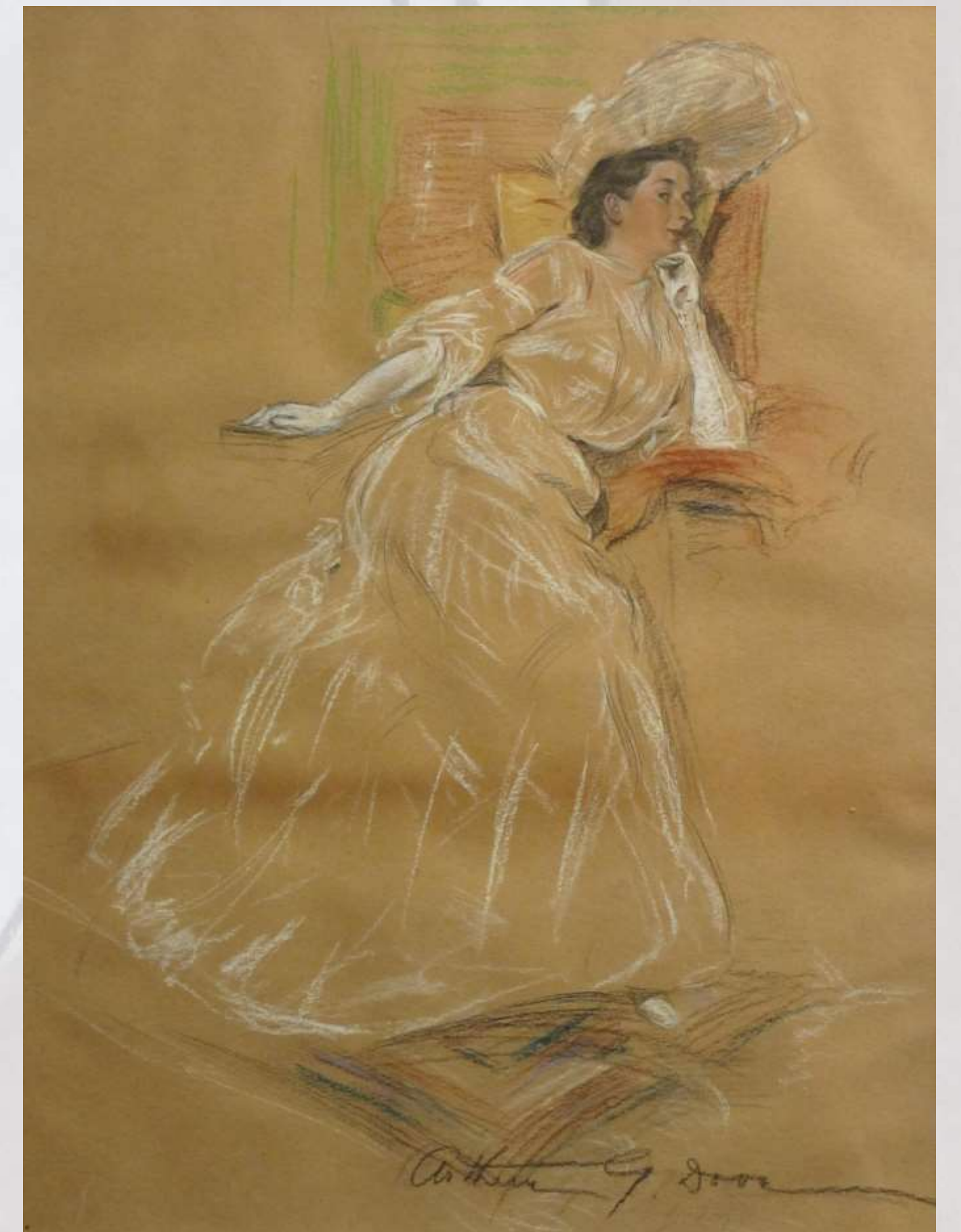
Arthur Garfield Dove (1880-1946) was America's first modernist painter. His family were stonemason contractors beginning in the 1830s and built a number of buildings in Geneva. Dove spent many days as a youth in the countryside hunting, fishing, and observing nature. He attended Hobart College and Cornell University before moving to New York City and becoming an illustrator. His fame lay in the abstract paintings he began creating in the second decade of the 1900s. Dove and his second wife, Helen "Reds" Torr, lived in Geneva from 1933 to 1938. He produced a number of paintings inspired by Seneca Lake and nature.



While at Hobart, Dove was in the Mandolin and Glee Club.



Stuyvesant Square, 1907, Courtesy of Hobart & William Smith Colleges. Dove and his first wife Florence lived overlooking Stuyvesant Square in New York City. This was one of his early paintings.



Untitled pastel, undated, Geneva Historical Society Collection
As a freelance illustrator Dove did everything from pastel drawings to pen and ink one-panel jokes.

Where the Doves Lived

Although the Doves were a Geneva family, Arthur was born and lived his first few years in Canandaigua. His father served as Ontario County clerk and was required to live in the county seat.

William Dove and his family resided at 87 North Main Street from 1884 to 1898. Their neighbor Newton Weatherly was a farmer, naturalist, and artist who became a friend and mentor to Arthur. Their second home was at 512 South Main Street next to Trinity Episcopal Church. The house remained in the Dove family until 1979.



In Canandaigua the Doves lived with William's in-laws on Dungan Street, a few blocks from Canandaigua Academy.



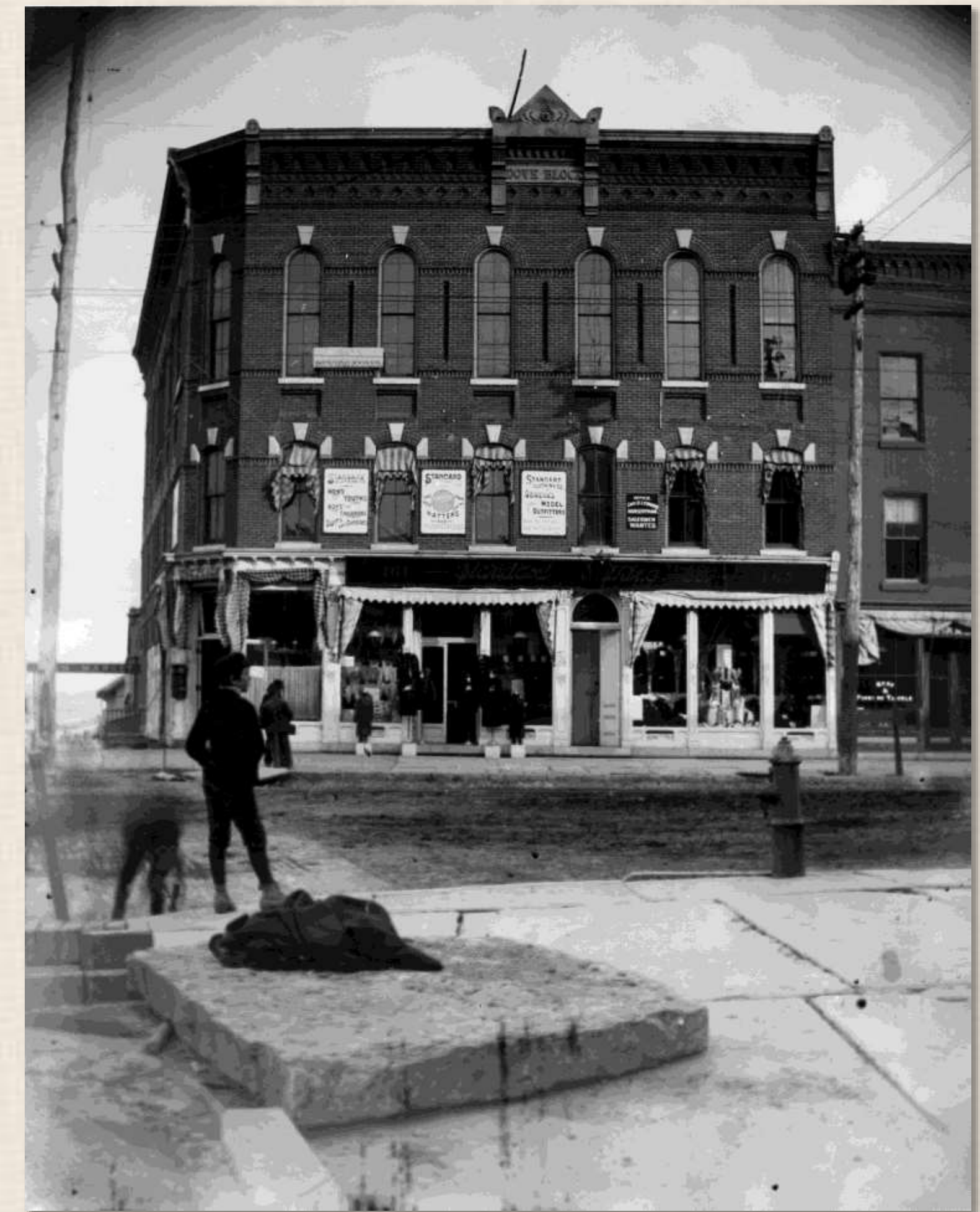
After the death of their mother, Arthur and Paul (shown here) inherited 512 South Main Street. It was divided into apartments in the 1930s to provide income for the brothers.



Dove preferred the house at 87 North Main Street, perhaps for his childhood association with Newton Weatherly.



Unwilling to stay at 512 South Main Street, Dove and Helen lived in family farm houses north of Geneva from 1933 to 1937. He is shown with his painting *Trees and Covered Boat*. Courtesy of Steve Sjolom



In 1937 Dove and Helen moved to the third floor of the Dove Block, which was one large open room. Dove wrote to his friend Alfred Stieglitz, "Walk about 10 miles before noon around this huge hall."

What Dove Saw: 1933–1938

Geneva became more urban in the three decades that Dove was away. The city had steadily gained population since he was a boy, due in part to immigrants from Italy and Syria. Industrialization was at its peak by 1933 when he returned to the city. The lakefront was fully developed and factories and houses had been built on the north side of the city.

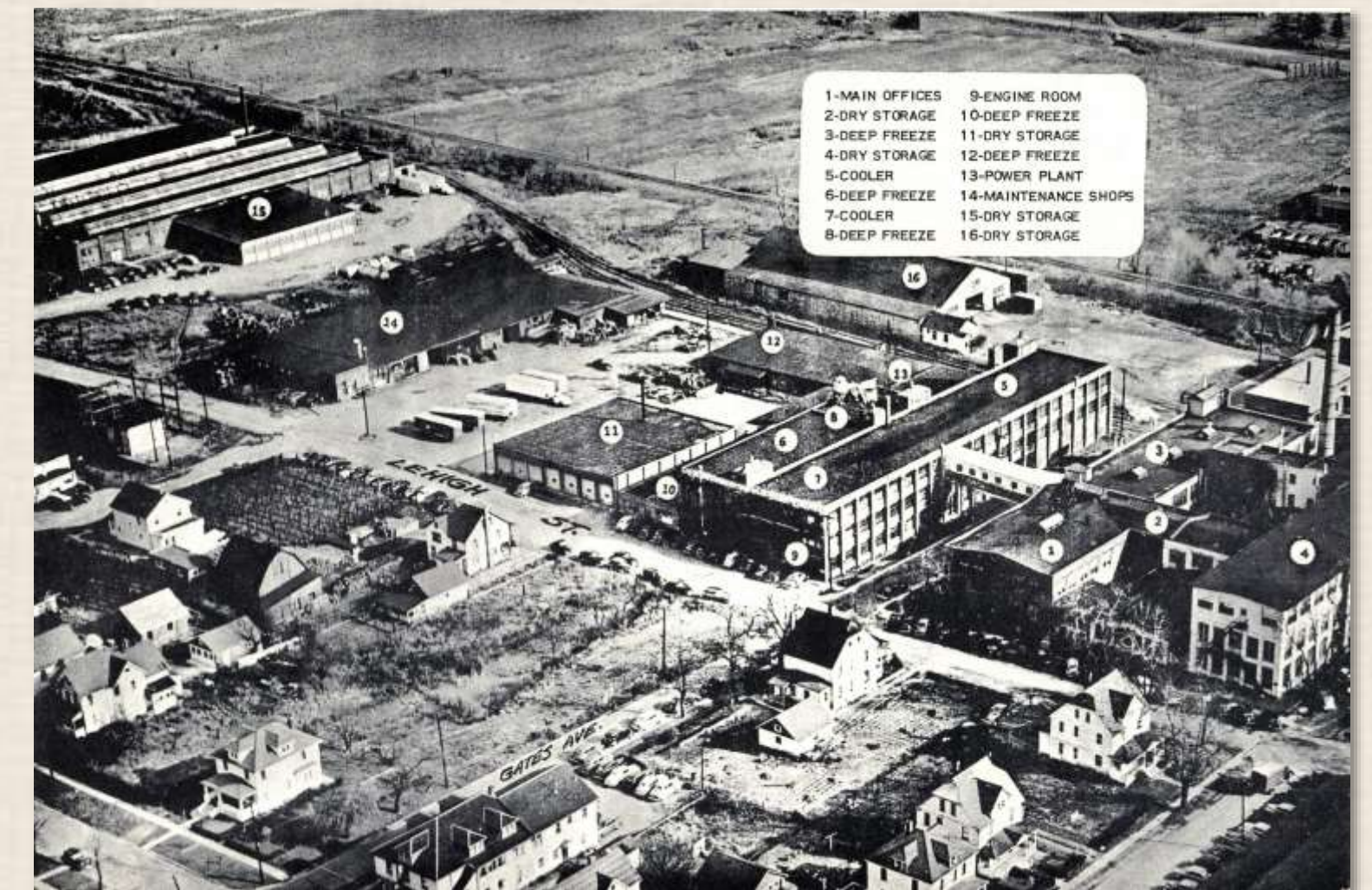
Geneva, and the nation, had become noisier and faster since 1901. Car and truck traffic replaced horses and trolleys. Planes flew overhead and occasionally stopped in the Doves' farm fields. Machines were sometimes a distraction to Dove's work, but they also served as subject matter.



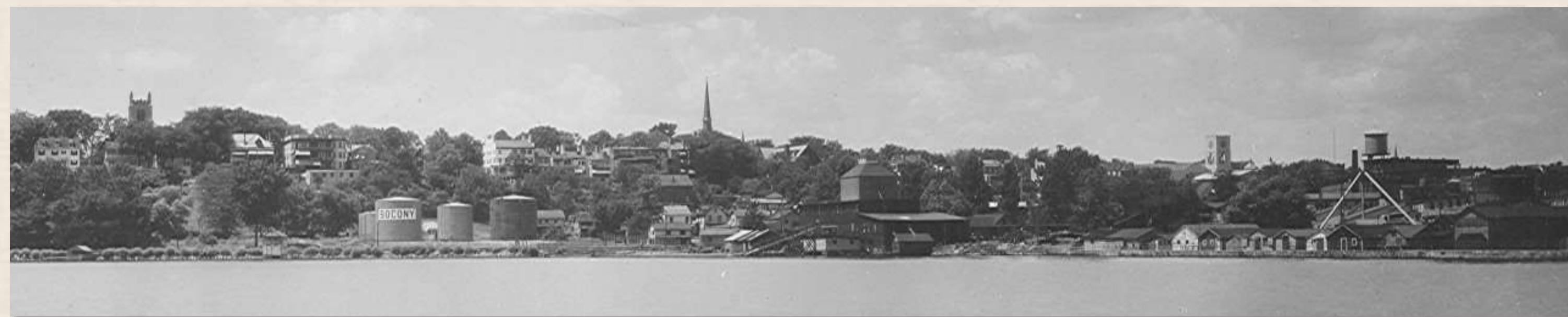
Lakefront Park was opened behind the Dove Block (red X) in 1916.



In 1937 the Finger Lakes and Hudson Flour Mills built the 190 foot-tall grain elevator on South Exchange Street. Dove captured it in his *Flour Mill* series of oils and watercolors.



Headquarters for the Market Basket grocery chain were part of the north side development. This area had been farmland in Dove's youth.



Dove often saw this view when he went out early in the morning in his boat. The Socony oil tanks (left) and Green's Bathing Beach water slide (center) inspired both oil and watercolor paintings.



North of the Dove Block were cheap hotels and the New York Central Railroad tracks. The gas tank (left) was the subject of Dove's painting *Tanks* (1937-38).

“It is Good Painting Ground”

Dove and Helen moved to Geneva in 1933 to help settle his mother’s estate. There was little cash but plenty of property in which to live and paint. While Dove felt exiled from the New York City art scene, the Geneva years were very productive ones for him. During the fair weather months he painted small watercolors. Some were framed and sold while others became studies for larger abstracts which he painted in the winter. Dove revisited the places he had painted with Newton Weatherly as a boy. He also captured buildings and scenes around the city.

“Have been going over the watercolors again and find about 35 good prospects for paintings.”

Dove letter to Alfred Stieglitz, October 24, 1935



In 1921 Dove and artist Helen Torr began a relationship while he was still married to his first wife, Florence Dorsey. After Florence died, the couple married in 1932.



Holbrook's Bridge to Northwest, 1937-38, private collection

While Dove painted Holbrook's bridge over the Canandaigua Outlet several times, he wrote Alfred Stieglitz that this "was a devotional thing to my 100-year-old friend Mr. Weatherly with whom I used from the age of five to go fishing there."



Exchange Street, Geneva, 1938, Amon Carter Museum

This was painted when Dove was living on Exchange Street in the Dove Block.



St. Peter's, 1937, Courtesy of Hobart & William Smith Colleges

This scene was likely painted from the lakefront looking west across the New York Central Railroad tracks and Exchange Street.



Flour Mill II, 1938, Phillips Collection

Dove painted at least two abstractions based on watercolors of the flour mill tower.