

The  
ROCHESTER  
CHAMBER *of*  
COMMERCE  
1888 1917



*The*  
ROCHESTER  
CHAMBER OF  
COMMERCE  
*from 1888 to 1917*



*A Sketch*



HE Rochester Chamber of Commerce on October 2, 1917, enters its new and magnificent home, made possible by the generosity of one of its trustees, George Eastman.

This building in which its future activities are to be carried on has been erected at the northwestern corner of St. Paul and Mortimer streets on a lot 92 by 112½ feet, only 400 feet from Main street. It is in the very heart of business Rochester.

Its composition is of Tennessee marble and bronze, simple and dignified, but exceedingly beautiful in design, and, from the practical point of view, embodying the best ideas for efficient Chamber of Commerce operation. No portion of the building is for leasing or renting; all is for the Chamber's use.

It is a source of gratification that this Chamber obtains such a building, in which to do its work for the community and its membership, encouraging it to greater achievements, making possible renewed widening of its influence and giving additional opportunity to serve.

The Rochester Chamber of Commerce enters this new, rich home at an age of slightly less than thirty years. When it was organized the city had a population of less than 125,000 persons and in life and outlook had but little departed from village ways. Today Rochester has within her environs 265,000 persons. It has spread to Lake Ontario, absorbing on the western side of the Genesee river and the Port of Rochester, the village of Charlotte, and beyond the eastern banks of the river and the village of Summerville, maintaining the magnificent Durand-Eastman park of more than five hundred acres. For its beauty as a city, for the merit of its highly diversified and specialized manufactures, and for the contentment and prosperity of its people amid unexampled living conditions, Rochester stands conspicuous among the larger cities of our continent.



H. H. WARNER  
President 1888

### ORGANIZATION MEETING

Called to consider a proposal that the business men of the city be organized to "foster the trade and commerce of the city of Rochester" and "to promote a more enlarged and friendly intercourse between merchants," a meeting was held in the office of Mayor Cornelius R. Parsons on the night of November 22, 1887. These are recorded as present: "Mr." Adams, E. R. Andrews, Patrick Barry, Henry C. Brewster, George C. Buell, Benjamin E. Chase, P. Cox, Thomas B. Griffith, Henry B. Hathaway, D. M. Hough, Dr. B. L. Hovey, William Livingston, F. M. McFarlin, Henry Michaels, R. M. Myers, Walter J. Osborn, L. M. Otis, T. J. Reynolds, S. B. Roby, Clinton Rogers, Lewis P. Ross, Leo Stein, Samuel Wilder and L. L. Williams. Death has removed most of these. Among those who survive and continue their active interest in the Chamber's work are Henry C. Brewster, chairman of the Lower River and Harbor committee, 1917, and Clinton Rogers. Both are former presidents and are members of the Advisory Council.

Lewis P. Ross called the meeting to order. George C. Buell was elected chairman and Thomas B. Griffith, secretary. These committees were appointed: By-Laws, Henry C. Brewster, John W. Goss, Thomas B. Griffith, Lewis P. Ross and Rufus A. Sibley; membership, E. Frank Brewster, Marcus Michaels, R. M. Myers, Walton J. Osborn and Clinton Rogers; nominations, Charles FitzSimons, H. B. Hathaway, D. M. Hough, Henry Michaels and S. B. Roby. Adjournment was taken to the night of December 5th, in the Common Council chamber.

### ELECTION OF FIRST OFFICERS

At the meeting of December 5th the committee on nominations presented the names of J. E. Booth, George C. Buell, Lewis P. Ross, F. S. Upton and Hulbert H. Warner for president.





WILLIAM S. KIMBALL  
President 1889

Mr. Buell withdrew his name and substituted that of Samuel Wilder. Mr. Upton also withdrew his name and J. C. Michaels, by request, withdrew the name of Mr. Booth, thus leaving L. P. Ross, H. H. Warner and Samuel Wilder in the running for president. W. F. Balkam and Horace Brewster were appointed tellers. With one hundred fifty names on the rolls, Mr. Warner was elected by a vote of eighty-five. Mr. Ross with thirty votes was second. Henry C. Brewster was elected first vice-president; Frank S. Upton, second vice-president; Thomas B. Griffith, third vice-president; and Henry B. Hathaway, treasurer.

The following were named for the Board of Managers by the nominating committee, and were duly elected: For three years, H. C. Brewster, George C. Buell, C. J. Burke, J. H. Chase, William N. Gorsline, Arthur S. Hamilton, D. M. Hough, A. M. Lindsay, L. P. Ross and Arthur G. Yates; for two years, William C. Barry, E. Frank Brewster, Eugene C. Curtis, John W. Goss, William Oothout, S. B. Roby, Clinton Rogers, James Vick, Isaac Wile and Frederick Will; for one year, Harvey W. Brown, Lewis Chase, Rufus K. Dryer, C. M. Everest, J. W. Gillis, T. B. Griffith, A. Hayden, Granger A. Hollister, Sylvanus J. Macy and E. T. Peck.

#### FIRST ANNUAL DINNER

To promote good fellowship and give the new organization impetus, the president invited all members to be his guests at dinner at Powers Hotel on the night of January 10, 1888. The membership by this time was 300, and 274 members attended. It was truly "a sumptuous repast", even for those days of many courses, long speaking and late hours. The menu, with its thirteen courses, was said by the press on the following morning to have been unprecedented in the history of Rochester. The toasts were in proportion, aglow with wit, wisdom and prophecy.



JOHN Y. MCCLINTOCK  
Secretary 1888-1890



LEWIS P. ROSS  
President 1890

George W. Elliott was toastmaster. The speakers: Mayor C. R. Parsons, President M. B. Anderson of the University of Rochester, Bishop Bernard J. McQuaid, Rev. Dr. Nelson Millard, Warner Miller, Joseph O'Connor, William S. Kimball, William Purcell, Lewis P. Ross, P. J. Ferris of Buffalo, John W. Goss, Judge George F. Danforth, George Raines, Theodore Bacon and J. C. O'Brien.

Those were the days of "distinguished regrets," and telegrams and letters were read from many notables, including the President of the United States, Roscoe Conkling and Chauncey M. Depew. The speaking concluded at 2:15 o'clock in the morning. One newspaper on the following morning reported the dinner in a seven-column eulogy, beginning "The solid business men of Rochester dined together last night."

On January 12, 1888, the standing committees were elected and the president read his inaugural address, to be distributed later in booklet form.

On January 21st, J. Y. McClintock, destined to give service for many years later as county engineer and county superintendent, was engaged as permanent secretary, and rooms on the second floor of the Rochester Savings Bank building were leased. These were the first rooms permanently occupied by the Chamber. Previous meetings were held in the mayor's office, the Common Council chamber and the office of Traders' Bank.

On Tuesday, February 6th, the first meeting of the Chamber was held in the new rooms, with more than three hundred members present. Mr. Griffith rendered an account of his service as secretary pro tem, emphasizing the purpose of the young Chamber by saying: "We are now organized and ready for business. We hope to promote by social intercourse, interchange of views and organized effort the commercial prosperity of Rochester."



EUGENE T. CURTIS  
President 1891



GEORGE MOSS  
Secretary 1891-1898

A committee was instructed to prepare articles of incorporation and by-laws, and on June 11, 1888, these articles were adopted. On July 2nd, they were filed with the Secretary of State and the Clerk of Monroe County, naming the president, vice-presidents, treasurer and existing managers as trustees for the first year. The objects were thus set forth:

"To foster the trade and commerce of the City of Rochester; to protect such trade and commerce from unjust and unlawful exactions; to reform abuses in trade; to diffuse accurate and reliable information among its members as to the standing of merchants, and other matters; to produce uniformity and certainty in the customs and usages of trade; to settle differences between its members, and to promote more enlarged and friendly intercourse between merchants."

It was further provided that the company should have no capital stock, and that its term of existence should be fifty years.

### TACKLING BIG PROBLEMS

The Chamber took up its task with vigor and enthusiasm. Among the problems it immediately attacked was storage of the surplus waters of the Genesee, the large and beautiful river which flows through the center of the city. The solution of this problem then as now, means the construction of a big dam in the "High Banks", sixty miles away, near Mt. Morris, and at what has become Letchworth Park. Decision to proceed with this undertaking has been postponed many times.

The first step in water storage by the Chamber was a request that the city provide it with an appropriation of \$3,500 for a survey. This the city charter would not permit, but the municipal government requested that a bill be introduced in the state legislature, providing that the Chamber be reimbursed for any expenditure it might make in the matter. The secretary, therefore, under instructions, and with the assistance of Edwin A. Fisher, now consulting city engineer, made a survey lasting





MAX BRICKNER  
President 1892



HENRY C. BREWSTER  
President 1893

three months. Meanwhile, a special committee composed of Lewis P. Ross, William C. Barry, J. W. Gillis, A. S. Hamilton and A. M. Lindsay, having at their command a special fund, subscribed for the obtaining of expert advice on matters of importance, engaged three of the country's most able engineers, James B. Francis, J. T. Fanning and Clements Herschell. These engineers visited the upper gorge and the next day made their reports at a special meeting. They said the river ordinarily created 7,000 horse-power and that this power not infrequently fell to 3,500 horse-power. A reservoir near Mount Morris, they added, would give a constant supply of 21,000 horse-power.

The Chamber's committee supported these reports with its recommendation, which specified a dam near Mount Morris, to be 114 feet high and to form a reservoir stretching eleven miles up the river and possessing a capacity of 8,000,000,000 cubic feet, and further recommended that the state be asked to appropriate \$5,000 for an official survey by the state engineer. Duly authorized in 1889, State Engineer Bogart personally made this survey.

In 1893 the secretary's report showed that the state had already expended \$27,500 on the plans. Though this task of the Chamber in thirty years has not been completed, it has never been abandoned; each year emphasizes anew the necessity for such water storage and, eventually, it will be brought about. The undertaking involves a great expenditure. When the dam is built and in operation, Rochester and the entire Genesee Valley will have reason to acknowledge the debt in this matter owed to the Rochester Chamber from its earliest days.

#### WATER SUPPLY VICTORY

Another matter which the young Chamber immediately seized upon was that of water supply. For the rapidly growing



IRA L. OTIS  
President 1894



CHARLES P. FORD  
President 1895

city the one main from Hemlock Lake was becoming insufficient. At a meeting of the Chamber in November, 1888, the burden of a communication from the Common Council was a request that the Chamber appoint five members to confer on the subject with a similar committee from the Council. Again the Chamber employed experts and finally evolved the recommendation that an additional main be built, for while it was found that the water supply at Hemlock and Canadice Lakes was sufficient to last the city for some time, the facilities to transport it were inadequate. The new main, as recommended, would cost \$1,500,000.

The matter was further complicated by a disagreement as to whether the additional main should be constructed from Hemlock Lake, over a shorter route, with pumping arrangements, or over the same route covered by the original main and dependent on gravity. Finally, in 1892, a gravity line, as most vigorously advocated by the Chamber, was located down through the valley and a thirty-eight inch main was installed. In addition, the acquirement of much property surrounding Hemlock and Canadice Lakes assured Rochester of its present adequate and uncontaminated water supply. The third conduit between Hemlock Lake and the city system is now being laid.

#### NEW CITY CHARTER

Toward the close of the year, the Chamber began to give vigorous attention to the need of a new City Charter and continued activity in this direction until it was obtained in 1908. The first step was a meeting to discuss the project. Papers were read by President Hulbert H. Warner, John Fahy, Henry Lomb and John Bower. In 1890 a committee was appointed to call a convention of citizens, obtain a consensus of opinion and draw up a tentative charter. This plan was not carried out. Later through a co-operative arrangement, a committee of five members



JAMES G. CUTLER  
President 1896

was appointed to work with a similar committee from the Common Council. This committee requested that eight additional men be added, making a committee of eighteen. This was done and by hard and conscientious work the desired charter was at last obtained.

An active committee of the first year was that on Manufactures and Promotion of Trade, D. M. Hough, chairman. It gave consideration to such problems as taxation, insurance rates, labor difficulties, cost of cartage, the advisability of a belt railroad around the city, the cost of anthracite coal, the practicability of using soft coal without creating a smoke nuisance. It also gave consideration to the obtaining of sites for new manufacturing concerns. A watch factory proposition engaged its attention for some time and a stock subscription of \$350,000 to start the business was attempted. Like many another young commercial organization before and since, the Chamber learned that it is false business philosophy to give free sites and special privileges, or to attempt the financing of infant industries no matter how glittering the promises of its promoters may be. It was fortunate to get the lesson at so slight a cost.

#### SEEKING NATURAL GAS

By endeavoring to obtain natural gas, the Chamber made a definite effort to improve Rochester as a manufacturing city and reduce the high cost of living. A special committee, consisting of William S. Kimball, J. W. Gillis and Benjamin E. Chase, with the secretary and several others went to Bradford and Kane, Pa., to investigate. They reported favorably. It developed, however, that to bring the gas from its distant place of origin would require about \$1,500,000, in addition to the purchase of large properties. An attempt was made to raise enough capital in Rochester to insure local control of the company. Lands and



CHARLES J. BROWN  
President 1897

gas wells in Pennsylvania and New York were secured. The project, however, proved uneconomical, and eventually was abandoned.

The Chamber in a minor capacity contributed to the development of Rochester's superb park system. The nucleus of this system, now one of the finest that exists, was a gift from Ellwanger & Barry, prominent in the Chamber, of twenty-two acres of land surrounding the reservoir in what was later to become Highland park. Later fourteen additional acres were purchased and in time the artistic pavilion, dedicated to the children of Rochester, completed this park. Eventually two hundred fifty-eight acres on the east side of the Genesee river and eighty-five acres on the west side were obtained and developed into what is now known as Genesee Valley park. The present acreage is five hundred forty acres. Every facility of the Chamber was placed at the service of Dr. Edward Mott Moore, "The Father of Rochester's Park System;" Superintendent of Parks Calvin C. Laney, Assistant Superintendent of Parks John Dunbar, the various park assistants and the various park commissioners, and the interest of the Chamber in the park system continues unabated. The total acreage of the system is now 1,644.

#### RAILWAY SERVICE BETTERMENTS

In 1888 objectionable features in the New York Central station were severely criticized by the committee dealing with transportation facilities, and as a result extensive improvements were made in the following year at a cost of \$28,000. A new freight station which had been urged came later. A special New York car for Rochester passengers was put on the eastbound train leaving at 8:03 P.M., and it was arranged to have through trains telegraph from Detroit or Toledo what berths remained vacant, so that Rochester people might obtain reservations in



CHARLES E. ANGLE  
President 1898

advance. In addition, the Wagner Sleeping Car Company gave assurance that the Chamber would have no further cause for complaint about sleeping cars being old and unsatisfactory.

Another transportation problem that was taken up was the complaint that freight was unduly delayed in shipment to and from Rochester owing, it was alleged, to a lack of freight house facilities. The Chamber offered to act as a medium for the handling of these complaints and a rapid and early decrease in the number of complaints proved the effectiveness of the arrangement.

Publicity was not ignored. *The Union and Advertiser* issued an elaborate Chamber of Commerce edition. Ten thousand copies of a handsome two hundred eighty-four page publication on "The Industries of Rochester" were distributed. Another booklet, "Rochester and Its Suburbs," was given wide circulation. In addition, the Chamber issued a four-page folder containing a brief of Rochester's claim to superiority, as well as a pamphlet containing the constitution and by-laws and a list of members. The *New York Graphic* and the *Harpers Weekly* each issued a supplement devoted to Rochester.

Among the activities recorded in the initial year were:

Urged Congress to reduce postage on seeds, cuttings, roots and such commodities.

Sought from Congress an appropriation for maintaining and improving Charlotte harbor, now the Port of Rochester.

Requested the Federal Government to make a survey for a ship canal into Irondequoit Bay.

Successfully opposed a state bill to make every Saturday in July, August and September a holiday.

Aided in a fight for a Federal bill prohibiting any license or tax on commercial travelers.

At the instance of S. B. Roby, it was suggested to the National Board of Trade that letter postage rate be reduced from two





RUFUS A. SIBLEY  
President 1899

cents an ounce to one cent. This movement, though yet unsuccessful, was so important that a cheap postage plank was inserted in the Republican platform of that year.

#### SAVING THE CITY \$2,000,000

In 1890 a group of capitalists undertook the project of electrifying the street railways. They asked certain privileges of the Common Council. Anticipating undeniable benefits from the improvement, public sentiment was influenced to such a degree that the company was about to name the terms of its own franchise. Indications pointed to an early granting of these terms. The Executive Committee of the Chamber recognizing that this was a matter of great importance to the city, sent a communication to the Common Council asking that action be delayed, and retained George F. Danforth to examine the terms of the proposed contract. Mr. Danforth made it apparent that the city was about to give a great deal more than was generally suspected. Many features of the proposed transaction were found so lacking in equity that it was characterized as no contract at all, but a mere gift. The Chamber spent much time and money on the subject, finally forcing a contract by which the Street Railway Company agreed to pay an annual tax of five dollars a car and, in addition to a purchase percentage already arranged, to abide by the following conditions:

*First*—To put conductors on the cars after 1892.

*Second*—To issue transfers after 1892.

*Third*—To pay 1 per cent of the gross receipts from 1892 to 1907 and 2 per cent of the gross receipts from 1907 to 1967.

*Fourth*—To erect iron poles through the business streets.

*Fifth*—To operate all lines by electricity within a limited period stated in the contract.



JOHN M. IVES  
Secretary 1899-1907



H. B. HATHAWAY  
President 1900

It was said at the time that the terms of the contract represented a value to the city of fully \$2,000,000 in percentages alone, which was accepted as adequate payment for the privileges to be enjoyed by the company. The officers of the company expressed their satisfaction with the contract. Judge Danforth in his letter to the Chamber committee wrote:

"The tax-payer is justified in demanding that no gifts shall be made, but that for every privilege or franchise to be exercised in or over the streets of the city, something should be paid to the city by the company exercising by its consent the franchise or privilege."

#### UNDER VIGOROUS LEADERSHIP

Meanwhile industrial and civic development was noticeably active. Confidence in the future of the city, someone remarked, was not confined to the city itself. Millions of dollars in capital from all parts of the world were invested in the largest of the city's establishments. The breweries, all notably flourishing, and the public utilities came in for a large share of this foreign control. Railroads kept a keen eye on the city's growth and increased their local facilities accordingly. In 1889 alone, 1,400 new buildings were constructed, of which 65 were for business and manufacturing use and more than 1,200 were private dwellings. Rochester now began to earn really its appellation, "The City of Homes." In 1891 the report of the Chamber's secretary chronicles the continuance of this development.

It was natural that trade opportunities should now be a matter of concern. In 1889, in the presidency of William S. Kimball, the Congress of the Three Americas was being held and its attendant publicity served no doubt as an impetus to the desire for trade extension. By means of correspondence and special interviews the delegates from sizable markets in the Latin South



A. B. LAMBERTSON  
President 1901

were impressed with the importance of Rochester as a trading center. As they passed through Rochester they were serenaded, as a combined greeting and fare-you-well. They enjoyed it thoroughly.

William S. Kimball, second president of the Chamber, gave to the work in 1889 the vigor and enthusiasm of an exceedingly able and courageous business leader. The construction of a foot bridge across the river at Central avenue and the obtaining of a switch connection of the Erie and Pennsylvania railroads, the latter the first and most important step in linking the railroad facilities in the city for freight transfer and interchange, were two accomplishments credited to his administration. In this year, too, the Chamber recommended a thorough and systematic inspection of buildings with a view to reduction of insurance rates, the beginning of a movement in which in later years the Chamber was to become a national leader.

This was the year of the Johnstown flood and, directed by President Kimball, a committee from the Chamber raised a large part of the \$14,000 contributed by Rochester to the Red Cross in aid of the sufferers. Conventions, too, engaged the attention of the Chamber in Mr. Kimball's administration, and successful efforts were made to obtain them.

#### STAND FOR GOOD ROADS

Mr. Kimball was succeeded in the beginning of 1890 by Lewis P. Ross. The latter, in his inaugural address, urged the importance of improving country highways, and through his administration initiated several worthy activities and preached the gospel of good roads with a persistency that would aid any cause. The Chamber, under his encouragement, gave heed to the importance of Rochester's natural harbors, the mouth of the river Genesee and Irondequoit bay. It was in this year that the



HENRY C. BREWSTER  
President 1902

Chamber succeeded in having the bay named as a navigable body of water of the United States.

In this year a special fund was raised by the Chamber to gather valuable data about Rochester for the eleventh United States Census, in addition to what the Government prepared. Another matter in which the Chamber in this administration played a prominent part had to do with the school system. It insisted flatly upon a reorganization and change of policy on the part of the Board of Education, as well as the resignation of some of its members, and the reforms it supported were quickly brought about.

Eugene T. Curtis succeeded Mr. Ross. The establishment of a quarantine for cattle and sheep at the Port of Charlotte was the outstanding accomplishment of this year, which, however, was one of consistent work and steady progress.

Max Brickner followed Mr. Curtis and in turn was succeeded by Henry C. Brewster, president of Traders National Bank, in 1893, and he in turn by Ira L. Otis in 1894, with Charles P. Ford, who for many years afterwards gave the city faithful service as a park commissioner, the president of 1895. Mr. Ford's interest in the parks was keen and by many the insistence of the Chamber that the city provide free municipal band concerts, is attributed to his urging. He continued to press the idea and saw his hopes brought to fruition in the organization of the Rochester Municipal band, the largest and finest municipal organization of its kind maintained by an American city for the free enjoyment of its citizens.

#### FOR THE GOLD STANDARD

The president of 1896 was James G. Cutler. He had been a leader in the great activities of the Chamber's earlier years in the fight to kill the project to pump Hemlock water into a



THOMAS B. DUNN  
President 1903-1904

city reservoir at great expense when nature offered to do it by gravity for nothing, and in the keen combat to prevent an iniquitous franchise to street car capitalists. His term as president, however, was peaceful, except for the stormy gatherings in favor of the gold standard and opposed to William J. Bryan's "free coinage of silver." One mass meeting of the Chamber, addressed by republican and democratic orators, adopted resolutions which were widely distributed as gold standard propaganda.

Rochester suffered from unfair express rates. Eastbound express to Rochester paid the Syracuse rates, those of a city eighty-one miles east of us. Westbound express to Rochester paid the Buffalo rates, those of a city sixty-nine miles to the west. Through the efforts of the Chamber, a Rochester express rate, east and west, was established in this year.

Charles J. Brown, head of Brown Brothers' nurseries, and now county treasurer, succeeded Mr. Cutler. The outstanding achievement of his administration is regarded as being the successful effort to keep at Despatch, now East Rochester, the great car shops of the Merchants Despatch Company. There was a strong liklihood at the time that the company would remove elsewhere. In this year, the Chamber made an investigation into the advisability of encouraging the beet sugar industry in this vicinity. The annual trade excursions and cruises of the Chamber find their early counterpart in an outing to Niagara Falls in this year. A special train on this occasion took 500 members to the Falls. At a dinner at the International hotel, Governor Black, United States Senator David B. Hill and Lieutenant-Governor Timothy L. Woodruff spoke.

The decade closed with the administration of Charles E. Angle, 1898, a conservative but constructive year.





CLINTON ROGERS  
President 1905

Rufus A. Sibley was president in 1899. This was not a year of outstanding accomplishment, but rather of steady, consistent progress. Mr. Sibley was keenly in earnest over the mutual advantage to Rochester and outlying towns and neighboring cities of an expansion of the trolley system. The effort to obtain such an expansion had begun in earlier administrations, but in this year it gained impetus, and in 1900, the year of H. B. Hathaway's presidency, the much sought expansion began. That expansion continued and to-day trolley lines out of Rochester have their termini in Buffalo, Geneva, Sodus and Syracuse.

It was in Mr. Hathaway's year that the Chamber began to impress upon the city administration the advisability of adopting advanced methods of bookkeeping. The object sought by these recommendations, regularly renewed, were obtained in 1905, in the presidency of Clinton Rogers. It was in this year that Rochester gave its memorable welcome to one of its citizens, General Elwell Stephen Otis, upon his return from the Spanish-American War. A triumphal arch in Main street embodied fittingly the testimonial of the Chamber.

#### LAMBERTON AND THE PARKS

Mr. Hathaway was succeeded by A. B. Lamberton, whose life's work, in which he gained his initial interest as a Chamber member, has been the development of Rochester's parks into a great system, envied by other cities on this continent and favorably known over the world. Henry C. Brewster, as Mr. Lamberton's successor, served in 1902 his second term. It was in this year that Prince Henry of Prussia toured the United States, making a brief visit to Rochester and being elaborately entertained under arrangements made by the Chamber. A salute of twenty guns and a flare of red lights on tall buildings signalled his entrance into the city. Some 20,000 persons greeted him at the New York Central station, where he was formally welcomed



ROBERT A. BADGER  
President 1906



MICHAEL DOYLE  
President 1907

by Mayor Adolph J. Rodenbeck and President Brewster, the presentation being made by Assistant Secretary of State David Jayne Hill. A procession escorted the Prince through the city, and he was presented with many gifts significant of Rochester.

Mr. Brewster was succeeded by Thomas B. Dunn, now representative in Congress from a Rochester district. Mr. Dunn possesses among many happy distinctions that of being the only man elected to succeed himself as a President of the Rochester Chamber of Commerce. At the close of Mr. Dunn's second year he was succeeded at the beginning of 1905 by Clinton Rogers, to whom Rochester will be forever indebted as its first and perhaps most vigorous crusader against the smoke nuisance. In 1892, Mr. Rogers, visiting Paris and London, became interested in the subject of their smoke abatement and personally interviewed men in charge of the work in those cities. On his return, he presented much data to the Trustees of the Chamber, coupled with a proposal that the Chamber begin an agitation for smoke prevention. Objection was made that such activity might throttle the enterprise of Rochester manufacturers and on that ground the proposition was voted "laid on the table". When Mr. Rogers became president in 1905, he proposed, in his inaugural address, three special activities for the year, and one of them was that the full force of the Chamber should be put behind his effort to have the Common Council of the city adopt an anti-smoke ordinance. A special committee appointed by him studied the subject and worked for an ordinance, creating some enthusiasm for it. The women of the city gave valiant support. Opponents gradually grew fewer, and on June 1, 1906, in the presidency of R. A. Badger, Mr. Rogers' successor, the desired ordinance was passed. Mr. Badger was succeeded by Michael Doyle. It was in Mr. Doyle's presidency that Sydney R. Clarke succeeded John M. Ives as secretary.



SYDNEY H. CLARKE  
Secretary 1907-1909



CHARLES F. GARFIELD  
President 1908

### THE AWAKENING

It may be frankly admitted that the Rochester Chamber of Commerce has not through the entire course of its existence continued as a progressive, industrious, determined body, aggressively pursuing its tasks. It slowed up. It did not see new visions and get new impulses. The men who served were the best and in many ways the records made were more than creditable. Indeed, big things were done, but the big machine was not going forward steadily, day by day. In other words it was not a modern Chamber of Commerce; the times had changed, but it had not advanced with them.

The beginning of the new order of things came with the presidency of Charles F. Garfield in 1908 and the secretaryship of Sydney R. Clarke, who had begun his service in the previous year. It came into days of enthusiasm and high spirits and the exultant slogan "Do it for Rochester" was coined to give expression to a real impulse. The Chamber and its membership got right with itself and from a body which had fallen into indifference with the public, stepped with all the lustiness of new youth into the public's favor.

Mr. Garfield was succeeded by Edward G. Miner, whose vision was genuine, born of an appreciation of Rochester's needs, and who happily was possessed of the faculty of planning means to supply those needs. In this year Mr. Clarke resigned to accept a position with a Rochester bank, and was succeeded by the present secretary, Roland B. Woodward. Both Mr. Miner and Mr. Woodward appreciated that the need was not more enthusiasm, but of building in a solid way to cash in on the new spirit embodied in the phrase "Do it for Rochester."

That is what it has been doing. The Chamber has been made a Chamber of results. It has done things; it has finished things; it has widened its scope; it has grown. New departments have



EDWARD G. MINER  
President 1909

been added to it; new work undertaken. There has been less assertion perhaps, but more real service given and many more things done. The slogan has been "Service," and the satisfaction of service done for the community. Constructive service at that. The Chamber itself has been a genuine democracy with equal rights to serve. The result is a Chamber that is strong, a growing organization, confident of its ability to do things, with a membership that is proved, and a city appreciative of its many advantages and many blessings.

#### A CITY PLAN

In Mr. Miner's term two important tasks were undertaken with characteristic vigor. One was the obtaining of a city plan. A committee was organized consisting of Chairman, James G. Cutler; secretary, Charles Mulford Robinson; treasurer, Hiram W. Sibley; Josiah Anstice, William C. Barry, William Bausch, Walter B. Duffy, Charles P. Ford, Alexander M. Lindsay, Robert Mathews, William S. Morse, Edward G. Miner, William Pitkin, J. Craig Powers, Lewis P. Ross, Charles H. Wiltsie. A fund of \$10,000 was raised quickly and three of the best experts of the country obtained: Arnold Brunner, of New York; Frederick Law Olmsted, landscape architect of Boston, for years the consulting architect for Rochester's park system, and Bion J. Arnold, traction engineer, of Chicago. Their report was not completed in Mr. Miner's tenure of office, but was made in that of his successor, George Dietrich, and remains today as a standard below which the city in making changes or undertaking new construction cannot go with impunity.

The other matter which taxed particularly the ability of the Chamber in Mr. Miner's year was the locating of the new New York Central Station. Such a station had long been advocated by the Chamber. In this year, 1909, William J. Wilgus, a





GEORGE DIETRICH  
President 1910



ALBERT B. EASTWOOD  
President 1911

former member of the New York Central railroad engineering staff, came with elaborate plans for a station over the Genesee river between Main street east and Central avenue bridge. A deciding factor in the failure of this plan was the limit of space it could provide for trackage. With this disposed of and with all in agreement as to the wisdom of the disposition, the present site was announced and work begun on the present station, which for beauty and artistic worth adds a distinction to our city. This station was completed and put in service in 1913.

#### SOME BIG THINGS DONE

While outstanding results were obtained, it must be remembered that the Chamber was increasing day by day the acts of service given members who sought its information, advice, or who desired information obtained for them and, more important, was giving its membership additional opportunities to serve. In Mr. Garfield's year, a beginning in traffic service had been made and this, in the years of Mr. Miner and Mr. Dietrich, was made more efficient, though far below the excellence of the Traffic Bureau which the Chamber maintains to-day. Mr. Dietrich's year was one in which the rejuvenated Chamber continued to take stock of itself and grew steadier in its pursuit of constructive tasks and permanent results. Among the activities initiated in this year by him, and made thereafter an integral portion of the Chamber's work, was the organization of the Sons of Members, and their trips of inspection to the large manufacturing plants of the city. This activity, which he enthusiastically directed, was a source to him of great satisfaction and pride.

Beginning with the presidency of Charles F. Garfield and continued with increased vigor by his successors, a determined effort was made to make Rochester the Convention City. With





HENRY W. MORGAN  
President 1912

the completion of the new State Armory in Main street east, built at a cost of \$300,000, the old armory in Washington square was obtained by the city and in 1907 remodeled as a Convention hall. Plans for a greater, finer structure on this site were drawn but never realized, though Convention hall annex was built shortly thereafter.

Rochester's Convention hall has a seating capacity of 3,800 persons. The annex contains 34,800 square feet of floor space for exhibits. Here, in the years 1908, 1909 and 1910 respectively, under arrangements by the Chamber, the first three Rochester Industrial Expositions were held. They were successful in every particular—in attendance, in display of Rochester-made goods and in advertising the city. In addition, the receipts provided the Chamber with funds for carrying on its increased work.

In the Tenth ward, and surrounded by an excellent residential section, was the State Industrial school, behind whose high stone walls boys convicted of misdemeanors worked out their commitments. Every one heartily applauded the purchase of wide farm lands at Rush, on which these boys could be placed as colonists, where there would be no walls, but bracing country air and the sight of lands and trees, expanse of sky and a beautiful stretch of the river Genesee. But when it was learned that the state proposed to use the abandoned school property in Rochester as a prison, the community was stirred to protect itself. The Chamber took the lead in the fight to obtain this property for the city and with the co-operation of the Mayor and medical societies prevailed upon the state to relinquish its plans and sell the property to the city. In a short time the walls were down and, finally, in 1911, in the term of Mr. Eastwood, the transformation into the splendid Exposition Park was effected. Thereafter, under semi-municipal management, the annual Rochester Industrial Expositions have been held.



ROBERT M. SEARLE  
President 1913

### EASTWOOD AND MORGAN

The year 1911, Mr. Eastwood's presidency, saw the successful conclusion of the Chamber's efforts to coördinate charity work in Rochester in a United Charities. After a period in which the new organization was housed in the limited quarters of the Chamber, the necessary finances were obtained and, the work having been brought to a commendable degree of systemization, other offices were obtained for the institution and the separation was made complete. The Chamber, active in the plan to organize a National Chamber along the right lines and representative, participated actively this year in the organization at Washington of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States of America.

It was in Mr. Eastwood's term that with trepidation the Chamber introduced a feature in its life which has meant extraordinary things for its usefulness to its members individually and as an organization. This was "the lunch room," the serving of a luncheon between noon and two o'clock, to committees in such retired space as was available, to the general membership in the large room originally maintained as a library. As a social leaven and for committee attendance the lunch room soon became an absolutely essential feature. It was placed in the beginning in charge of a house committee consisting of Chairman, A. V. Smith, John H. Pierce and George B. Schoeffel. In time the committee reported that the lunch room required constant attention and recommended that employees of the Chamber be charged with its management. This, accordingly, was done.

The Chamber's great debt to Mr. Eastwood is found in the leadership the organization took throughout the country in fire prevention, beginning in the administration of Mr. Dietrich, his predecessor, and reaching full strength and authority in his own. This was his enthusiasm. The booklets on Fire Pre-



GEORGE W. THAYER  
President 1914

vention, gotten out under his direction and close personal supervision, won the liveliest appreciation throughout the country and stimulated fire prevention activity in many other cities. Clean-up Week, most thorough in character, was another practical fire prevention agency begun in his administration. They set an example, which other Chambers, one by one, began to follow. The efficacy of this work of fire prevention by the Chamber is indicated by the fact that, following important annual reductions, Rochester's fire loss in 1916 was \$1.04 per thousand, the lowest in ten years.

#### AUTONOMOUS COUNCILS

In the administration of Henry W. Morgan, 1912, the Chamber entered upon a new era of development, the organization within itself of autonomous councils for special work, most of them financed and directed by those who would profit most directly from their activities, and yet held accountable to the Officers of the Chamber and obligated to operate within the policy of the present organization. It meant specialization in an increasing number of fields. It was in accord with the spirit of the times and spelled progress.

The first of the autonomous organizations created was the Safety Council. Activity in the Chamber for increased safety to life and limb had followed quickly on the heels of Fire Prevention work. A committee on accident prevention was the first step. Representatives of the larger plants took the keenest interest in this matter, both in the equipping of their machinery with safety devices and the education of their workmen along accident prevention lines. Mr. Morgan warmly endorsed a proposal that the accident prevention committee be expanded into the Safety Council and, as such, linked with the National Safety Council. The number of industrial accidents as a result



GEORGE W. TODD  
President 1915



GEORGE W. ROBESON  
President 1916

of the work of the Chamber's Council has fallen off perceptibly each year. During the first three years of the Council's existence, the accident rate dropped almost fifty per cent. In 1916 the rate had reached what is considered a minimum by many. Public safety propaganda goes hand in hand with the industrial work.

The second of the autonomous organizations created was the Community Council, in March, 1913, composed of the representatives of Chambers of Commerce, Boards of Trade, Improvement Associations and other civic and industrial bodies in the villages and cities of the seven counties nearest Rochester, those of Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Wayne and Wyoming. This council has done a splendid work. In its initial year it killed a water storage project which would, after the State had invested about \$9,000,000 in it, have proved worthless. It instituted several years afterward, and again at the instance of Mr. Morgan, a campaign to enhance the beauties of its already lovely countryside by highway planting of elm or other trees at well spaced intervals. This it continues to urge with satisfying results. Elsewhere, particularly in Massachusetts, the highway tree planting idea of the Rochester Community Council has been copied. An indication of the interest taken in the Council is given by the attendance at its annual dinners. At one of them, with only twenty-five Rochesterians present, there were 525 guests from places as distant as fifty miles.

#### RATES CUT IN TWO

Mr. Morgan's year in many other fields was noteworthy. It was in his term that the Chamber without recourse to the Public Service commission, but with friendly yet determined negotiation, succeeded in effecting an equalization of baggage rates that practically cut in two the rates of the Westcott Express company, a corporation which enjoyed a monopoly in this city. Under



GEORGE EASTMAN

the Chamber's encouragement and under safeguards as to hours interurban trolley express service was begun by one of the important lines entering the city, and an arrangement with steam railroad officials was effected whereby freight houses thereafter were kept open on holidays not observed by manufacturing and business houses.

In the following year, with Robert M. Searle president, the Monroe County Farm Bureau was organized with the financial co-operation of the county, state and federal governments and assistance from railroads interested in the agricultural progress of the county. The policy from the start, so far as this bureau was concerned, was to increase its autonomy, once it had found itself and in proportion to its increase in strength and usefulness. The bureau has justified the expectations of the Chamber's officers and to-day, in the height of its usefulness, its autonomy is complete.

### THE THREE GEORGES

No additional bureaus were created in 1914, George W. Thayer's year as president. This term saw a quickening of interest in waterway transportation, especially the Port of Rochester. Quiet but persistent work on the part of the Chamber for the annexation of Charlotte, with the interests of the port in view, was prosecuted with increasing earnestness. This object was obtained by the passage of a bill by the Legislature in the following year, effective January 1, 1916. It was in Mr. Thayer's term, also, that the Chamber assisted in the organization of the Great Lakes Waterways Association, at a conference held at Buffalo. In this year, also, largely through the Chamber's efforts, apprentice part-time agreements between employees and the city schools, were arranged.





HARPER SIBLEY  
President 1917

In 1915, with George W. Todd president, the retail merchants of the city were organized into a Retail Merchants' Council, and before the year was out a similar organization among the wholesalers was effected. Both councils carry on successful and important work, with a most commendable spirit of good fellowship and co-operation. Towards the close of Mr. Todd's year the Traffic Council was established.

The Industrial Management Council, the last of the councils, was organized in the latter part of 1916, in George W. Robeson's presidency, and has been gotten under way with splendid results obtained under his successor, the president of this year, Harper Sibley. Its purpose, as set forth in its by-laws, is "through co-operation, investigations by paid experts and systematic interchange of ideas and information, to secure for members the benefits of the best, most efficient and most economical factory methods in use."

#### THE TRAFFIC BUREAU

The Traffic Bureau after its establishment in April, 1915, in the presidency of George W. Todd, gave an excellent service in the matter of express and freight claims and in auditing freight and express bills. In the following year, in the administration of George W. Robeson, its sphere was increased to the study of the larger traffic problems affecting the city and the giving of a more extended service. It seeks the completion of a scheme of reciprocal switching arrangements for all steam roads serving the city, including the R. W. & O. Branch of the New York Central Railroad, on a satisfactory rate schedule.

When the Officers and Trustees of the Chamber, in Mr. Robeson's year, wishing to obtain from an independent source a plan of routeing the trolley cars of Rochester on as near an ideal schedule as was possible with the existing trackage and equipment



GRANGER A. HOLLISTER  
1st Vice-Pres. 1917

of the New York State Railways, engaged the services of Bion J. Arnold, of Chicago, traction engineer, to make the survey and the report, the bureau was able to assist in obtaining much data, as requested by Mr. Arnold and his staff. The report filed by Mr. Arnold contained important recommendations which, as yet, have not all been carried out, but it has established many facts upon which proper trolley service in Rochester hinges and its findings and recommendations cannot be ignored in the consideration of any Rochester trolley service problem.

#### BARGE CANAL VICTORY

The Rochester Chamber of Commerce, while giving through its Traffic Bureau the closest attention to the city's steam and electric railroad transportation problems, has been increasingly alive to the future transportation service it is to obtain from the Barge Canal, when completed, and the Port of Rochester, when the Welland Canal enlargement is finished and the local port is even half developed. It is now easily the leading port on Lake Ontario. When the Barge Canal was projected, Rochester, as a city, and the Chamber of Commerce, as a body, opposed it as promising benefits disproportionate to its immense cost, and in 1903 Rochester registered a majority of 16,196 against the project. But once the state was committed to the task, the Chamber prepared to make the best of what it considered a doubtful bargain. In 1911 it campaigned in favor of the great fund necessary for harbor terminals for the canal, obtaining a Rochester majority of 5,622, and when in 1915, in the presidency of George W. Todd, an additional appropriation of \$27,000,000 was required, this Chamber after receiving assurance that the plan as set forth by legislative act and referendum to give Rochester a one-level Barge Canal harbor from the canal crossing at Genesee Valley Park to a point several hundred feet south of the Court



CHARLES C. BEAMAN  
2d Vice-Pres. 1917

Street bridge should not be tampered with, waged a most vigorous campaign of publicity. The result was a majority of 15,097 in the city in favor of the appropriation and in the county a majority of 16,288. The vote in the state was close. Had Rochester maintained its traditional attitude on Barge Canal matters, the referendum would have been defeated.

#### HOMES OF THE CHAMBER

The story of the Chamber's expansion can be presented clearly by following the thirty years' growth of the facilities it had for carrying on its work. As has been stated, its preliminary meetings were held in the Mayor's office, the Common Council Chamber, and the office of Traders National Bank. Early in 1888 the Rochester Club abandoned its rooms on the second floor of the Savings Bank building, having purchased a club house in East avenue. On Tuesday, February 6, 1888, three hundred members of the Chamber met in this room for the first time.

The first quarters consisted of an L-shaped group of rooms. All worthy organizations were free to use the rooms of the Chamber for their meetings, and the records show that the quarters were commodious enough to accommodate five or six such meetings at the same time.

As early as 1889 there was serious and persistent talk of erecting a new Chamber of Commerce building, one that would be, in the words of the secretary's report of that year, "worthy of us."

Messrs. Keeler and Kimball finally put an end to the discussion by erecting the Chamber of Commerce building at Main street and South avenue, to contain 180 offices and the rooms of the Chamber. It was begun in 1894. The Chamber moved in about the middle of 1895. The building, especially the



JEREMIAH G. HICKEY  
3d Vice-Pres. 1917

Chamber's portion, was considered a marvel for its substantial construction and elaborate features. The wood carving in the assembly room was long regarded as an unusual piece of decoration. In the beginning the small room at the front of the building was the office of the secretary and his assistants, consisting first of a stenographer with an assistant secretary added later. The room which in 1911, in the presidency of A. B. Eastwood, became the dining room, was used as a library and reading room, and the main hall was used as an auditorium.

There is no exaggeration in saying that the eleventh floor of the building at Main street and South avenue for many years provided more than ample room for the Chamber's activities. But with department being added to department in the necessary expansion of its activities after its awakening in 1908, every available inch on the floor became utilized, and by 1913 offices for the stenographic and multigraphing force had to be taken on the floor below. The space thus provided on the eleventh floor remained vacant only a short time; the cramped and crippling condition of affairs soon became more evident than ever and, finally, the organization of the councils and the Traffic bureau brought about absolute congestion.

#### MR. EASTMAN INTERESTED

In the presidency of George W. Thayer, 1914, George Eastman, who for some time had been quietly observing the work of the Chamber, gained concern about its needs and became a believer in its future, provided those needs were supplied. The first and greatest of those needs as he saw it, was a Chamber of Commerce building devoted solely to the Chamber's uses. The problems of such a building were not solved even by Mr. Eastman in a day, but in the presidency of George W. Todd, Mr. Thayer's successor, his plans were clearly defined. The lot at St. Paul and Mortimer



GEORGE W. ROBESON  
Treasurer 1917

streets was bought and architects, Claude Bragdon with Foster & Gade, of New York, as associates, were engaged to draw up the plans. Ground was broken early in the spring of 1916. The cornerstone was laid by President Todd with appropriate ceremony, on June 29, 1916.

The one stipulation of the Chamber made by Mr. Eastman, that a fund of at least \$100,000 be raised to properly equip, furnish and maintain the new building, was quickly met by a subscription of \$146,000 from the membership and placed in the hands of fifteen Trustees of the Building Fund, duly elected; and later organized as follows: Chairman, Granger A. Hollister; vice-chairman, George W. Todd; treasurer, Albert B. Eastwood; secretary, Fred C. Goodwin; Edward Bausch, P. V. Crittenden, Edgar N. Curtice, James G. Cutler, Frank W. Lovejoy, Joseph Michaels, Edward G. Miner, Henry W. Morgan, George W. Robeson, George W. Thayer and Andrew J. Townson.

#### THE BUILDING COMMITTEE

Throughout the more than a year that the construction of the building was in progress, the details were closely supervised by a Building committee named by the Officers of the Chamber and consisting of three former presidents: Chairman, Albert B. Eastwood; George W. Robeson and George W. Todd. They were indefatigable in their labors and brought to them an experience and judgment of exceptional value. The debt the Chamber owes them for the exacting, tireless performance of their duty, cannot be overstated.

This building to-day is complete and the Chamber's force is housed in it and at work. They took up their tasks there on Thursday, September 20th, handing that morning to the superintendent of the building at South avenue and Main street the keys of the quarters the Chamber had so long occupied. Mr.





WENDELL J. CURTIS  
Asst. Treasurer 1917

Eastman on the foregoing Monday, September 17th, had formally given to the Officers of the Chamber the keys of the new building.

Quiet and beautiful, fairly in the center of Rochester's most active commercial district, this building, erected with little regard to its cost and with every regard to its utility for Chamber of Commerce work, promises for many years to stand a monument to the generous spirit which built it and a tribute to the worth of the organization for whose needs it was provided. The entrance of the Chamber into this new home finds its prestige at the highest in its history and membership in it a distinction which no Rochester business or professional man can ignore.

#### THE CHAMBER TO-DAY

In 1888, the year after organization, the membership of the Rochester Chamber of Commerce was 339. To-day it is 3,000.

In 1888, and in the years thereafter, important things were done by a few men in the name of the Chamber of Commerce. To-day there are a multiplicity of things done for and by many men, working as a Chamber.

In 1888 there were six standing committees in the Chamber. To-day there are thirty-four standing committees, with definite work to perform, meeting regularly to take counsel, to hear reports on progress and to give themselves new tasks towards the completion of their assignment.

In 1888, and through years thereafter, the workers were few. To-day there are many and a man is judged by his ability to do things. The work of the Chamber to-day is limited only by the extent of the membership.

In 1887 the Chamber had no home. Its occasional meetings were held in the office of a bank official. In 1888 it had its first small office. To-day it has for its important and widely known work the best equipped Chamber of Commerce building in the world, devoted solely to its use.



ROLAND B. WOODWARD  
Secretary 1909-1917

In 1888 the Chamber employed only a secretary. In 1908, it had a secretary with one assistant and a stenographer. To-day the Chamber's staff consists of a secretary and eleven assistants. It has a cashier and an office manager, and an office force of sixteen persons and a lunch room force of twenty.

In 1888 and for many years following, men asked what the Chamber of Commerce was, what it was for and what it did. To-day its works speak for it. It is an institution which has justified itself by what it does and which every day justifies itself anew.

To-day Rochesterians are proud of Rochester. To-day Chamber members are proud of their Chamber. A man has a distinct satisfaction in being a member of a strong, working organization, with vision and courage, in which one is as good as another, an organization known from Maine to California as a leader in Chamber of Commerce work.

Wherever Rochester men go they hear the Rochester Chamber of Commerce praised. Returning they investigate it. Then they join, so that they may have a part in the Chamber's work.

To-day there is confidence in the Rochester Chamber of Commerce. Men know that the first requisite that the Chamber demands of every proposition is that the thing be right.

To-day the Rochester spirit lives and the Rochester Chamber of Commerce is its exemplar.

