

ROCHESTER'S ERA OF
ANNEXATIONS

1901 - 1926

JOSEPH W. BARNES

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ROCHESTER'S ERA OF ANNEXATIONS

1901-1926

by

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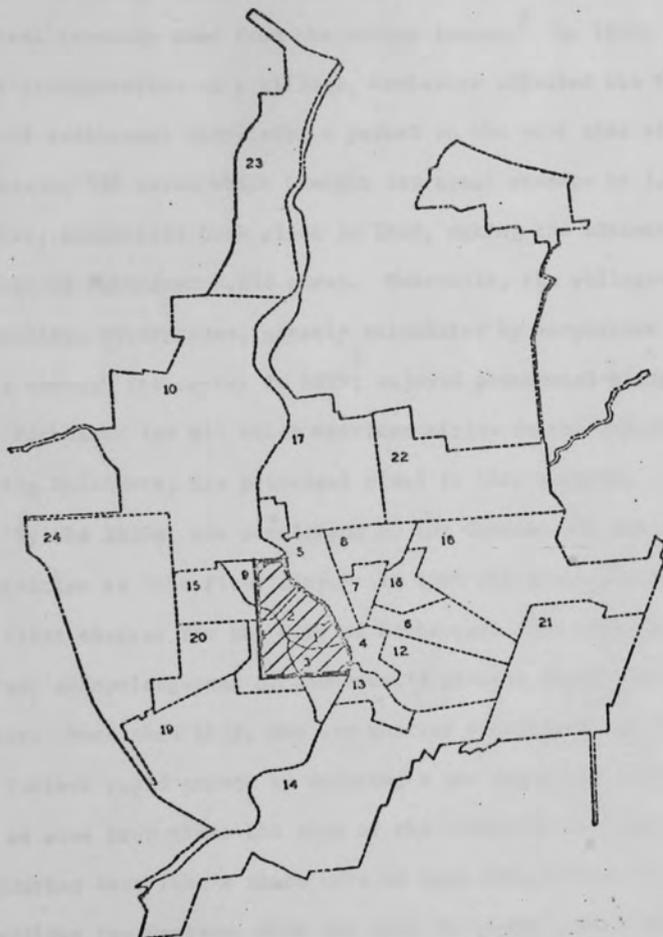
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Chapter I

Introduction; Nineteenth Century Backgrounds

During the early decades of the twentieth century the city of Rochester, New York, in a series of annexations of territory from surrounding towns, completed its geographical growth to its present size. In the years 1901-1926 the city maintained a constant expansionist pressure on neighboring municipalities. In eight of those twenty-six years its annexation campaigns were successful, resulting in larger or smaller territorial additions. The period can justly be termed Rochester's "era of annexations." While not all attempts to annex territory during those years were successful, city leaders repeatedly proposed expansion of Rochester's boundaries in all directions. As a result, the city's area doubled in size, from 11,456 acres at the turn of the century to 22,246 acres in 1926.¹ After 1926, the municipal boundaries became virtually frozen; the only additions to the city's territory since that time have been a few small residential blocks, land for a municipal airport, and minor additions to its parks.

The city's twentieth century era of annexations was the conclusion of a process of growth begun soon after Rochester's organization as a village in 1817. Rochesterville's original boundaries contained only 655 acres west of the main falls of the Genesee River. The falls supplied motive power for numerous flour and lumbering mills centrally located in the rich Genesee country. Rochester quickly became the principal milling and trading center for a vast agricultural hinterland; in fact, Rochester lays claim to being the first in the series of American boom towns located at the edge of westward expansion. The settlement's

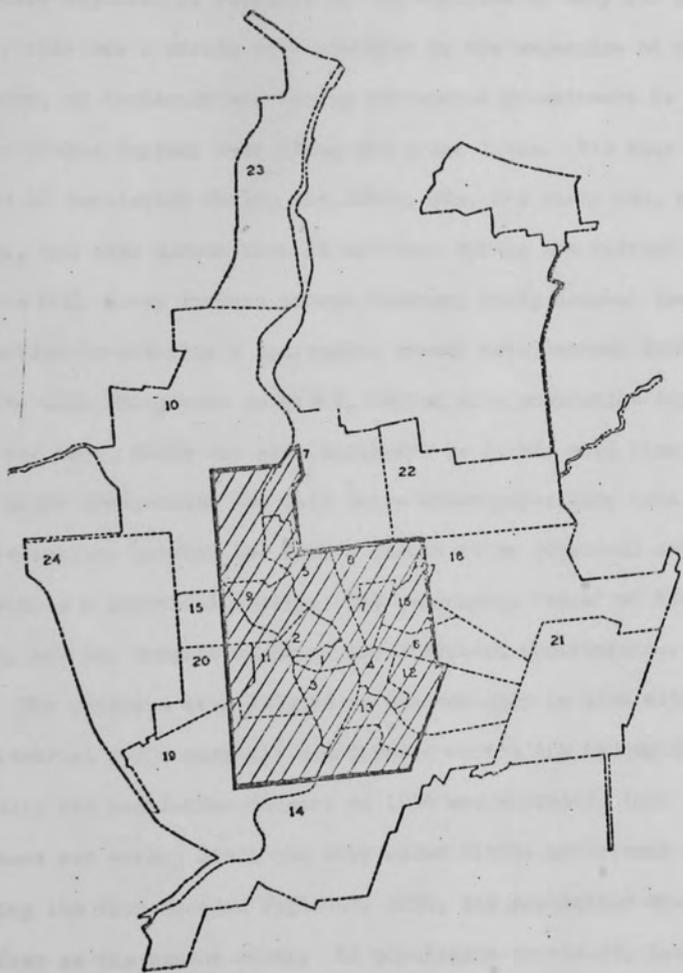


BOUNDARIES (SHADED AREA) AS DESCRIBED IN THE 1817
CHARTER.

Source, Figures 1-3: W. Earl Weller, "The Expanding Boundaries of Rochester," Rochester Historical Society Publication Fund Series, XIV (1936), pp. 176-180.

rate of growth during its first decades was so rapid that contemporaries marvelled at the sight of dozens of frame structures, built with unseasoned wood, "appearing overnight" along streets containing stumps of trees recently hewn from the virgin forest.² In 1823, six years after incorporation as a village, Rochester effected its first annexation of additional territory, a parcel on the east side of the Genesee containing 356 acres which brought its total acreage to 1,011. Another, smaller, annexation took place in 1826, making the ultimate size of the Village of Rochester 1,238 acres. Meanwhile, the village's commercial and milling enterprises, greatly stimulated by completion of the Erie Canal through its center in 1823, enjoyed phenomenal prosperity. For a time Rochester led all other American cities in the export of flour, including Baltimore, its principal rival in this respect.

By the 1830s, the settlement on the Genesee was rapidly earning recognition as "the flour city." In 1834 the state legislature issued the first charter for the City of Rochester. The city charter was, of course, acknowledgement of Rochester's growing status as an urban center. More than this, the new charter recognized the city's potential for further rapid growth by defining a new set of boundaries encompassing an area four times the size of the erstwhile village. The 1834 boundaries described a shape more or less like a vertical rectangle straddling the Genesee, with the main falls and commercial district at the center. Much of the new city's nearly 5,000 acres at this time were still occupied by farms and by untouched woodland, but would soon be platted for streets and subdivided into residential lots or put to new commercial uses.



BOUNDARIES AS DESCRIBED IN THE 1834 CHARTER

Between 1834 and 1874, the city's geographic growth continued at a very reduced rate. During the forty year period, seven separate boundary adjustments resulted in the addition of only 318 acres. In part, this was a result of a slowdown in the expansion of the city's economy, as Rochester was losing commercial preeminence to Buffalo and other rivals further west along the great lakes. Its rate of growth in terms of population during the 1840s, 50s, and early 60s, while still large, was also slower than it had been during the initial boom period (Table I-1). These factors cannot, however, fully account for the severe reduction in the city's geographic growth rate between 1834 and 1874. During that forty year interval, Rochester's population increased about 467 per cent, while its area increased by little more than 7 per cent. The major explanation for this large discrepancy must take into account a distinction between the city's growth as an urbanized area and its growth as a political entity. The geographic "size" of Rochester has been, and is, subject to these two different descriptions.

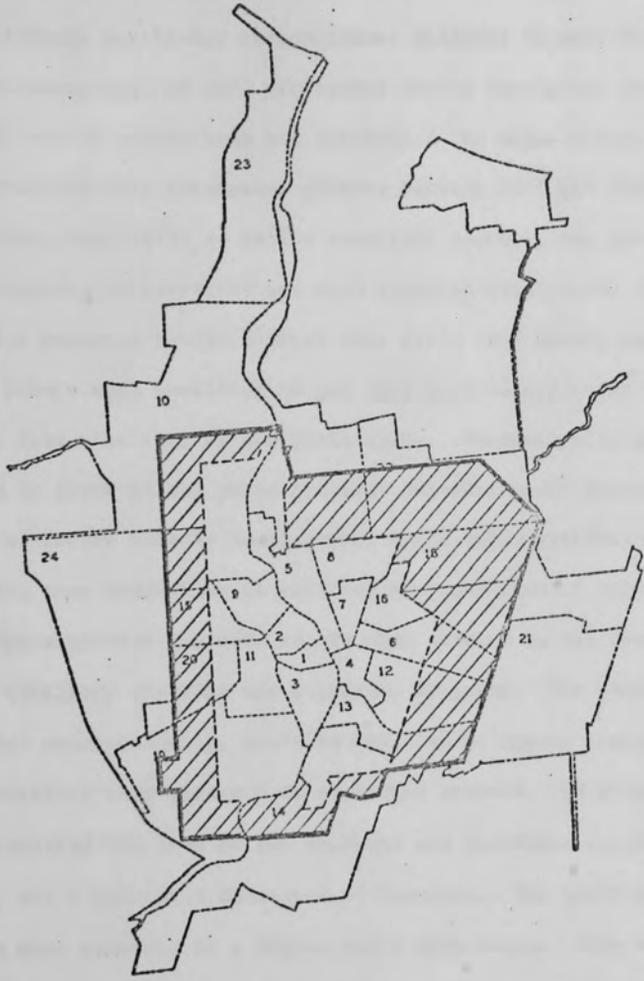
The generous area allotted to the new city in 1834 allowed for future residential and commercial development within its boundaries. As a result, its population density in 1834 was extremely low: about three persons per acre. Since the city added little additional territory during the four decades following 1834, its population density grew nearly as fast as its census count. As population increased, land for new development within the city boundaries inevitably became more scarce. Density, in terms of persons per acre, rose to 5.26 in 1845, 8.54 in 1855, 9.92 in 1865, and 12.14 in 1870. As a consequence, speculators in new residential tracts and individual homebuilders began seeking locations beyond the city outskirts. Comparison of descriptive maps of the city

published in 1851 and 1875 reveals that the city entered an embryonic phase of suburban development during that 24 year interval.

A great deal of this nascent suburbanization took place during the post-Civil War decade, a period of resurgent growth for Rochester following ten years of relative stagnation between 1855 and 1865. Rochester's population grew by only 16 per cent between 1855 and 1865, and by 60 per cent between 1865 and 1875.* In 1872, Mayor A. Carter Wilder remarked on the "constant demand for residences, and ... the new streets laid out and built upon in every available locality."³ In January, 1874, at the height of the campaign for a large scale annexation, a spokesman for the cooperative lot associations responsible for many of the new subdivisions outside the city estimated that the associations had laid out 4,300 suburban lots.⁴

Rather abruptly, in 1874 the city extended its boundaries to encompass an area more than double its former size. The new 5,231 acres included all the suburban tracts partly or fully developed up to that time. The "omnibus" annexation of 1874 moved the city line outward in all directions and restored population density to its 1850-1855 level. It was also the occasion for publication of a new platbook, or "Atlas," in 1875.⁵ The 1875 platbook shows that urban growth had filled and was already overflowing the "old city line." The publishers of the 1875 platbook conveniently located maps of all the new sections of the city at the back of the volume. These maps reveal that, as in 1834, much of the new

*These percentages are not corrected for the "sudden jump" in the city's population due to the 1874 annexation; see Appendix I.



BOUNDARIES AFTER ANNEXATION OF 1874

territory added to the city was still in use as farmland. However, much of it also contained new subdivisions, unevenly developed and unevenly spaced around the city's old perimeter.

Although particular circumstances differed in some respects, the omnibus annexation of 1874 prefigured events during the twentieth century era of annexations and introduced the major themes underlying controversies over annexation efforts between 1901 and 1926. In the years preceding 1874, as in the twentieth century, the attempt to annex large amounts of territory met with repeated resistance. While many suburban property owners desired that their land should come into the city, others were unwilling to pay city real estate taxes levied at a higher rate than that of the rural towns. Annexationist spokesmen argued in favor of the added services the city could provide, and in favor of future orderly development, while oppositionists questioned how long they would have to wait for the extension of city services.

Oppositionist property owners were abetted by the town boards whose territory the city was proposing to annex. The town officials, somewhat understandably, could be expected to oppose losing part of the territory they governed on emotional grounds. On pragmatic grounds, they resisted the loss of the improved and developed sections of their towns, which otherwise consisted of farmland. The built-up suburban tracts were assessed at a higher value than farms. They were therefore a prized addition to a town's total assessed valuation, serving to keep its tax rate low; in effect, the taxpayers in the improved tracts helpfully subsidized the costs of providing services throughout the far-flung rural towns. For example, they helped pay the cost of maintaining long

stretches of modest roads serving isolated farms. By and large, as we shall see, the towns provided few or none of the services needed or eventually desired by these suburban taxpayers. On the other hand, since the towns provided so few services of any type for any of their residents, their annual budgets were miniscule and their tax rates far lower than the city's. Some suburban taxpayers felt that they could tolerate the absence of street lighting, paving, or grading, public water, sewers, quality schools, sidewalks, and the like, as long as their annual tax bills reflected a substantial savings over the sort of taxes paid by their neighbors on the other side of the city line.

Other suburban property owners, however, were vitally interested in the services provided for city residents, and were willing to bear the higher taxes necessary to pay for them. Following decades of delay and false starts, in 1874 the city of Rochester was about to complete construction of a model water system.⁶ Until this time, the residents of Rochester, like those of other American cities, relied on commercial wells and springs or the familiar backyard pump for their supply of domestic water. They also suffered the regular outbreak of epidemic typhus and cholera and the appalling mortality caused by the use of water contaminated by human waste. By 1874, most persons were aware of the relationship between contaminated water and disease; common sense told them that groundwater in any area of concentrated population was likely to be dangerous. In addition to the danger of disease, the absence of a public water supply increased the hazards of fire to property and life. In Rochester in the years preceding the omnibus annexation, therefore,

a substantial number of suburban property owners--individual home owners, lot associations, and speculators--were eager to have the new water mains extended into their tracts.

Nevertheless, the municipal expansion of 1874 was preceded by years of repeated unsuccessful annexation efforts on the part of city officials and suburban lobbyists. A synopsis of annexation efforts in Rochester during the eleven years preceding 1874, culled from news reports in one local newspaper, appears in shorthand form as follows: February 23, 1863, bill to enlarge city introduced; March 3, 1863, bill opposed; February 1, 1865, charter amendment annexes tract for a municipal cemetery; November 1, 1866, bill to expand; March 11, 1869, expansion advocated but no further news develops; January 24, 1870, new bill to expand the city; March 7, 1870, Town of Brighton opposes the bill; November 17, 1871, subdividers are virtually expanding the city; September 10, 1873, city limits are to be extended; November 24, 1873, City Surveyor draws maps for annexation; December 13 and 17, 1873, extension debated; December 24, 1873, Brighton taxpayers are in opposition and Greece taxpayers are doubtful; January 5, 1874, subdividers will meet to organize support; January 7, letter to the editor favors annexation, January 19 and 10, large mass meetings favor annexation; January 23, oppositionists meet to organize resistance; January 30, Rochester Common Council passes annexation ordinance; January 31, Village of Pittsford opposes; February 2, Village of Spencerport opposes; February 18, modified bill is debated before the state legislature; February 25, modified bill is approved by the common council; March 23 and 30, modified bill again

before the legislature; April 24, an annexationist committee is formed to lobby for the bill; April 28, bill passes the legislature; May 19, 1874 the governor signs the bill, making it a local law changing the boundaries of Rochester as defined in the city's charter.⁷ At the stroke of the governor's pen, Rochester's city limits were pushed outward and the city's area more than doubled.

The omnibus annexation of 1874, like that of 1834, marked the beginning of a lengthy period during which the city added relatively little territory. As in 1834, the annexation of 1874 added a substantial amount of undeveloped land providing room for urban growth for many years. Between 1875 and 1891, no further annexations occurred. In 1891, the city annexed nearly a thousand acres, but the greater part of this was land for its new Genesee Valley Park.⁸ In 1895 and 1899, two residential tracts of 55 and 40 acres respectively were added to the city; a larger parcel, totaling 164 acres, was added in 1901. The three latter annexations all were taken from the Town of Brighton on the city's south side. The largely undeveloped 164 acres of 1901--west of South Avenue and south of Elmwood Avenue--were earmarked for state and county eleemosynary institutions which required access to city water and sewer mains.⁹

A little playfulness with statistics shows that the city at the beginning of the twentieth century was again "due" for a doubling of its territory as it had been in 1874. The quarter century preceding 1874 had witnessed an increase in population of 140 per cent, with virtually no gain in city area. Similarly, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the city's population increased by 99 per cent, while its acreage--including land set aside for park use and other public purposes--had

increased by only 12 per cent. It is interesting to note that, as in 1870, Rochester's population density on the eve of its twentieth century era of annexation had again risen above twelve persons per acre; in 1900, the figure stood at 14.19.

During the succeeding twenty-six years, city authorities very nearly accomplished the doubling of Rochester's area which its population growth by 1900 seemed to demand. However, continued growth in population during the era of annexations kept pace with the city's geographic expansion. As a result, population density in the years 1905-1930 remained greater than it had been in 1870--although in one year, following the great west side annexation of 1919, it fell slightly below the level of 1900. In other words, to the degree that population density could be considered an (indirectly) operant variable affecting decisions to expand the city's geographic size, its magnitude throughout the era of annexations seemed to continually demand additions to the city's territory on the scale of 1874.

The participants in the debates over Rochester's proposed annexations during the twentieth century were neither interested in nor aware of arithmetical considerations such as this one. They did, however, often display a subliminal awareness of the city's annexation history. With amazing regularity and frequency annexationists and oppositionists alike referred to the city's "inevitable" expansion. The former, of course, used the theme of inevitability as an argument against postponement of a given annexation; the latter, conceding the inevitability of expansion, argued that annexation of a particular area with which they were concerned would be premature. Contemporaries generally

regarded the expansion of Rochester's boundaries as a necessary and proper means of rationalizing government of the ever-growing urban area. They fully accepted, in principle, a continuation of the process of city growth which had served to maintain a political hegemony over Rochester's urban area during the nineteenth century.

This rapid overview of Rochester's nineteenth century annexation history illustrates that the city's geographic expansion was an erratic companion to urban growth measured by the most common statistic, population. It suggests, moreover, that there was a normative tendency to adjust municipal boundaries in response to increases in population. Of course, the immediate motives for proposing or supporting a given annexation did not stem from the publication of census figures--and certainly not from increases in the density of population within the municipal boundaries, but from the development of new suburban tracts.

In the chapter that follows, we shall see that Rochester's era of annexations was contemporaneous with an era of sustained economic vitality affecting all aspects of the city's life. Among other things, the city's economic health in the years 1900-1929 contributed to a continuous increase in population and a lively rate of outward development, facilitating annexations of new territory. Economic health and the optimism it generated also helped maintain political circumstances conducive to the growth of "Greater Rochester," a theme which will be developed at length in Chapter IV.

Population of Rochester and Population Density, 1820-1900

<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Area (in acres)</u>	<u>Persons/acre</u>
1820	1,502	655.16	2.29
1825	5,273	1,011.71	5.21
1830	9,207	1,237.80	7.44
1835	14,404	4,819.20	2.99
1840	20,191	4,993.00	4.04
1845	26,965	5,122.81	5.26
1850	36,403	5,135.92	7.09
1855	43,877	5,135.92	8.54
1860	48,204	5,135.92	9.39
1865	50,940	5,137.25	9.92
1870	62,386	5,137.25	12.14
1875	81,722	10,368.06	7.88
1880	89,366	10,373.11	8.62
1885	N.A.	-----	----
1890	133,896	10,373.11	12.91
1892	144,834	11,360.57	12.75
1900	162,603	11,456.00	14.19

Sources: United States and New York State Census; W. Earl Weller, "The Expanding Boundaries of Rochester," Rochester Historical Society Publication Fund Series, XIV (1936), p. 181.

NOTES

Chapter I

1. W. Earl Weller, "The Expanding Boundaries of Rochester," Rochester Historical Society Publication Fund Series, XIV (1936), pp. 175-182.

W. Earl Weller, for many years the Director of the Rochester Bureau of Municipal Research, accomplished the painstaking task of delineating and measuring the size of every addition to Rochester's territory between 1817 and 1926. His source materials were the lengthy boundary descriptions contained in successive city charters and charter amendments. Weller found it curious that "rarely is the area of the city considered a factor in its size" but added that, "the area growth of the city, every bit as important as the population growth, is not so easily traced."

2. Basil Hall, Travels in North America in the Years 1827 and 1828 (Edinburgh, 1829), pp. 36-38.
3. Rochester, N.Y., Proceedings of the Common Council 1872-73, p. 9.
4. Rochester Democrat and Chronicle, January 14, 1874.
5. G.M. Hopkins, City Atlas of Rochester, New York (Philadelphia, 1875).
6. Edwin A. Fisher, "History and Engineering of Rochester's Water Supply in its First Century," Proceedings of the Rochester Academy of Science, VII (March, 1932), No. 3; Blake McKelvey, "Water for Rochester," Rochester History, XXXIV (July, 1972), No. 3.
7. Rochester Union and Advertiser, dates cited.
8. Weller, "Expanding Boundaries," p. 179.
9. Managers of the Rochester State Hospital, Eleventh Annual Report (Albany, 1902), p. 15.

Chapter II

The City's Golden Age

In the first three decades of the twentieth century, Rochester participated in the vast movement which completed the transformation of the United States from a dominantly agrarian nation into one in which, by 1930, urban residents comprised a clear majority of the population. This was the city's golden age. Nationally, the combined growth rate of the Census Bureau's "Standard Metropolitan Areas" was 32.6 per cent from 1900 to 1910, 25.2 per cent from 1910 to 1920, and 27 per cent from 1920 to 1930. Meanwhile, the growth rate for non-metropolitan areas dropped from 15 per cent during 1900-10 to figures substantially below 10 per cent during each of the other two decades.¹ In terms of plain numbers, urban population more than doubled in size, from 30 million in 1900 to 69 million in 1930, while the nation's total population grew from 76 million to 123 million in the same period.² These increases in the numbers of city residents were both a cause and an effect of unprecedented prosperity. The net income from manufacturing in the United States in the years 1925-29 was nearly four times as great as it had been in the years 1895-99.³ The growth of an urban, industrial economy was deflected by war and recessions only occasionally during the thirty year period, and to a degree that was mild in comparison to the dislocations of the late nineteenth century and of the 1930s and 40s.

The increasing wealth of the cities, in addition to drawing people toward a better standard of living, raised the cities' tax base,

enabling municipal authorities to accomplish a wide variety of civic projects and to expand public services. In Rochester, private enterprise contributed new factories, office buildings, apartments, and railroad stations, transforming the city skyline. Indeed, the noise of construction and the continual appearance of new buildings served contemporaries in an important way as constant reminders--not to say concrete images--of their city's growth. A spirit of optimism dominated the mood of city residents, in Rochester and elsewhere. Most citizens shared with civic and business leaders the belief that the city's future held the promise of unending progress. This spirit of optimism, the belief that all problems could eventually find solution within the urban community's own resources, is one element of the city's golden age most difficult for the observer of the 1970s to fully comprehend. The seemingly endless succession of crises with which impoverished municipal government has had to contend in modern times has tended to replace the excessive optimism of the earlier period with an excessive cynicism. Some effort of imagination as well as study of quantitative facts is necessary for a full appreciation of the sense of positive accomplishment which prosperity lent to urban life in its decades preceding the Great Depression. The mood of Rochester's leaders and citizens, as much as anything else, accounted for the spirited way they pursued annexation campaigns in this period.

As its boosters in the 1920s liked to point out, Rochester was strategically located in the heart of the nation's industrialized northeast. It not only participated in the prosperity of the urban golden age, but

also closely paralleled it in terms of statistical growth. Its wealth was the product of a combination of the two types of industrial activity which energized different American cities during this period: the expansion of existing factories and the introduction of new city-building industries which drew on twentieth century demands and technologies. Rochester completed a variety of civic projects ranging from sewage treatment facilities to new schools. Its leaders commissioned ambitious plans for the downtown section. If anything, Rochester experienced more than a fair share of the spirit of optimism: perhaps this was the origin of the reputation for "smugness" which some critics eventually gave it. New construction in Rochester during this period, reflected in increases in the city's total assessed real estate valuation and by other statistical measures, was nothing less than phenomenal. The rise in real estate valuation, from \$116 million in 1900 to \$651 million in 1930, represented an enormous increase in the city's taxable resources, even when allowance for dollar inflation is considered (Table II-1).

Between 1900 and 1930, Rochester's population nearly doubled, increasing from 163,000 to 325,000. The growth was fairly steady, with no five year period experiencing a disproportionate amount of growth (Table II-2). The three sources of this growth were foreign immigration, rural-urban migration (or "in-migration"), and natural increase. Population growth remained steady over the thirty-year period despite drops in the number of foreign immigrants after 1914 due to European war and legal restrictions imposed in the 1920s. These checks were compensated for by accelerated desertion of American farms and by

larger natural increases within the city's population. The city's birth rate rose dramatically, from less than 3,000 births in 1900 to more than 6,000 annually in the years 1913-1928.⁴ Improved public health measures curtailed infant and child mortality, while advances in medicine and obstetrics increased life expectancy for adults.

The improvement of public health measures during these years, besides helping to account for population growth, illustrates the increased responsibilities civic authorities were willing to bear during the golden age. A professionally staffed Health Bureau, organized under the Department of Public Safety, replaced the old Board of Health Commissioners in 1901. Until 1933, it was headed by a nationally distinguished Rochester physician, Dr. George W. Goler. Goler forcefully promoted a variety of measures designed to curtail epidemics and improve the health of the city. These included vaccination against smallpox and diphtheria, educational programs to secure better infant care, milk inspection to lessen incidence of babies' intestinal disease, the control of flies, elimination of unsanitary nuisances (privies), forceful quarantine of sick persons, and improvement of hospital care. At the turn of the century, the city maintained a pesthouse¹ named "Hope Hospital," for the confinement of persons with infectious disease. Appropriately it consisted of a few ramshackle wooden structures supplemented by tents and voting booths in times of high demand, and was conveniently located adjacent to the municipal cemetery. By contrast, in 1925 the city cooperated with the University of Rochester in planning an ambitious municipal hospital to be constructed along with a new school of medicine.⁵

The advancing birth rate (which did peak out in the mid-1920s, due perhaps to wider dissemination of contraceptive information) was indirectly the product of optimism. Prosperity facilitated marriage and favorable decisions to accommodate offspring. The proportion of Rochester women over 15 who were married was 52 per cent in 1910, 56 per cent in 1920, and 57 per cent in 1930.⁶ In marriage statistics such as these, even small percentage changes reflect large changes in attitude because the variable is relatively inflexible; a more or less steady proportion of persons remain out of the marriage market despite economic and social trends. Increases in the number of persons applying at the marriage license bureau were a dramatic indication to contemporary observers of the city's prosperity, and the daily press frequently heralded business at the bureau as a barometer of good times. An example is this headline taken from the Rochester Evening Times of December 7, 1910:

STEADY INCREASE IN MARRIAGE LICENSES MARK CITY'S GROWTH.

According to the Times, more licenses had been issued up to December 1, 1910 - 2,175 - than during any previous entire year; the figures were 1,958 for 1909 and 1,765 for 1908.

Population growth itself was, of course, also marked by the press. The Rochester Herald, reporting on newly released U.S. Census figures for 1910, noted exuberantly that the city's population had grown 34.2% since 1900. The latest report of growth was always the occasion for some rhetoric, as in this sample taken from the Herald's story in 1910:

There are no dead centers in Rochester, no slum districts, no congested tenements. The city can grow indefinitely in four directions until it reaches Lake Ontario and has a population several times larger than it is now, and still retain its distinctive feature as one of the most ... convenient /cities/.⁷

Optimistic accounts such as this were not unique for the year 1910, but may be found in the newspapers of virtually any year during the golden age, except when American participation in the European war obscured all other issues. They are, however, particularly noticeable in years such as 1909-12 and the mid-1920s, when the cycle of new building construction demonstrated unusual growth (Table II-3).

Foreign immigrants and their offspring accounted for a substantial portion of the city's growth in this era, despite the war years and quota restrictions imposed in the 1920s. The foreign born in Rochester numbered 41,000 in 1900, 59,000 in 1910, 71,000 in 1920, and 75,000 in 1930; their offspring--excluding those of mixed foreign born and native parentage--numbered 48,000, 57,000, 78,000 and 87,000 in the same years. Compare these numbers with the figures for total city population in Table II-2; nearly half the city's population was foreign born or "first generation" in 1930.

In ^{addition} to natural increase and foreign immigration, another source of Rochester's population growth was the in-migration of "native" Americans from rural areas. The golden age of American cities paralleled a chapter in the decline of the family farm. For the individual city, precise statistical measures of the rural-urban migration are lacking. Rochester's surrounding County of Monroe, despite a long-standing reputation for agricultural productivity, showed only slight population gains outside the city between 1900 and 1930. The trend in the column "Percentage of County Population in City," which is graphically presented on the chart accompanying Table II-2, shows that urbanization of the

county was making steady inroads on its farm population. After 1920, it is true, the proportion of city to county residents drops off, but this is because the city began losing its ability to annex urbanized areas on the outskirts. The result was that increasing numbers of metropolitan residents were counted as part of town populations rather than city population.* Nationally, farm population stood at 32,078,000 in 1910, dropped to 31,614,000 in 1920 and 30,445,000 in 1930.⁸

Migrants from foreign lands and rural America, as well as Rochester's own young people, were attracted to city residence first by economic opportunities, and secondly by a wide variety of features of the urban life, ranging from ordinary municipal services to cultural activities. The quality of life which attached persons to the city was made up of many elements, some of which it would be impractical or inappropriate to deal with at length here. The city's cosmopolitanism, for example, which gave the individual the opportunity and choice to associate with large numbers of similar individuals, cultivate friendships with diverse types, or remain anonymous, was not something restricted to the golden age. What was most distinctive about the golden age was the city's expanding economy which facilitated employment and provided the wherewithal for such things as better housing, expanded cultural and social activities,

*In a sense, municipal annexation could be considered a "fourth" source of the city's population growth. This author prefers, however, to count residents of the districts Rochester was annexing as part of the population growth from the three sources cited. Until 1926, the city steadily expanded its municipal boundaries to take in urbanized as urbanizing areas. In this sense, annexation is not so much an addition of new population as it is a political adjustment to the fact that some of a city's new growth always takes place outside its boundaries.

and improved municipal services directly affecting the way people lived. The expansion of Rochester's economy in this period is easily understood in terms of its many industrial success stories.

A key factor underlying Rochester's wealth was, of course, the continuous growth of the Eastman Kodak Company. Nationally, the burst of urbanization in the early part of the twentieth century was a consequence of a "new phase" of the industrial-commercial revolution which included the appearance of new city-building industries. Just as Detroit grew with the demand for automobiles, Schenectady with electrical apparatus, and Cleveland with refined petroleum, Rochester grew with the expanding markets for photographic apparatus and supplies.⁹ George Eastman launched his enterprise in the 1880s. By 1901, when the present Eastman Kodak Company was formally incorporated in New Jersey, Eastman had finished securing sufficient patents and control of rivals to insure the company's success. Eastman employed 5 men in 1882; in 1898 there were about 1200 employees and in 1908, 6,130. In the latter year the company's annual earnings were \$7.5 million, more than three times what they had been in 1900. Earnings rose to \$9 million in 1910 and \$15.7 million in 1915. By this time employees numbered 8,000, and Kodak had become the city's largest single employer. After 1915, Kodak's announced earnings grew at a reduced rate, reaching \$18.5 million in 1920 and 1925 and \$20.3 million in 1930. No doubt this was largely due to increased expenditures for plant expansion. Kodak Park, the main manufacturing facility (annexed by the city in 1919), grew from 54 acres in 1910 to 235 in 1920 and 408 in 1930. By 1934 Kodak employed 23,000 Rochesterians.¹⁰

Behind these statistics of growth lies one of the most extraordinary success stories in American industrial history. At the turn of the century, some Rochesterians may still have thought of Kodak as "the novelty works on State Street," as it was termed in 1892.¹¹ Within a timespan of less than a generation's duration, Rochester had become "Kodak City."

That nickname never found much acceptance with Rochester's spokesmen, and with some justification. Despite the emergence of Kodak as the dominant industry, Rochester remained a city of diversified industrial interests. At the end of the golden age, literally hundreds of small companies still accounted for a major share of its payrolls. A striking example is provided by the metalworking industry; 85 foundries and machine shops were in operation in 1899, 104 in 1925.¹² In the latter year, metalworking was still among the five largest industries in Rochester. Another major enterprise in Rochester, the clothing and shoe industries, similarly remained fragmented despite some consolidation and attrition among companies during the golden age. More dramatically, Rochester retained its claim as a city of diverse industries in the early part of the twentieth century because of the appearance of new, major manufacturing concerns.

Among these was the North East Electric Company, later renamed and far more familiarly known as Delco. Today, cognoscenti may think of Rochester as one of the industrial satellites of the Detroit automobile industry. Fewer are aware of the fact that Rochester was one location of pioneer efforts to equip automobiles with self-starters and other electrical apparatus. The humble origins of Delco in Rochester began as

late as 1909, when the city directory of that year ran an advertisement for the Rochester Coil Company on North Water Street. As the name suggests, the Rochester Coil Company began business rewinding and re-insulating field and armature coils for the primitive electric motors of the day. Edward A. Halbleib reorganized the business as the North East Electric Company in 1910. The following year North East Electric introduced a self-starter system, mountable in front of an automobile's radiator where the hand-crank was normally located. It was not until 1929 that North East Electric was sold to General Motors. By that time the company employed over 3,000 Rochesterians.¹³

The success of other companies was similarly dependent on the innovative application of new technology. Thus the Pneumatic Railway Signal Company, which was organized in 1897, renamed itself the General Railway Signal Company in 1904 following several years of successful patent acquisition and consolidation. The year before it had perfected a signal device to be operated entirely by electricity. This invention enabled the company to quickly become a world leader in the production of signal devices.¹⁴ The Stromberg-Carlson Telephone Manufacturing Company began in 1895 with five employees as a producer of magneto-type telephone instruments. The development of a dial telephone system by a Rochester inventor became a factor after the turn of the century in complex business maneuverings which resulted in Stromberg-Carlson's becoming a Rochester owned and based firm (the original office and factory had been in Chicago). In subsequent years, not without some reverses, the company became an important manufacturer of equipment for

independent telephone companies.¹⁵ In the 1920s, Stromberg-Carlson was a pioneer in the new radio industry.

Another of the major industries which emerged during the golden age, incorporated as the Pfaudler Company in 1902, supplied industrial customers in every part of the nation with glass lined metal tanks and distillation apparatus.¹⁶ Its customers included food processors, chemical and pharmaceutical manufacturers--industries directly engaged in twentieth century "neotechnics," to use Lewis Mumford's term. The technique of lining steel with glass had been a development associated with the needs of Rochester breweries in the 1880s.

Other Rochester concerns, large and small, which either originated in or experienced unusual growth during the golden age included Todd Protectograph (business machines), T.H. Symington (railroad equipment), Vacuum Oil (refining), Bausch and Lomb (optical equipment), Ritter (dental equipment), Yawman and Erbe (office furniture, voting machines), Taylor (scientific instruments), and Gleason (gear-cutting machinery). The success of these and many other ventures was celebrated frequently and ecstatically in the newspapers, and of course, in pamphlets, essays, advertisements, and speeches written by members of the Chamber of Commerce.

Two such pamphlets--really fact-sheets--appearing in 1916 and 1928 were titled, "Rochester, the City of Varied Industries." A comparison of the two shows that capital investment in Rochester manufacturing grew from \$143 million in 1916 to \$210 million in 1926. Although the pamphlets acknowledge Rochester's status as "world headquarters for photographic goods and supplies," they take pains to prove that Rochester

is not only the home of Eastman Kodak; they describe Rochester as the "largest manufacturer in the world" of enameled steel tanks, filing devices and office systems, soda fountain supplies, optical equipment, thermometers, and high grade buttons, and "one of the largest manufacturers" of clothing, shoes, and foundry and machine shop products. In 1934, by which time the theme had become somewhat tired, Chamber of Commerce Executive Vice-President Roland B. Woodward summarized the reasons businessmen felt such diversification was important:

Diversification of industry is one of Rochester's outstanding attributes. It makes possible an important means of leveling the peaks and valleys of prosperity and depression, resulting in steadier employment and more even purchasing power. It has, on the whole, given Rochester a more stable life than belongs to those communities which are dependent for their welfare upon one or two major industries.¹⁷

Although it profited immensely from the presence of Eastman's industrial giant, Rochester was not, in the eyes of its admiring boosters, a "company town." Rochester could have it both ways: prospering along with its dominant industry while maintaining the sense of independence and security normally enjoyed by cities without a single dominant industry.

As with other aspects of its golden age, Rochester was sharing somewhat disproportionately in a national trend. The twentieth century brought with it multiplying demands for new types of industrial products. Moreover, increased efficiencies resulted in greater industrial productivity. Nationally, the number of factory jobs actually decreased during this era while industrial output multiplied. Particularly after World War I, trade, clerical, and professional occupations began accounting for larger

shares of the non-farm labor force.¹⁸ Increased productivity also meant higher wages. In Rochester the average industrial worker's income was \$600 in 1914, \$1,000 in 1919, and \$1,400 in 1924.^{19*} Higher wages, combined with increased leisure, generated demands for a variety of consumer goods and services, further stimulating business diversification.

Larger numbers of families now had the wherewithal to display a better standard of living in the most dramatic fashion possible, with the purchase of new, substantial houses in the city's expanding residential neighborhoods. Rochester, like all other cities, never eliminated its perpetual shortage of adequate housing. The sheer volume of new construction in the golden age seemed at times, however, to hold the promise of an eventual solution to this chronic problem. Not all the activity in the construction industry, of course, was residential. A

*Thus, the average industrial worker's wage in Rochester increased 133% between 1914 and 1924. In the same ten years the national cost of living index increased about 76%.

The cost of living index is a useful guide to dollar inflation, and will serve the reader in interpreting the degree of real gain contained in the assorted growth statistics both in the tables and text.

Cost of Living Index 1890-99=100

1900	106
1905	115
1910	128
1915	136
1920	286
1925	240

Source: Paul H. Douglas, Real Wages in the United States, 1890-1926 (Boston & N.Y., 1930), p. 60.

large share of it was taken up with the need for new factory and office space. The period witnessed the erection of many impressive new buildings in the downtown section: hotels, banks and office buildings, and retail stores. Expanding population and increased educational standards demanded constant construction of newer, larger school buildings in all parts of the city. In fact, construction of buildings of all types in itself became one of the important growth industries of the golden age. Activities related to the growth of the physical city--the extension of private and public utilities, bridge building, street paving and the like--were also important economic energizers. New residential subdivisions, office towers, schools--even sewer and water main extensions--served contemporaries as symbols of progress and as justification for continued optimism.

The dimensions of Rochester's building boom are eloquently described in the figures for real estate valuation during this period (Table II-1) and for value of new construction during the years 1903-26 as reflected by issuance of building permits (Table II-3). It is interesting to note that the rate of building condemnations shows little change during these years, unlike the present period, when ever-increasing demolition of aged and neglected structures has seriously affected the number of available housing units. The houses that are now being torn down are the ones located in the oldest residential sections of the city; it was these same houses that provided shelter for poorer elements of the city's population during the golden age, when members of the expanding middle class vacated their old neighborhoods. This variegated middle class,

ranging from skilled workers made prosperous in the new industries to minor executives and professional people, chose to live in the new subdivisions being developed in every part of the city's periphery.

The large-scale construction of new homes, which we associate today with development of suburban towns, took place in the city proper or its adjacent outskirts during most of the golden age. Promoters of the new subdivisions took pains to demonstrate that lot purchasers would not be cutting themselves off from city life. For example, the 1913 announcement by a real estate partnership of an ambitious plan to subdivide four large tracts in or near the city included the following message:

The plan is to develop all the tracts into acre plots and to make small settlements on each site. This plan has been adopted around Boston with material success and gives an air of country life with the added feature of being practically within the city confines.²⁰
(emphasis added)

Similarly, an advertisement for the Brighton Terrace subdivision, appearing in 1923, featured a photograph surrounded by these captions:

All Improvements - Street Paving-Sewers-Sidewalks -
Electricity - Gas - Hemlock Water.

The advertisement's copy described Brighton Terrace's easy access to car lines and the future rapid transit system then under construction in the Erie canal bed.²¹ Home buyers in these decades sought a balance between access to city advantages and the questionable delights of a more sylvan setting. Parents preferred sending their children to city schools rather than to schools in the unevenly developed outside districts, where free high school was not available, and where grade schools were often located some distance from the home. The average householder was not eager to maintain

a quarter acre or larger house lot in the days before the widespread introduction of power lawnmowers. He was attached to the idea of using the city's Hemlock Lake water, praised for its reliability and purity, rather than well water or water supplied by the Lake Ontario Water Company, which drew for its source from the same body of water where the city's sewage was discharged. He and his fellows were not, for the most part, as yet ready to abandon the streetcar lines in favor of the dubious privilege of commuting daily to work in an automobile. After World War I, it is true, as vehicle registrations increased geometrically, the automobile began to stimulate development of outlying towns; however, the trend toward "automobile suburbanization" was still in an embryonic stage in the 1920s. In short, a variety of factors served as brakes on the centrifugal dispersion of city population later characteristic of post-World War II suburbanization.

The result was the emergence of a residential pattern which permitted many residents a way of life combining the best features of the city with the advantages sought by modern suburbanites--advantages which the latter often find elusive. The city remained relatively compact, while it afforded people the opportunity to live on attractive, tree-lined streets. Houses were set on small-to-moderate sized lots, combining privacy with the opportunity for some neighborliness. The streetcar system gave easy access to parks, lakeshore resorts, stores, theaters and other cultural attractions. City merchants provided free delivery of foodstuffs and a variety of other consumer goods. The homeowner's sense of safety was reinforced by the nearby presence of professional fire and police forces.

Contrast these conditions, enjoyed by most of the moderately well-to-do during the city's golden age, with the present split-level and shopping-center pattern produced by automobile suburbanization!

The introduction of consumer credit in the real estate market during these years helped encourage people to purchase land for new homes. The Brighton Terrace advertisement just mentioned closed with the message:

Easy Terms - 10 per cent Down
6 Years to Pay the Balance
A Discount for Cash

According to one journalist in 1912, Rochester had numerous land companies "which enable one to enjoy all the ecstasy of the landed proprietor for the infinitesimal expenditure of \$1 down and 50 cents a week."²² The promoters who led these land companies were aggressive merchandizers, as is evidenced by their extensive advertising, which featured some of the earliest use of photographs for such purposes. In 1911, promoters of the Maple Terrace subdivision - as yet wholly undeveloped - staged "open air weddings" on two successive weekends at their tract. The first and second brides received, respectively, \$50 and \$25 in gold as prizes! The promoters successfully drew crowds numbering in the hundreds to view these novel events.²³

Contemporary observers regarded the city's physical growth with great satisfaction. The Rochester Herald, reacting to increases in building activity up to 1907, predicted a city population of over 500,000 by 1940 and 1,000,000 by 1980. The paper noted that literally hundreds of new houses were planned by builders during April of that year. Higher wages, according to the Herald, were enabling many families to buy or

rent homes who used to "double up," and, as the newspaper put it, "even Italians" now want houses."²⁴ Observations of the city's growth sometimes generated descriptive theories to explain its shape or direction. As a feature writer for the Rochester Evening Times explained it, the "Population of A City is Not Unlike Water in Seeking Level." In the article following this banner, he stressed that Rochester's growth was now (1912) taking place in outlying districts and seemed to move in all directions; hills and other barriers acted as effective, but only temporary, obstacles to this human flood.²⁵ A frequent observation found in contemporary news stories explains that new residential growth follows the direction of new industrial locations. Thus Kodak Park drew residential development to the northwest; the Gleason, Stromberg-Carlson, and Todd factories - among others - drew it east; and the large number of industries locating in or near Lincoln Park drew it west and southwest.

The physical evidence of growth sometimes gripped contemporary observers in a manner reminiscent of the boom period of the 1820s and 30s. In pioneer days visitors to Rochester remarked on the mushrooming of white frame structures among the stumps of the semi-cleared forest. An item in the Rochester Post-Express in the spring of 1913, headlined "Tall Pole Taken Down," marks the passing of an unusually large wooden utility pole at the intersection of Atlantic and University Avenues. In nostalgic terms, the reporter ponders the changes taking place in the city. In the old days, he notes, the streets of less developed districts were filled with poles and wires; now these overhead wires are being replaced by modern back-lot or underground wiring in old and new residential districts.

An item in the same newspaper the following year reports extraordinary development of the city's residential southwest:

Improvements in the section have followed one another with . . . incredible rapidity. Arnett Street, now modernly equipped and lined with fine homes, was two years ago little more than a mud drive, lacking all indications of progress. The same is largely true of Rugby Avenue, whose appearance has been magically and completely altered within three years past. The avenue has now no unimproved sites, and is built up with fine residences.

This story's headline is "Vacant Waste Transformed in Year to Finished Street"; an accompanying photograph, depicting a row of bungalows on a broad residential street, is captioned, "A year ago at this spot the boys took pleasure in a deep swimming pool."²⁷

The city's physical growth was graphically displayed for its residents with the issuance of new atlases or plat books in 1910, 1918, and 1926, necessitated by street extensions and the large number of additional buildings.²⁸ A newspaper story which accompanied announcement of the new atlas for 1910 noted the appearance of 20,000 more buildings in that volume than had been shown in its predecessor, issued in 1900. The story also contained these prophetic words:

The mapmakers have anticipated a great growth of Rochester in the next few years and have surveyed large areas outside of the present city lines, a proceeding heretofore never attempted The city officials will make continuous use of these maps during the next year or so when selecting territory for annexation There are many comparisons possible between the business area of ten years ago and that of today. Then it was the custom for all factories to locate as centrally as possible. The new atlas shows that this is no longer the fashion; that factories are dotted all over the city.²⁹

A variety of new buildings in the downtown section balanced the extensive development of the outer wards during this period. Many of the new buildings were built on a monumental scale, and instantly became symbols of the city's vitality. Foremost among these was the Kodak office tower, erected on State Street in 1913. A partial list of other buildings constructed between 1900 and 1917 would include the Memorial Art Gallery, the Rochester hotel, the central YMCA, the Eastman Dental Dispensary, the main portion of the Sibley, Lindsay, and Curr department store, the Chamber of Commerce building, and the New York Central railroad station. A hiatus in new construction occasioned by the war and the brief post-war recession was followed by an unprecedented building boom. Plans for more large-scale buildings followed one after another, helping to swell the annual estimated value of building permits issued for new construction to over \$26 million in 1924. Two famed elements of the Rochester skyline, the Lincoln-Alliance and Genesee Valley Trust buildings--the latter topped with its attention-drawing "wings of progress" sculpture--made their appearance in the 1920s. The impressive size of these two banks for a time seemed to threaten the pre-eminence of the Kodak tower's place in the skyline; whether for this or some more pragmatic reason, George Eastman added several additional stories and a pinnacle roof to his office building. Among other products of the 1920s boom were the Masonic Temple and auditorium on East Main; the Eastman School of Music; the Sibley, Temple, and Rochester Gas and Electric office buildings; the Sagamore and Seneca hotels; the Jewish Young Men's & Women's Association and Knights of Columbus buildings; and the Gannett newspaper building.

The City School District, faced with a burgeoning student population who now more often demanded education beyond the elementary level, found the Free Academy on Fitzhugh Street inadequate. East and West high schools were constructed during the first decade of the century. Still more schools were needed; Washington, Jefferson, and Madison junior high schools appeared in 1915, 1919, and 1922 respectively. Monroe and Benjamin Franklin, built in 1923 and 1930, began as junior high schools but were quickly converted to junior-senior high schools. The number of elementary schools in the city increased from 35 in 1900 to 44 in 1930, and a large number of modern schoolhouses replaced the antiquated and overcrowded structures of the turn of the century. The needs of higher education also contributed to the building boom of the golden age. The University of Rochester constructed its River Campus, School of Medicine and Dentistry, and Strong Hospital during the 1920s. At the same time, the Colgate-Rochester Divinity School established its new campus, also on
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the southern outskirts of the city.

Another aspect of physical growth, one that was concomitant with new construction and with the city's geographical expansion, could be categorized as "the provision of urban services." The city extended and paved streets, laid water and sewer lines, expanded the water supply and built a sewage treatment plant, improved bridges, provided new parks, built new fire and police stations, and even undertook to build a subway system. Private companies extended gas, electric, and telephone service, laid trolley lines, and provided street lights under municipal franchise. All of these improvements and extensions of services were a measure of

urban maturation, as well as a reflection of the city's sheer growth in size. Some of the improvements undertaken by municipal officials, for example the construction of a sewage treatment plant, a municipal hospital, and additional schools, represented obligations which nineteenth century leaders had too long deferred. Encouraged by the city's prosperity, and particularly by its expanding tax base, leaders during the golden age now commissioned many necessary or simply desirable large scale projects. Eventually, the cost of these projects when combined with ever-growing outlays for "local improvements" resulted in substantial increases in the municipal debt. By the mid-20s, the strain on the public treasury of debt service and increased operating expenses was beginning to pose obstacles to further progress.

Between 1900 and 1928, the mileage of improved* streets in the city more than tripled, from 110 to 378. The proportion of unpaved to total street mileage had meanwhile declined from 63 to 26 per cent, despite the frequent addition of unpaved roads in newly annexed districts.³² These figures for the installation of pavement give a fair notion of the rate at which some other services were being extended, where only fragmentary statistics are available. One municipal service which did frequently "precede pavement" was water service; the city's domestic and firefighting water systems had been established in the 1870s. The extension of city water into neighborhoods was largely completed for older sections by the turn of the century and accompanied new development

*As defined by the city engineer, an "improved" street had a least a gravel cover.

thereafter. Water service inevitably led residents to install flush toilets, a step which in turn inevitably necessitated sewer installation; the use of cesspools was a temporary expedient at best in the city, where nearby neighbors if not the Health Bureau soon intervened to halt pollution of the air and soil. The extension of sanitary sewers into all parts of the city was a process well started, but by no means completed, at the dawn of the golden age. Nearly all residential neighborhoods were served by sanitary sewers or had sewer projects underway by World War I. In the 1920s, the extension of sewer service had caught up with the city's growth and sewer pipes were lacking mainly in undeveloped areas or in a few newly annexed districts. The statistics that could be culled from the voluminous records of local improvements have not been assembled. However, a pattern similar to that of sewer extension would probably be observed for the other services, e.g. pavements, sidewalks, and electrical street lights. ³³ Development was not even, but the extensions of different services tended to accompany one another. By the early 1920s, the campaign to provide a full range of urban services in all parts of the city had reached a "mopping up" stage.

While an occasional report in the daily press of some new record number of miles of gas or water mains provided local boosters with a convenient, if unlyrical, yardstick of the city's growth, the progress of large civic projects served as more dramatic indicators of the city's maturation. It is not surprising that the expansion of the park system and the construction of large schools, a reservoir, subway, and other civil engineering projects were sources of civic pride.

Enlargement of the park system during the golden age included doubling of the size of Genesee Valley Park, the donation of over 500 acres by Dr. Henry S. Durand and George Eastman for a lakeshore park (1907), the landscaping of the hillsides around the new Cobbs Hill reservoir (1908), and creation of playing fields and other recreational facilities throughout the city. The total acreage of park and recreational land was approximately doubled during the period--much of it through municipal annexation of outlying land donated by philanthropists. For the first time in the city's history, there were public zoos, a public beach and bathhouse, and publicly sponsored park band concerts. Park authorities were actively promoting use of their facilities, an endeavor in which they were enormously successful.

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Recreational use of river and lake-side lands was made possible by the city's decision, in 1904, to halt pollution of the Genesee River. Before 1887 the city had had no general sewer plan; drainage areas in different parts of the city were not interconnected, and untreated sewage was allowed to drain in the direction of the nearest body of water. In the downtown section, sewer mains terminated at the rockface in the river gorge below the main falls (the openings can still be seen). On the city's east side, the land contour sent a great deal of sewage draining toward Thomas Creek, ultimately toward Irondequoit Bay. Protests and claims for damages from eastside landowners first spurred the Common Council and Executive Board to action in 1886, and a plan for an eastside trunk sewer was commissioned in 1887. This trunk sewer was constructed in the 1890s--at a large expense which eastside property owners paid for

through a forty year special assessment--but did not stop the pollution of the Genesee. Instead, the new trunk sewer diverted the sewage which formerly found its way into Irondequoit Bay into the river gorge, there to add its total to the raw, untreated sewage already contributed to the river by downtown sewer mains and numerous outlet sewers along the west bank.

If the volume of water carried by the Genesee was greater, this arrangement would perhaps have endured indefinitely. In the summer months, however, the Genesee is a sluggish stream, and during warm weather at the turn of the century citizens feared approaching the river gorge or the beaches near the mouth of the Genesee. In 1904, Mayor James G. Cutler commissioned an eminent sanitary engineer, Emil Kuichling, to develop a plan for the relief of this problem. The Kuichling plan, presented in 1907, called for the partial purification of the city's sewage by screening and settling and its discharge through an outfall pipe extending some distance into Lake Ontario. The great cost of this plan, combined with objections from quarreling experts who differed over details of design, served to delay start of the project until 1915. A great interceptor sewer then had to be constructed to connect all the existing large and small outlet sewers which emptied into the river and carry their discharge to the new Irondequoit sewage disposal plant, which began operating in 1917.

The interceptor sewer and the Irondequoit plant were civil engineering on a grand scale. As the expansion of the water works system in 1907 had done, and as the construction of a subway through the city in the abandoned

Eric Canal bed in the 1920s would do, the sewer project drew national attention as a bold solution to a difficult municipal problem.³⁶ Other projects, already alluded to, which also required initiative and the outlay of substantial sums of money, included construction of large school buildings, the municipal hospital, and park expansion. In addition, the city established a public library system in 1912 and built a terminal at the lake port in 1922.³⁷

Contemporary observers, impressed by the rate of private and public improvements, at times pressed beyond a realistic affirmation of their city's progress. A small book written by Edward Hungerford, a local booster, appeared in 1923 with the title Rochester: A Good Town to Live In. According to its author, the Eastman Theater is not simply an excellent addition to the city's cultural life, it is "the finest theater in all the land; if not, indeed, in all creation."³⁸ Similarly, Hungerford exaggerates more than a little in declaring Rochester "(a) city which has no tenements, and practically no apartment houses, but ... homes everywhere set in broad open lawns."³⁹

Despite great material progress on all sides, Rochester was not without serious problems during the golden age. Perhaps the most striking of these problems was the chronic shortage of low cost housing. To be sure, the expanding middle class benefitted as never before from the extensive residential development characterized by "broad open lawns." The city's spokesmen doggedly maintained Rochester's claim to be a "city of homes" - a slogan which, because of numerous revelations of inadequate housing for the working poor, was becoming shopworn. In fact, Rochester

had claimed a pre-eminent place, in terms of home ownership and the ratio of dwellings to families, among cities of its size and type before the depression of the 1890s (44% of houses owner-occupied; 24,000 dwellings to 27,000 families).⁴⁰ These inspiring statistics had, however, ignored the plight of thousands of recent immigrants and other poor whose families occupied tenements, houses converted from single-family use, or tiny "workingman's cottages" packed densely on numerous side streets. The burgeoning population of the 1890s and the golden age continually outstripped the rate at which new houses went up, and few of the new single-family, detached houses of which city boosters were so proud were economically suited for the lower classes. Successive surveys by the Health Bureau, the Chamber of Commerce, the YMCA, the Unitarian Church, and the fire marshal revealed that slums existed in Rochester and that they were growing in size. Simple appeals to the building industry that they exert more energy toward providing low rent housing accomplished nothing. The well-intentioned efforts of the Health Bureau to implement and maintain strict building codes exacerbated the problem, as they discouraged the construction of multiple-unit dwellings. Many years would pass before Rochesterians began to overcome the ideological barriers to publicly subsidized housing.

Another serious problem encountered during the golden age was the ever-increasing cost of municipal services (Table II-1). The annual cost of local government (including schools) more than doubled between 1900 and 1915; by 1930, the annual outlay was more than triple the 1915 level. It is not difficult to account for these increases. The level

of services provided by the city increased along with the city's size and with the maturing sense of public obligation. The city school district, which was fiscally dependent on the city, serves as an illustration. Besides modernizing its physical plant and making classroom space available for a growing student population, the school district assumed new responsibilities in the areas of vocational training, student counseling and medical inspection, and overall improvement of its educational program. The annual expenses of the city schools were less than \$700,000 in the year 1900. In 1910 they were over one million dollars, in 1920 close to four million dollars, and in 1930 about nine and a half million dollars. School expenses accounted for the largest share of the increase in the city's budget during the thirty year period.

Increased school expenses were not the only factor, however, accounting for the growing tax levy. Ordinary services - fire and police protection, pavement repair, health and building inspection, refuse collection - became more expensive as municipal salaries rose and citizens continually expected greater sophistication on the part of the city's housekeepers. In 1900, annual streetlighting expenses were less than a quarter of a million dollars; by 1930, streetlighting was costing the city close to three quarters of a million dollars. Larger areas, after all, had to be illuminated - and with modern, brighter equipment sufficiently ornamental to suit the neighborhoods which had petitioned
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for it.

If the city had attempted to finance all the physical improvements necessary during the golden age from general tax revenues, it could not have accomplished as many large-scale projects as it did. A system of special assessments for local improvements, inherited from the nineteenth century, enabled the city to charge local property owners for such items as sidewalks, pavements, sewers, repairs, and street lighting installation. By defining as many services as possible as local improvements, authorities were able to keep much of the rising cost of public services from being reflected in the general tax rate. Thus, even pavement repairs, street sprinkling, and sewer flushing were at times deemed appropriate justifications for special assessments. The great east side trunk sewer, already mentioned, and later the west side trunk sewer, were defined as local improvements for the purpose of levying special assessments on entire halves of the city.

Despite the use of this device, and a constantly expanding total valuation, city administrations were compelled to raise the tax rate from time to time. One reason tax raises were necessary, aside from the rising cost of services, was because of the limitations of debit financing. Separate columns in Table II-1 show the five-fold increase in municipal debt between 1900 and 1930 - an increase for which local improvements contributed a substantial share. Most of the balance represents expenditures on expensive capital improvements for the water system, the sewer plant, parks, schools, and the subway. By the mid-20s, fully one-sixth of the city's tax revenues went for interest payments on the debt. Put another way, the cost of debt service in 1925 was almost as great as municipal expenses for all purposes had been in 1900.

While the increases in the tax rate of the golden age may seem paltry by today's standards, they struck many contemporaries as indications of profligacy. In 1922 the United States Census Bureau reported that Rochester's per capita cost of government was higher than that of any other city with a population greater than 30,000. Information like this supplied opponents of the city's long-standing Republican dynasty with valuable political ammunition, and caused leaders and sympathizers of the machine some embarrassment. The Republican machine, which had provided a continuity of leadership facilitating decisions for expensive civic improvements, began to disintegrate after the deaths of its two principle leaders in 1923. Still, Rochester did not elect a Democratic administration until the beginning of the New Deal. In the meantime, the enormous municipal debt and high tax rate served as restraints on decisions to launch new projects. The Rochester Democrat and Chronicle, though sympathetic towards the Republicans who picked up the fallen mantle of Mayor Hiram Edgerton and "Boss" George Aldridge, nevertheless featured a series of news reports and editorials on the rising cost of government in the fall and winter of 1923-24. ⁴⁴ The editors judiciously refrained from fixing specific blame for the state of municipal finances, pointing out that the rising cost of services in Rochester paralleled similar developments on the state and federal level and in other cities. The newspaper avoided drawing conclusions from the facts it presented, while at the same time it deplored the burdens that taxpayers were being called upon to bear. However, the item titled "That Extra Mortgage"

in the "Facts for Taxpayers" series, describing the municipal debt as an additional ten per cent "mortgage" on every piece of real estate in the city, must have led many taxpayers to conclude that the city should refrain from making further capital improvements. ⁴⁵ The administrations that succeeded Edgerton's in 1923 avoided commitments to build a central library, further expand the water supply, or invest enough money in the subway to insure its success.

Objectively speaking, the financial crisis of the 1920s was not as severe as some critics argued. The municipal debt, stated as a proportion of total valuation, was not much higher in 1925 than it had been in 1900. As a percentage of total valuation, the debt had stood at 7.9% in 1900, and 9.7% in 1925. Considering the many added services and improvements that the city financed, increases in the tax rate were entirely reasonable. Some of the difficulty lay in the fact that politicians were not willing to raise the tax rate far enough; in the years 1921-24, the city borrowed an average of \$2,000,000 a year to meet current expenses--a deficit resulting from an unwillingness to raise the tax rate. ⁴⁶ Exercising the normal reluctance of politicians to raise taxes, city leaders during the golden age sought to minimize rate increases while they looked for ways to maximize borrowing power. Since a state constitutional provision limited the city's legal debt to 10% of its total valuation, the city's administrations at times tried to expand valuation by annexing territory or tried to have the debt for local improvements exempted from the legal total by legislative fiat. In retrospect, it seems that municipal authorities

should have begun raising the tax rate sooner than they did. Timely tax increases would have headed off the debt crisis of the mid-20s. Additional public projects in the 1920s would have been possible, and administrations in the first years of the Depression would not have inherited an enormous municipal debt--over \$52,000,000 in 1930--which prevented them from commissioning further projects as a means to relieve local unemployment.

As it was, money was not available to pay for some useful projects proposed in the 1920s. The construction of a central library was deferred until Depression years, when federal subsidies became available. Acquisition of a larger upland watershed was also delayed, so that the city was eventually compelled to resort to Lake Ontario for additional water. The Rochester subway never became more than a half-finished dream--an expensive one at that. Projected interconnections of the line with the street railway system were never built, nor was the line extended to its logical suburban terminals. The city's golden age entered its twilight period in the 1920s. Comprehensive plans for the downtown section, featuring plazas over the Genesee River, union railroad stations, great public buildings, and new boulevards paralleling Main Street were first promulgated in 1904 and were common features of public discussion thereafter; yet in 1924 the city gratefully accepted George Eastman's offer of the use of the old Kimball tobacco factory (present site of the War Memorial auditorium) as a temporary shelter for city offices. The many renderings of awesome civic plazas supplied by different architects during the golden age today are poignant evidence that the city's reach exceeded its grasp.

Like the nation as a whole, Rochester did not seize all the opportunities made available by the prosperity of the early twentieth century. Its citizens were unwilling to contribute a sufficient share of their new wealth in taxes to pay for all the projects which far-seeing planners said would add to the public good. To some degree, the national impulse to limit public spending contributed to high unemployment in the late 1920s--a chronic condition which was a significant feature of the economy's weakness in 1929. Of course, Rochester's unwillingness to pay for a civic plaza did not cause the Great Depression. The blithe way its optimistic spokesmen tended to pass over continued wretchedness in living conditions of its working poor while celebrating the city's material progress did, however, accurately reflect the national tendency to ignore how unevenly new wealth was being distributed. The fact that maldistribution of income and unemployment had badly weakened consumer buying power was a major reason capitalists found themselves overinvested and overextended in 1929;

Despite its shortcomings, the city's golden age witnessed unprecedented progress in many areas. A majority of the city's growing number of residents were able to take advantage of modern conveniences and live in pleasant neighborhoods. The city provided all its citizens with educational and recreational opportunities undreamed of in the nineteenth century. The scourge of epidemics was largely banished, due to improved sanitation, medical knowledge, and vigorous public health measures. Pavement everywhere replaced rutted dirt streets which had been swamps in wet weather and sources of dust storms in dry weather.

In many respects, the city seemed to continually become a more comfortable place in which to live. No small part of the sense of comfort which Rochesterians enjoyed was a feeling of security provided by the regular appearance of new industries and the constant expansion of old ones. It would have been easy to agree with George Eastman in 1924 that Rochester ". . . is well started on its way toward being the finest city in the world to live in and bring up families. . . ."

City Valuation, Tax Levy and Rate, and Indebtedness, 1900-30
(nearest thousands)

Year	Assessors' Valuation	Tax Levy	Tax Rate ¹	Local Improve-ments Debt	Total Debt	Population
1900	\$115,948,000	\$ 2,285,000	\$16.80 to 19.83 ²	\$ 500,000	\$ 9,112,000	163,000
1905	126,940,000	2,397,000	17.02 to 18.93 ²	1,500,000	9,980,000	182,000
1910	165,409,000	3,191,000	19.32	2,300,000	10,619,000	218,000
1915	226,200,000	4,458,000	19.73	4,700,000	19,530,000	248,000
1920	297,505,000	6,908,000	23.242	5,226,000	25,513,000	296,000
1925	471,479,000	13,490,000	28.62	9,492,000	45,815,000	317,000
1930	650,784,000	16,751,000	25.76	12,095,000	52,462,000	325,000

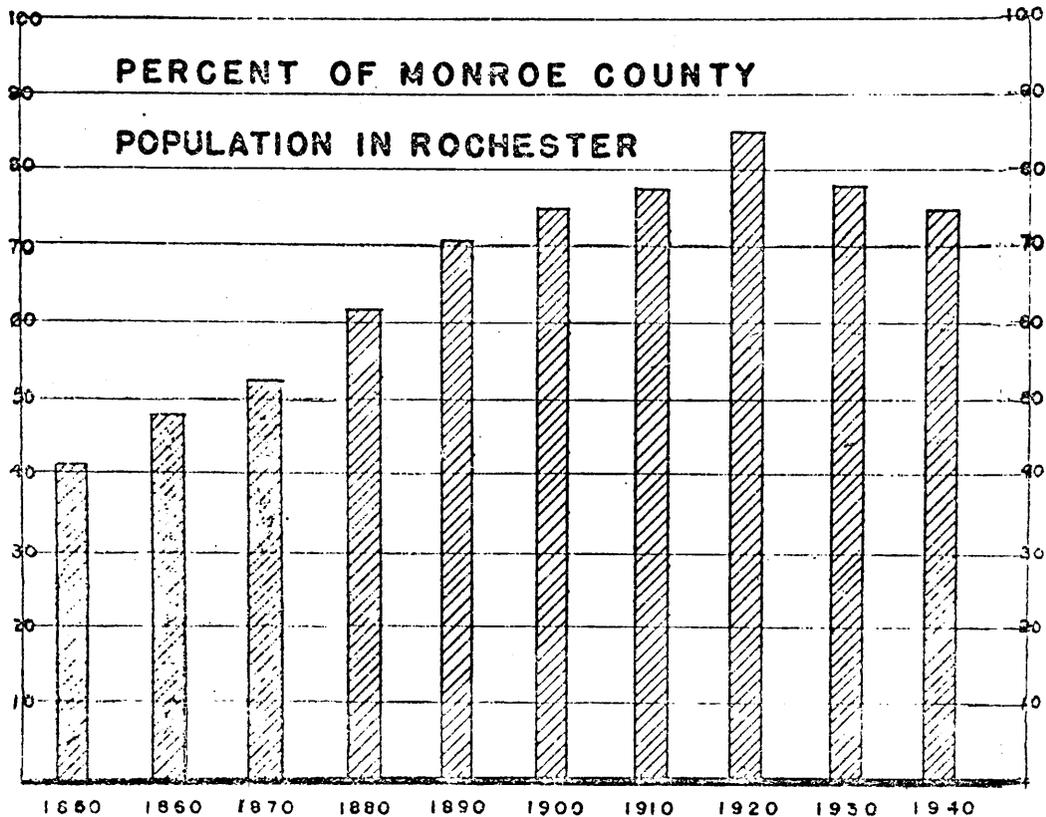
¹per \$1,000 assessed valuation. ²Residents of newer wards paid lower rates.

Sources: Annual Report of the Comptroller, 1900-1930; U.S. and N.Y. State Census; City Directories.

Population of Rochester and Monroe County, 1900-1930

<u>Year</u>	<u>Rochester</u>	<u>Monroe County</u>	<u>Percentage of County Population in City</u>	<u>City Population Density, Persons/acre</u>
1900	162,608	217,854	74.6	14.19
1905	181,666	239,434	75.9	15.63
1910	218,149	283,212	77	16.77
1915	248,465	319,310	77.8	15.99
1920	295,750	352,034	84	13.9
1925	316,786	392,174	80.8	14.36
1930	325,019	419,955	77.4	14.61

SOURCES: U.S. and N.Y. State Census.



SOURCE: City Planning Commission, A Study of Population Growth of Rochester and Monroe County (Report No. I, December, 1947).

Table II-3

New Construction, 1903-1926

<u>Year</u>	<u>New Buildings Authorized</u>	<u>Estimated Value</u> (nearest thousand)	<u>Condemnations</u>
1903	550	\$ 1,695,000	27
1904	812	3,924,000	17
1905	NA	NA	NA
1906	1375	5,446,000	13
1907	1420	5,912,000	11
1908	1302	4,508,000	20
1909	2315	8,489,000	35
1910	2466	9,181,000	34
1911	2476	8,322,000	30
1912	2558	10,768,000	14
1913	2036	8,497,000	18
1914	1958	7,826,000	35
1915	2244	8,315,000	23
1916	2046	8,316,000	21
1917	1412	5,408,000	19
1918	705	1,339,000	23
1919	2193	8,030,000	17
1920	1993	8,179,000	6
1921	3618	14,452,000	18
1922	4469	15,239,000	5
1923	5651	20,107,000	22
1924	5193	26,326,000	28
1925	4835	28,103,000*	NA
1926	4207	18,388,000	NA

* includes value of remodeling - approx. \$3,000,000.

NOTE: Construction of private garages tended to inflate figures for number of new buildings in the 1920s.

SOURCE: Annual Report of the Bureau of Buildings 1903-26.

Author is Fire Marshall 1910-20 and Superintendent of Buildings 1921-26.

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33. Preliminary work with masses of the City of Rochester's manuscript records, now in dead storage, has only recently been undertaken by the City Historian's Office. About half of the more than 1,000 special assessment ledgers for local improvements have been cleaned, catalogued and placed in some order. The author bases his estimates on personal experience in this archival work.
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Chapter III

The Annexation of Brighton Village

Among the things that demonstrated Rochester's extraordinary vitality in the early decades of the twentieth century were the city's numerous additions to its territory. Rochester's annexation of Brighton Village in 1905 was the true beginning of the city's twentieth century era of annexations, as well as the city's first significant annexation victory during the period. (The 164 acres annexed from the Town of Brighton in 1901, it will be recalled, were undeveloped and intended for the expansion of state and county hospitals.) Like later successful annexations, it was not a victory quickly or easily won. During the controversy, in late 1904 and early 1905, the various parties on the question engaged in lively debate. Many of the issues which were relevant to the larger history of Rochester's expansion in the twentieth century surfaced during the Brighton Village episode.

In the years 1900-1910, Rochester's population increased by over a third, from 163,000 to 218,000. The need for additional housing and new industrial plants was rapidly consuming available space inside the city borders and stimulating the development of outlying districts. The prosperity of the Kodak Company caused George Eastman to speed construction of his new manufacturing complex outside the city's borders at Kodak Park. A variety of other industrial concerns settled in Lincoln Park in the town of Gates, just west of the city line. The Gleason

Works, on University Avenue not far from Brighton Village, occupied the last large industrial site available on the city's east side.¹

An examination of platbooks from these years shows that nearly all the city's open land was occupied by expanding factories or was already subdivided into residential districts. Since 1874, when the city more than doubled its size in a single omnibus annexation, not much territory had been added. Urban growth was outpacing the speed with which city administrations extended the corporate borders, despite small additions made in several years between 1891 and 1901. The new factories, while serving as magnets to draw people to the city, competed for space with residential subdivisions. As the supply of land for housing inside the city dwindled, real estate promoters turned to areas outside the city. Both Kodak and Lincoln Parks began attracting housing developments as soon as the new factories were completed. On the east side, wealthy residents had been constructing houses along East Avenue for a number of years. Following their example, developers had provided housing for the middle class to the north and south of the Avenue. By the turn of the century, one of the major thrusts of new residential construction was to the southeast, and it had already spread beyond the southeastern city border.²

On the other side of the Culver Road border was Brighton Village, a small hamlet in the northeastern part of the Town of Brighton which had secured incorporation in 1885.³ At the time of annexation, it exhibited a mixture of urban and rural characteristics. Commuters or shoppers from the village could travel on the city's streetcar system via the

Park Avenue line which terminated at the village center (the intersection of East Avenue with North and South Avenues, later renamed Winton Road North and Winton Road South). The New York Central Railroad, bisecting the village from east to west, served the village with separate passenger and freight stations. Within the village's business district were numerous stores, four small hotels, a post office, fire house, and school. Scattered outside the center, the village's industries consisted of a carriage factory, an agricultural chemical plant, and a cold storage warehouse. Many residences were clustered near the village center. Outside the center were a number of fair-sized farms, but these were interspersed with three unevenly developed residential subdivisions: "Barnum Terrace," "Brighton Heights," and the less imaginatively named "M.D. Phillips Subdivision." Although the 1902 platbook shows the subdivisions with the streets in and the building lots numbered, perhaps only a fourth of the lots as yet contained houses. The western end of the village adjoining the city was composed of large parcels held by individuals, some of whom had constructed estate-sized residences on part of their land. Like hundreds of incorporated villages in New York then and now, Brighton was square-shaped and quite compact, measuring about 750 acres.

Although its population numbered only 888 in 1900 (up from 705 in 1890), the village was clearly due for some dramatic increases in population associated with urbanization. By 1905 the erstwhile village (now the city's Twenty-first Ward) contained 1,147 persons, and in 1910 its population was 1,582. These increases were the product of population

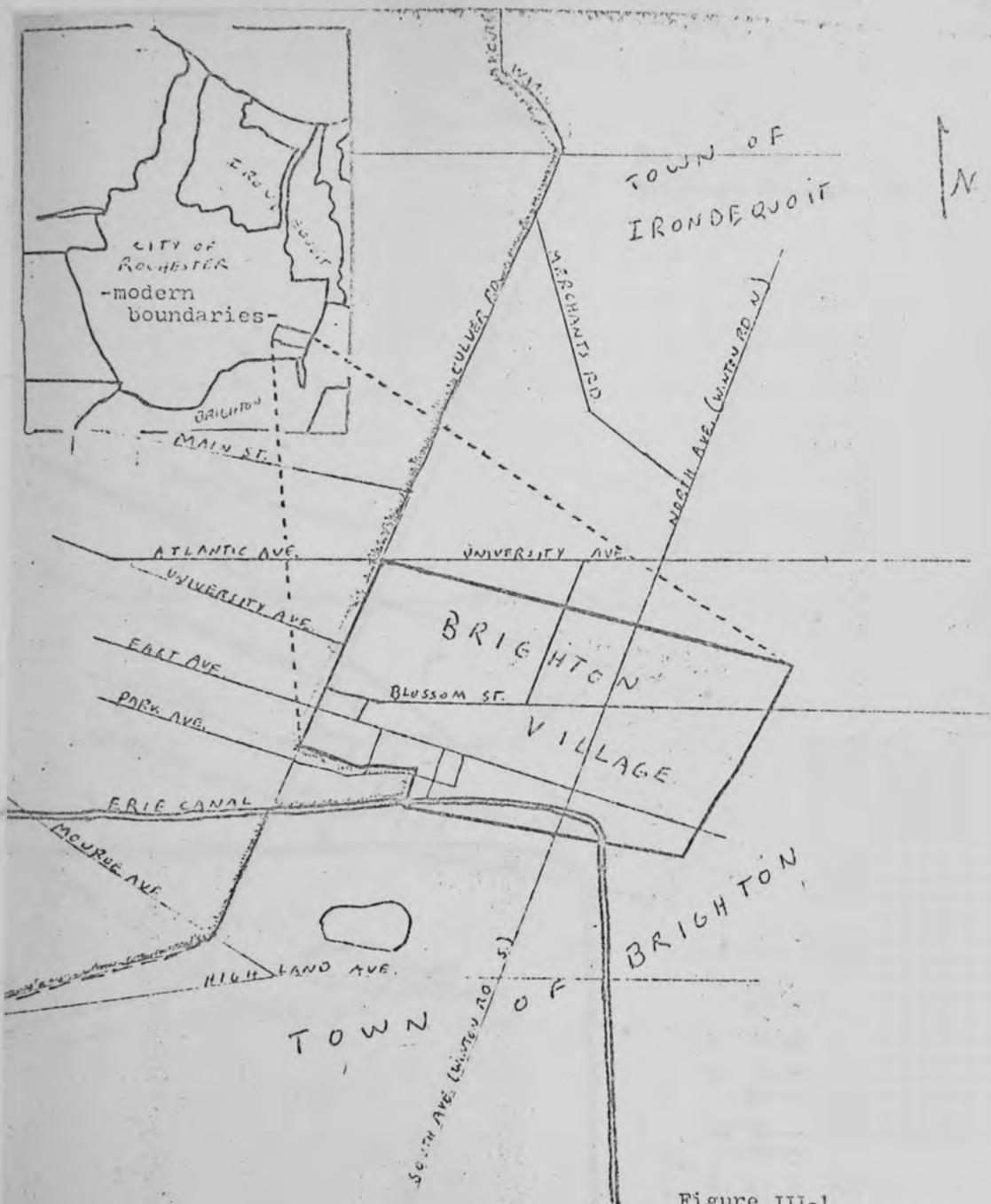
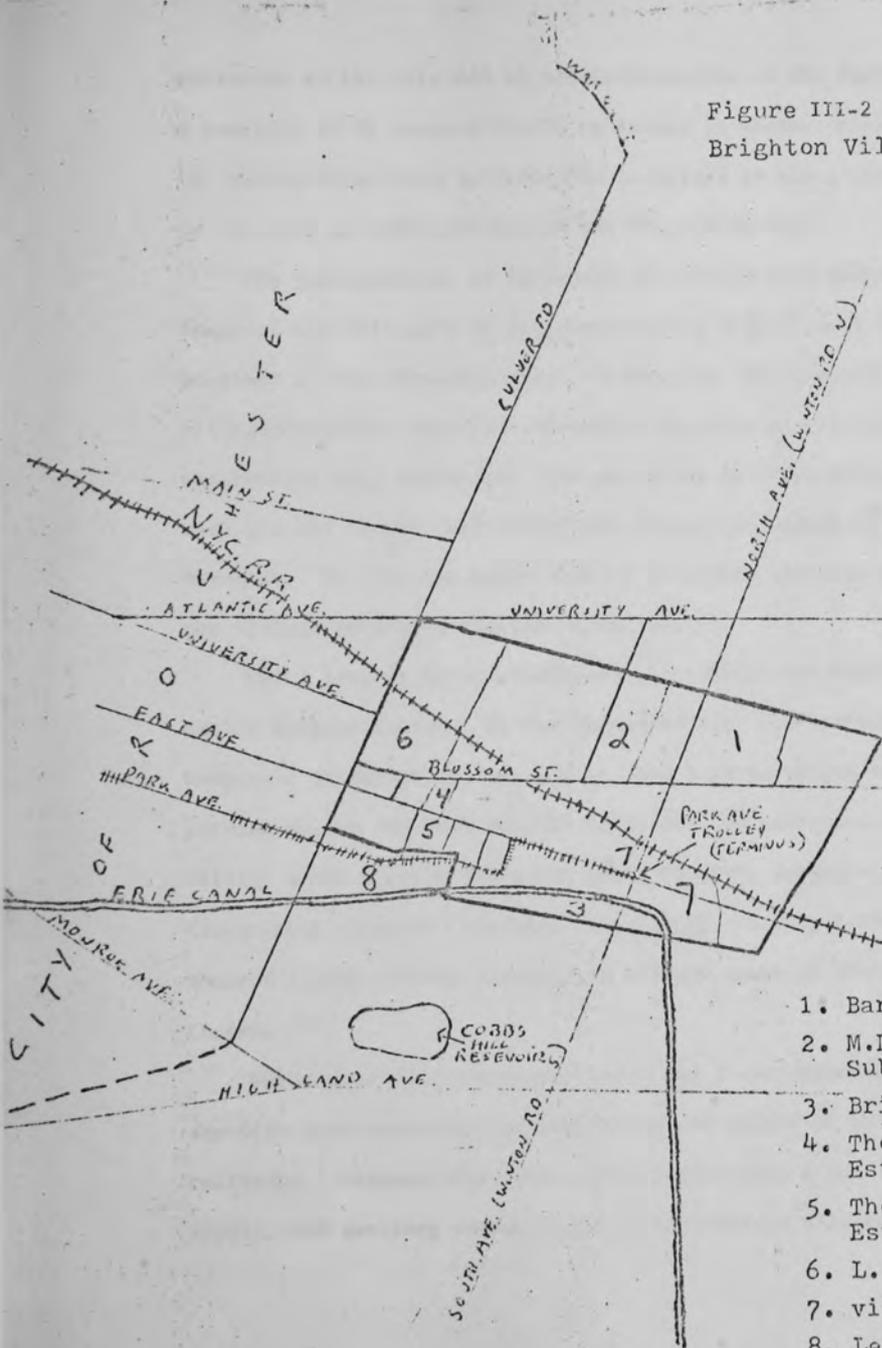


Figure III-1
 Brighton Village
 adjacent to Culver Road
 boundary in 1905.
 Inset illustrates size
 and position of Village
 in relation to modern
 city.

Figure III-2
Brighton Village, 1905



1. Barnum Terrace
2. M.D. Phillips Subdivision
3. Brighton Heights
4. Thomas E. Blossom Estate
5. Thomas Leighton Estate
6. L. D. Ely Estate
7. village center
8. Leighton Lea Tract (City of Rochester)

pressures in the city and of new in-migration to the Rochester area: a sampling of 86 persons listed as living in various neighborhoods of the Twenty-first Ward in 1905-1906 contained 19 names that were listed in the 1895 or 1900 editions of the City Directory.

The juxtaposition of farms and subdivisions is perhaps the clearest image of the village's de facto transition from a rural hamlet to a province of the advancing city. Inevitably, the growing number of village residents required additional services of the type enjoyed by neighboring city residents. The provision of these urban services became the key factor influencing the timing and extent of the annexation movement. In 1904 the mixed quality of public services available to the village reflected its semi-urban status.

Owing largely to its location, the village had extensive access to public transportation. It was connected with the Rochester Railway Company's streetcar system, and enjoyed both passenger and freight service on the New York Central Railroad. In addition, in 1904 the village would soon be served by the Rochester, Syracuse, & Eastern (interurban electric) Railway. The R,S,&E Railway Company had already secured a right-of-way through the village south of the New York Central tracks.

While good public transportation was a convenience, other urban services were necessary for the health and safety of the village residents. Adequate fire and police protection, a safe community water supply, and sanitary sewers could be included in this category. In 1904,

the village met the first three needs with methods carried over from its days as a rural hamlet. Villagers had felt for some time that their volunteer fire company, small constabulary, and private wells were sufficient. However, the growing urban character of the village by 1904 made these methods unsatisfactory. Fire and police protection promised to become a larger burden on village taxpayers. The water provided by the Brighton wells, needed especially to fight fires, was limited in quantity. For this reason village officials granted a franchise to the newly formed Lake Ontario Water Company, which had laid pipes in the main streets of the village but had not yet begun supplying water at the time of annexation.

The most pressing public need at the time was for the installation of sewers. The Brighton cesspools grew more obnoxious in direct proportion to the increase in population, and threatened the quality of well-water. Living in an era when the threat of epidemics in an urban community was not remote, village residents (unlike some modern suburbanites) considered sewers a necessity rather than a convenience. By 1904 many villagers, including town health officer Dr. William Brown, felt that a sewer project should no longer be postponed.

Unlike the case of some other public services, the village could not expect private enterprise to provide the large capital outlays needed to build a sewer system. This was one expensive part of an urban plant that had to be publicly financed. The residents and taxpayers of Brighton Village could choose among a variety of options to solve the problem of paying for urban services. Some services, such as transportation

or the supplying of gas and electricity, were "automatically" the responsibility of private enterprise, minimally controlled by municipal franchise. Other services, for example streetlighting, were traditionally the offspring of a mixture of private enterprise, which erected streetlights and operated them, and public initiative, which requested streetlights and paid for them. A water supply could be either a municipal enterprise (as it was in the City of Rochester) or a privately-financed system operated under franchise. Still other services, for example sewers, education, fire and police protection, health inspection and building regulation, were clearly public responsibilities. These distinctions among the private and public sectors were relevant to the decision on annexation. Eventually, village taxpayers would be called upon to express preferences for annexation or continued independence. Annexation would mean allowing the city to assume responsibility for both the public sector and regulation of private business. If independence were maintained, the village could rely heavily on private business to provide needed services while minimizing expenditures in the public sector. A few years later, during events preceding the city's annexation of the Village of Charlotte, an entire range of questions about the provision of services--through independent means, through village or through city franchise--would become a central theme in the annexation debate.

In 1904 and early 1905, considerations about policy regarding the entire range of public services took second place to the immediate need

for sewers in Brighton Village. Would the village build an independent sewer system, or, through annexation to the city, seek connection with the existing Rochester system? The decisive factors affecting this question were costs and geography. The construction of a sewer system serving the village, whether made with Brighton pipes or Rochester pipes, represented a large capital expenditure of public funds. One (probably low) estimate, provided by proponents of an independent system, set the cost at \$50,000--an amount more than eight times the village's normal annual budget, or, an amount which would cost taxpayers about \$385 apiece if raised through special assessment. This level of expenditure could more easily be absorbed by the larger fiscal resources of the city. Annexation would mean that villagers would immediately begin paying higher city tax rates; on the other hand there was some question whether or not village rates would begin catching up with the city's once Brighton began assuming responsibility for sewers and other needed services. At first glance topographical location would seem to dictate the logic of extending city sewers, but, in fact, simple proximity was deceptive. To the degree that Brighton sewerage could be drained directly into the city's eastside trunk sewer, the cost of an independent sewage treatment plant could be obviated. However, only the western end of the village drained naturally towards the city sewers. The eastern end of the village, containing the majority of the population, drained naturally to the east and north. Advocates of an independent system reasonably questioned how long they would wait before the city overcame this topographical and engineering difficulty, if annexation occurred.

While the sewer question affected the debate over annexation in the village as a whole, it was particularly important to the property owners of the west end. By and large, these were men of substance with large landholdings held for speculative purposes or for construction of their own estate-sized residences. If they could persuade the city to extend its sewers the short distance into their section they could quickly enjoy sewer service for a small assessment charge. These property owners, many of whom were not village residents, could see little purpose in the idea, or the cost, of an autonomous system when their needs could so easily be met by the city.

The chain of events which led to the annexation of Brighton Village was initiated by this relatively small group of men owning land between Blossom Road and East Avenue in the west end of the village. Late in November, 1904, a half-dozen such men presented a petition to the Rochester Common Council's Committee on Streets and Sewers. The petitioners identified themselves at the beginning of the document as "We, the undersigned property owners of the city of Rochester . . . also owning property adjacent thereto in the village of Brighton. . . ." They implored the Committee to authorize construction of a sewer line laid through Blossom Road and connected to the city's eastside trunk sewer. They wanted the work performed by Rochester's Department of Public Works. In return, they promised payment of their share of the costs through assessment and further pledged that they would not oppose any city plan to annex
7
the area in the future.

The Blossom Road property owners made their promises easily. Their offer to pay a share of the cost of sewer construction was gratuitous. After all, the special assessment of benefitting property owners to compensate a city for the capital costs of this type of service was an inflexible rule. The promise not to oppose annexation was reasonable and prudent. The owners of lots between East Avenue and Blossom Road were not planning to live there to escape city taxes, but to own houses as fashionable as those built earlier on East Avenue nearer the city center. Their wealth left them unconcerned over the difference between city and village tax rates. Further, their assurance given the Rochester aldermen not to stand in the way of future annexation was a political idea designed to overcome the city's reluctance to extend municipal services beyond its borders.

The petition was not very extraordinary. Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the city's normal procedure for determining the timing of needed improvements (e.g. sewers, grading, pavements, sidewalks, or repairs) was to await requests from affected property owners. The common council, after favorably judging the necessity for a given improvement and the degree of consensus among the property owners, would then pass an ordinance authorizing the work and directing the city assessors to make a special assessment on the property of those who would benefit from the improvement.

What did make the Blossom Road petition somewhat different in the eyes of the Streets and Sewers Committee was the fact that it requested improvements outside the city border. The aldermen knew that if they

granted the petitioners' request, their action would raise important questions about the city's policy toward adjoining suburbs. Traditionally, the city had refused extension of services into adjacent territory, and had sound reasons for maintaining this policy. In the first place, the provision of city services to non-residents raised problems in the areas of fair payment and the mechanics of taxation. Moreover, the extension of services to outsiders could interfere with Rochester's ability to compel annexation of territory.

"Compel" might be too strong a term, since the city did not have absolute power to annex territory in 1904 or at any other time. Although city administrations would initiate annexation plans, or at times disavow intention of forcing annexation on unwilling suburbanites, neither they, nor the officials of suburban municipalities, nor even suburban residents voting in referendum possessed the de jure power to determine whether annexation would in fact take place. Before the addition of a "popular sovereignty" amendment to the State Constitution in 1927, the determination of municipal boundaries in New York was entirely in the hands of the state legislature. Municipalities were the legal creation of the legislature, which, with the approval of the governor, could amend their charters, enlarge or decrease their territory, or declare them non-existent at will. These sweeping powers of the legislature remained essentially intact despite attempts at "home rule" reform made during the convention that wrote the Fourth Constitution in 1894. Article 12; Section 2 of that document provided mechanisms for the legislature to consult with affected city governments in passing bills for "special

city laws"-- ". . . those laws which relate to a single city, or to less than all the cities of a class." However, the legislature retained the right, with the governor's approval, to create special city laws despite a city's objections simply by passing bills for such laws twice. 8

The annexation of territory to a city required the passage of a special city law. Although the power to annex territory thus appeared entirely in the hands of the state government, in practice the initiative was left to the concerned city government. Rochester's annexation bills were written in the office of the city's corporation counsel, who then transmitted them via local members of the Assembly and Senate to the legislature's joint Cities Committee. It was necessary for the city administration to enlist the cooperation of the local legislators, who would sponsor passage of annexation bills before the Cities Committee and on the floor of the legislative chambers. Members of the legislature from other parts of the state tended to vote automatically for annexation bills which carried the endorsements of the Cities Committee and the local delegation. If suburbanites or others opposed to a given change in municipal boundaries wished to lobby against an annexation bill, they sent spokesmen to attend meetings of the Cities Committee or approached their state legislator (whose district could, of course, enclose a major portion of the city as well as suburban and rural territory).

From time to time some local legislators acted to block or modify city annexation efforts because of pressure from suburban residents, but normally they cooperated with the city administration. One reason was that the constituencies of the Monroe County delegation during this

period contained a far greater number of city residents than townspeople. A far more important reason for the legislators' cooperation was the respect they held for Rochester's powerful Republican boss, George W. Aldridge.

For 39 years, 1883-1922, the taciturn George Aldridge was a major force in Rochester politics, and during the latter half of this period he was an important power broker in state Republican circles as well. Aldridge spent much of his time at Albany, leaving the day-to-day matters of governing Rochester in the hands of men like Mayor James G. Cutler and Cutler's hand-picked successor Hiram H. Edgerton. Although Aldridge rarely intervened directly in the mundane civic affairs of Rochester, his power in Albany helped to assure that bills written by the political managers of Rochester would be favorably received by the normally Republican legislative leadership. The Rochester press of the time used a characteristic phrase to describe proposals for special city laws that had the Aldridge stamp of approval. The newspapers referred to such proposals as "administration measures," and considered the label adequate⁹ explanation for belief that a proposal would easily pass the legislature.

In short, the City of Rochester generally possessed actual power to initiate and to force annexation regardless of the wishes of affected residents. Nevertheless, the city administration was usually not heavy-handed in its policy toward suburbs it wished to take in. A frequent theme heard throughout the era of annexations was the expressed reluctance of city officials to annex people against their will. Part of this was the wish to appear democratic, to placate opposition, and to maintain the

cooperation of the local legislators. Another reason city leaders wanted to refrain from dragging unwilling suburbanites into their sphere probably reflected the normal scruples of politicians against adding antagonistic elements to their electorate. Still another, and a very important factor weakening the city's aggressiveness was a universal belief in the inevitability of city growth. This belief permeated discussion of annexation until well after the city had stopped adding significant territory to its borders. The "sooner-or-later" attitude permitted city leaders to back away from suburban opposition in the belief that a more favorable atmosphere in the future would make annexation of a given suburban area easier.

Whatever the reasons were, the city's usual reluctance to assume an imperialistic posture towards its neighbors contributed to a suburban faith that the city could not force annexation, and that petitions, referendums, and lobbyists could be effective weapons against annexation. From time to time, as we shall see, there were variations in the set of political circumstances which normally enabled the city administration to annex territory "at will." On occasion city leaders would encounter the determined opposition of a local legislator--as happened in 1905 when the city attempted to add a section of the Town of Brighton to its Brighton Village annexation bill--or the state Republican machine would temporarily lose its hold on the legislature. Particularly in the 1920s, after the Aldridge machine began disintegrating with factionalism, political pressure from suburban oppositionists expressed through the means cited in fact did become effective.

Returning to the episode of the Blossom Road petition, the problem facing the Streets and Sewers Committeemen was whether the extension of city sewers into Brighton Village would compromise the city's ability to persuade the villagers to join the city at some future time. The enjoyment of urban services was the only telling inducement for suburbanites to acquiesce to annexation; they were never swayed by the prospect of full-fledged citizenship in the city they called their own, and were only negatively influenced by the prospect of city taxes. These facts were not lost on Rochester's political leaders at the turn of the century.

One newspaperman covering the Streets and Sewers Committee meeting, who typically did not identify his source, reported that:

The suggestion was urged that as the city has now become entirely built up to the Culver Road the boundaries should be extended immediately to include all this territory.¹⁰

For the time being, the Streets and Sewers Committee postponed official action on the petition, but few doubted what its decision would be. The withholding of a sewer connection was, in this case, the city's chief power to overcome suburban reluctance to be annexed. A few days later, the pro-annexationist Rochester Herald made a clear analysis of the situation:

Officials have practically determined to grant no permits for connections with the east side trunk sewer to residents outside the city. They see that all these outside property owners require to give them the full benefit of city advantages without paying city taxes is a sewer connection.

The can get water from the pipes of the private water company. They can make a private contract with the Rochester Gas and Electric Company to extend its service out East Avenue beyond the city line. If desired, they could construct their own pavements. As a matter of fact, this territory has now the benefit of fire protection, inasmuch as the city department has never refused to respond to put out a fire in a dwelling adjacent to the

city line. If sewer connections are given, these property owners, who will erect some of the finest residences on East Avenue, will pay very little for the privileges of city conveniences, compared with the taxpayers residing in the city.

The newspaper's allusion to free city fire service enjoyed by nearby suburbanites is a concrete illustration of the unfair situation which resulted when developing suburban areas remained outside the city. The residents of these areas, who were in fact residents of metropolitan Rochester, remained in a parasitical relationship to the city that made "suburban life" a possibility. Even when, in the future, highly developed suburbs provided themselves with the entire range of municipal services that were the subjects of debate during the era of annexations, they would leave the city taxpayers the task of paying the extra costs of high urban concentration.

In 1904, however, the issue of "privileged suburbs" lay in the future. As long as the expectation remained intact that developing suburban areas would eventually be annexed, there was little need to be alarmed over temporary injustices in the city-suburban relationship. Instead, participants in a debate over the annexation of a specific area such as Brighton Village limited themselves to questioning pragmatic details. Was the time right for city expansion? How much territory was the city justified in taking? The opponents of Brighton's annexation did not anticipate permanent independence, nor did they explore the long-range implications of providing sewers and other services autonomously.

The petition from the Blossom Road lot owners had little chance of success, but it did raise the question of whether the city was ready

to move its boundary eastward. Following a nameless alderman's suggestion on November 22, that "the boundaries should be extended immediately" there was a three week period of uncertainty and speculation. The first report that the city was contemplating an annexation was published in the daily press on December 2. ¹² On that day Brighton health officer Dr. William Brown called on the Mayor of Rochester, James G. Cutler, to ask about annexation rumors. Cutler "stated frankly the question of annexing a portion of Brighton was under consideration, but that the matter had not been taken up for final determination." Brown replied that he was worried if "any considerable portion" of the village were taken by the city, the village would not have enough taxable property left to support its government. The mayor blandly assured Brown not to worry about this possibility, but would commit himself to no details. In a conversation with a newspaper reporter, Cutler said there was no plan to force annexation against the wishes of village authorities. Later, city officials would disavow any intention to force annexation on ¹³ affected residents.

In the days that followed, there was speculation that the city would announce intention to annex the west end of the village. The annexation of the west end was seen as a first step toward the village's inevitable elimination. As the Herald reported on December 8, "Ultimately it is admitted, the fate of Brighton Village is to be swallowed up in the municipality of Rochester." Although village officials probably subscribed to this nearly universal doctrine, they seemed determined to delay elimination of their jobs as long as possible. Nor would they

supinely watch the city take the highly assessed west end of the village, the loss of which would necessitate raising tax rates for the remainder.*

So it was that the lines of debate within the village on the annexation question were drawn even before the city's exact intentions were known.

The debate was joined by a growing party of annexationists, led by the west enders, and a similarly growing party of oppositionists led by the village officials. Village Clerk Morrill J. Caley seized the initiative for the oppositionists with the issuance of a circular on December 9.

Caley's arguments against annexation were detailed and explicit. His circular was practically a catalogue of urban services with accompanying reasons for maintaining village independence. The village had an "ample" street lighting system; it would be "but a short time" before gas and electricity was provided. The water supplied by the Ontario Company was as "good and wholesome" as Hemlock water. Caley was proud (and no doubt politically wise) to state that the village had "as sturdy a volunteer fire company as can be found anywhere." With the addition of the new water mains and some new equipment the village would be as well protected from fire as the city. "The one great need of our village at the present time is a good sewerage system," but the village could build one at less expense than could the city. "If the village is annexed, the city Board of Health can order us to fill up our wells and put in Hemlock water, and also order a sewer, and we must pay whatever tax is assessed." On the other hand,

. . . if we wish a sewer we can let the contract to the

*Ironically, a substantial part of the reason for the land's high value was its proximity to the city.

lowest bidder; our own business men would see that the work was properly done. Hence there would be no unnecessary expense of inspectors and other drafters, as would undoubtedly occur if it were a city job.

Finally, there was the matter of taxation. The combined Village and Brighton School tax rates were \$10.50 per \$1,000 assessed valuation. The city tax rate, which paid City School District costs, was \$17.00 per \$1,000. Additionally, the city rate was (theoretically) levied on full valuation, while Brighton Village used 50% valuation. Caley ended his circular by urging residents to approve an upcoming (December 14) referendum to purchase fire equipment. Aside from reinforcing village independence, a favorable vote on this referendum would mean less danger from fire and lower fire insurance rates. The added fire equipment would raise village tax rates \$1.30 per \$1,000.¹⁴

Five days after Caley's circular appeared, the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle published a reply written by one James F. LeClare, "who owns property in Brighton and in Rochester." LeClare began his statement with a caution that low village tax rates would not last. "In the immediate future" village tax payers will have to pay not only \$1,200 for new hose, but also expenses for hose carts, storing, cleaning and drying the hose.

When all this is done, we shall have only a volunteer fire department, with no modern equipment volunteers . . . cannot be expected to be on duty day and night. All these things are taken into consideration by the Board of Underwriters in fixing insurance rates for the village.

LeClare stated the case for sewers in no uncertain terms:

This need is felt more than ever now that we have a water system, with more water used and no means of drainage. A

cesspool may answer for a farmhouse in the country where there is plenty of room to get to windward of it, but in a village it is an abomination. I have no doubt the ground in some sections of the village is so saturated from cesspools and outhouses as to make the water in adjacent wells decidedly "doubtful." If this continues a few years longer, with a growing population, the laws of health and of self-preservation, instead of "the mandate of Rochester," will compel the closing of the wells and outhouses.

"A thorough system of sewers" means a great deal. It means a large outlet sewer, thoroughly constructed under the direction of competent engineers, sufficiently large to be adequate for the growing needs of the village for many years to come. . . . These questions are serious ones, and must be met in the near future, or our village will get the reputation of being badly drained and unhealthy, which will seriously affect the value of its real estate.

Following his commentary on the need for sewers, LeClare returned to the question of taxes. He believed that the west end of the village, "comprising about one-fourth of the assessed valuation of the village," could not be held back from joining the city. If the Brighton tax base were reduced by this amount, and increased expenses were added to the village budget, then the tax rate "will soar up well towards that of Rochester in its downtown section, probably fully as high as that of the outlying wards of Rochester." The result would be a "homemade sewer" and high taxes; "then indeed the lot of those working hard on a small income, to pay for their homes, will be a hard one."

LeClare also countered Caley's insinuations that a city job would involve graft and unnecessary expenses:

I have property both in Rochester and Brighton, have paid taxes and improvements in both places many years, and would as soon take my chances in this respect with the Common Council of Rochester as with the Village Board of Brighton.

According to LeClare, the advantages to be gained by annexation were numerous. In addition to providing sound fire protection and good

sewers, the City of Rochester could:

. . . give us the most thorough police protection, of which we are sadly in need at present; . . . abolish nuisances which now exist, and prevent the establishment of more; . . . regulate the erection of buildings, and prevent structures which are fire traps and a constant menace to surrounding property; . . . regulate our draining and plumbing methods; . . . give us the most prompt mail service, with delivery by carrier; . . . see that our street improvements are properly made, and the line and grade of walks permanently established, so one laying is not obliged to raise, lower, or move them at the caprice of every incoming village board; . . . run our affairs on thorough business principles, so that we shall no longer be looked upon as an easy mark by every outside corporation looking for a graft.*

Moreover, LeClare felt that annexation was in line with "the march of Progress." He predicted that trying to run a "'one-horse' municipal government" on land adjacent to a large, progressive, and growing city was doomed to failure. If Brighton Village did not join the city whole-sale, its fate would be to be annexed piecemeal.

The only unpleasant thing I can see about annexation is that we should probably lose our genial Village Board. While we should all, no doubt, shed some tears at the parting with them in that capacity, I beg to remind them that there will be new and higher positions opening before them if Brighton should become a new ward of Rochester, for the voters are yet here. Who knows?--perhaps our worthy president may yet become mayor of "Greater Rochester."¹⁵

A few days after the publication of LeClare's statement, another annexationist spokesman, attorney James S. Havens, also spoke strongly in favor of "of annexing at least a part of the town of Brighton to the city." Havens had been one of the petitioners seeking authorization for construction of a Blossom Road sewer from the Streets and Sewers Committee;

*The "graft" which LeClare implied the village board had indulged in allegedly was paid by the R, S, & E Railway Company to secure its right-of-way. Whatever the facts of the matter were, some village property owners were unhappy at the prospect of seeing the interurban electric routed through their land; the rumors of "graft" which circulated through the village in 1904 remained rumors.

his residence was on East Avenue just beyond the city line. Havens' remarks are of interest since they expressed the point of view of the west end property owners. Like LeClare, Havens felt that village tax rates would soon rise to the level of the city's. In return for paying these higher tax rates, property owners of the west end would continue to be shortchanged in services:

The reason I want to get into the city is that all the taxes I pay to the village of Brighton bring me practically nothing in return. I receive no police protection, and very little fire protection. If my house should catch fire, the chances are I should have to depend on the courtesy of the Rochester fire department to put it out. . . .16

Along with other residents of Brighton Village, on December 14 Havens had the opportunity to vote on a village spending issue which tested both confidence in the Brighton volunteer fire company, and, indirectly, opinion on the annexation question. This was the referendum which Morrill J. Caley supported in his circular of a week before. The proposal before the voters was for the purchase of \$1,200 worth of fire hose. Although seemingly a small matter, the leaders of both the annexationist and oppositionist parties viewed the referendum as relative to Brighton's future independence. Support for improving the village fire equipment implied support for maintaining the independent fire company, which in turn could be interpreted as a popular (if less than decisive) mandate for maintaining village independence. The fire hose referendum was the first in a series of votes taken in the upcoming weeks which tested opinion on the annexation issue.

If either side on the annexation issue had anticipated a strong expression of voter sentiment on December 14, they were disappointed.

Out of a potential electorate of over 150, only fifty-eight persons came to the polls. The proposal to purchase new fire hose was carried by a vote of thirty-five to twenty-one. The implications for annexation were ambiguous: while oppositionists claimed that the favorable result showed a lack of desire to join the city, annexationists claimed that the small turnout reflected support for their cause.¹⁷

Meanwhile, the Streets and Sewers Committee had taken official action on the Blossom Road petition. Not at all suprisingly, it rejected the petitioners' request for the special sewer permit and instead recommended to the common council that the western end of Brighton Village should be annexed immediately.¹⁸ The common council and the city administration were receptive to this suggestion. While delaying for the time being formal announcements or official action, the city quietly began laying plans for a limited annexation. On December 17, newspapers reported that the city Corporation Counsel's office was drafting an annexation bill.¹⁹

At the same time the Brighton Village Board was laying plans in great haste for an independent sewer system. Early in December the board engaged a Buffalo engineer to survey the village's sewer problem and by January 3, 1905, they were ready to announce progress. The engineer had supplied a maximum cost estimate of \$60,000. The board said they would seek voter approval of the plan in a referendum on January 18 along with authorization for borrowing the necessary funds on thirty-year village bonds to pay for it.²⁰

While the village board had been making ready for its independent sewer proposal, the village annexationists had not been idle. At a village meeting held the evening of the same day the sewer plans were published, the annexationist group presented a petition "representing something like \$325,000" of the village's \$800,000 assessed valuation. At the moment the petition was presented, the board was discussing details of the fire hose purchase with the assembled citizens. The petitioners objected to spending any village money if annexation was imminent. The petitioners said they planned to attend the next meeting of the Rochester Common Council, on January 10, to request annexation of the village. In reaction, Village Board President Andrew Miller promised that the people would have a say in the matter.

One oppositionist at the meeting argued that the "certain prominent taxpayers" who had signed the petition did not speak for the village. He pointed out that fifty percent of Brighton taxpayers were non-residents, and, "as some of the petitioners were of that category the petition did not carry as much weight as would first appear." On the other hand, newspaper accounts of the meeting reported that the annexationists
21
appeared to have more strength than was supposed.

The reason for this apparent growth in the annexationist party, according to a lengthy analysis in the Herald, was that west end leaders of the annexation movement were picking up supporters in the eastern end of the village as well. It had become common knowledge that the city was laying plans to take the valuable western end. At this point few people were certain if the city would, or could force the issue over the

objections of the Village Board, or even, for that matter, what the exact boundaries of the territory were that would be described in the bill the Corporation Counsel was preparing. It was known, however, that the property owners of the west end would eagerly agree to an annexation with or without the rest of the village. Their wishes could not be ignored. Annexationists in the eastern end reasoned that if the west end were lost, the village tax base would be so reduced that they would be faced with high taxes and no increase in services. It would therefore be better to have the entire village join the city, and receive in return for higher city tax rates the prospect of city services. Also, the annexationists argued that the village needed a new police station, fire house, and school. They estimated that the cost of these new buildings would be \$150,000. If the village joined the city as a whole, the fiscal resources of Rochester, drawn on tens of thousands of taxpayers, could absorb this large capital outlay with relative ease.

22

At the January 10 common council meeting, Mayor Cutler proposed that the city should annex the whole of Brighton Village. With this sudden move, Cutler neutralized the fear of piecemeal annexation and effectively torpedoed the village board's independent sewer plan. The oppositionist village officials, in laying plans for continued independence, he hoped that village residents would support the independent sewer as a means for holding the west end. Their reasoning was remarkably similar to that of the eastern annexationists, who also held out the fear of losing the west end, but who had arrived at an opposite conclusion on what to do about it.

By proposing wholesale annexation, Cutler outmaneuvered the Brighton officials. The mayor probably had mixed motives. On the one hand, he had succeeded in appearing open-handed; the Herald described his annexation proposal as "the fairer plan." He had also put the long-range interests of greater Rochester ahead of short-range economic considerations. The city would get no bargain in taking the whole of Brighton Village: the anticipated tax revenues from the added territory might not adequately compensate the city--in the short run--for the cost of providing a full range of services throughout the area. Recognition of this fact was one of the reasons observers had anticipated only a limited annexation proposal.

23

The immediate effect of Cutler's action was to throw confusion into the camp of the Brighton oppositionists. On January 16, two days before the village referendum on an independent sewer and six days after the mayor had proposed annexation of the entire village, officials of the village conferred in open meeting with the Board of the Town of Brighton.* The result, according to the Herald, was "one of the most incoherent meetings ever held":

Some there were who favored the annexation of the entire town, some wanted the village annexed, others a strip near the city line; there were those who favored sewers, those who opposed sewers, and those who wanted to get square with the village board for allowing the Rochester, Syracuse & Eastern Railway Company a franchise to run through the village.

*The village lay within the Town of Brighton, but since it was incorporated, was governed independently. Dr. William Brown, a leading oppositionist, was health officer of the Town, but resided in the village. Andrew Miller, President of the Village Board, was also town clerk, and thus a member of the Town Board.

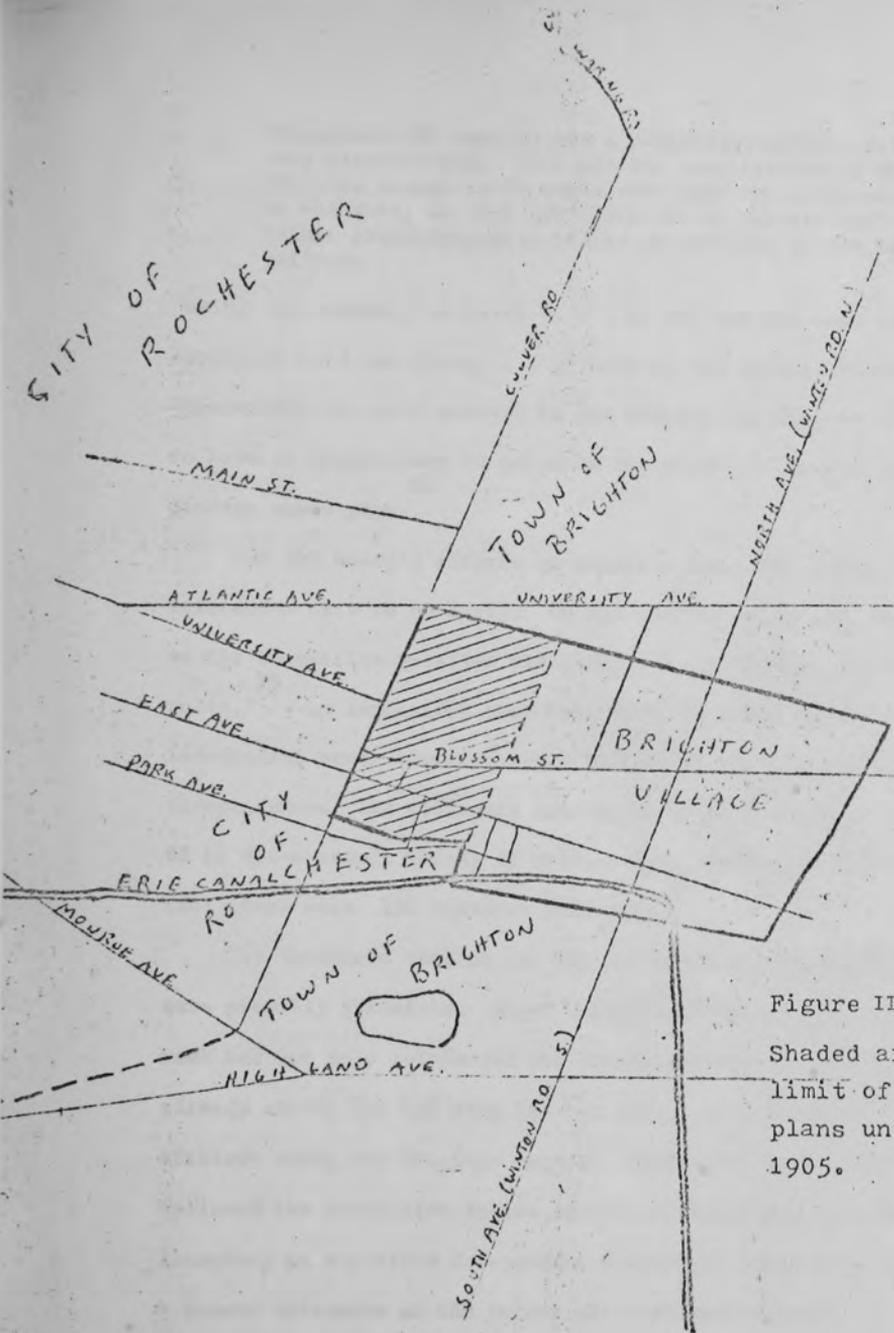


Figure III-3

Shaded area indicates limit of city annexation plans until January 10, 1905.

Altogether the meeting was a delightful affair, filled with many pleasantries. Each man was very certain of what he wanted, but none seemed to be quite sure just why he wanted it; or, if he was sure, he took good care not to mention his reasons, but rather grandiloquently talked of the good of the town or the village.

During the meeting, at which ". . . he who had the most vital . . . vocal apparatus held the floor. . . ," nothing was definitely accomplished. Apparently, the main purpose of the meeting was for the village board to have an opportunity to persuade the voters to support their independent sewer plan.²⁴

But the board's efforts to secure a favorable outcome on the sewer referendum were to no avail. On the morning of January 18, "both parties on the annexation question had sleighs ready to take the voters to the polls,"²⁵ --an indication that both sides felt the determination of the independent sewer question would be crucial to the village's future independence. The villagers soundly defeated the measure by a vote of 85 to 45--a result which, if nothing else, indicated they were not apathetic; there were 130 resident taxpayers.²⁶

The immediate reasons for the defeat of the independent sewer plan were probably threefold. Mayor Cutler's announcement of the previous week had not only reinforced the annexationists' position for reasons already cited, but had also had the effect of creating a "wait and see" attitude among the Brighton voters. Especially those voters who had not followed the annexation debate closely probably saw little point in launching an expensive independent project if annexation were imminent. A second influence on the voters was a statement issued by the city tax

assessors a few days before the referendum. In the statement, the city assessors assured village taxpayers that in the event of annexation assessment would not be raised. ". . . with the exception of a few inequalities which ought to be rectified." Moreover, they said that village farmlands would be assessed as farmland, ". . . and in some cases this would mean lowering of assessments." ²⁷ If the voters had feared Village Clerk Galey's implied warning that the city tax authorities would double village assessments from half to full valuation, they were no doubt reassured to the degree they placed credit in the Rochester assessors' statement.

A third reason for the defeat of the sewer referendum may have reflected the normal reluctance of some voters to approve of any new government expenditure. There exists a mathematically constant proportion of any electorate who are automatically negative on spending issues. In the history of Rochester's twentieth century annexations, these people, who were governed by the same impulse to minimize taxes that most often motivated the opponents of annexation, sometimes contributed to the delay of providing needed suburban services with the ironic result that annexation of a given area was hastened.

The village board, seeing that the independent sewer issue was lost, called for another referendum to be held on January 26. This time the voters would express their wishes on the larger question of joining the city. Before the referendum could take place, however, the village annexationists fought with the board about extending voting privileges to persons unable to vote in the last referendum. The board wanted to

limit voting to resident taxpayers, the same group who had defeated the independent sewer. The annexationists wished to broaden the electorate to include non-taxpaying residents and non-resident taxpayers; the former group had no reason to fear city taxes, and the latter group included the absentee landowners who had initiated the movement toward annexation in the first place. The annexationists successfully persuaded the board to permit all taxpayers of the village to vote, but not non-taxpaying residents.²⁸

The outcome of the village referendum on annexation was so close that differing newspaper reports initially granted victory to both sides. On January 27, the Democrat and Chronicle reported that annexation was defeated 84 to 83. On the same day, the Herald announced that "The annexationists won squarely . . ." by a vote of 84 to 83. Although the Herald distorted the truth in describing the victory as decisive,²⁹ its report of a favorable outcome on the referendum proved correct. In the wake of the referendum, annexationist leaders claimed that the vote would have been more decisively positive if all village residents had been permitted to vote; they were no doubt consoled by the following statement in the Herald:

In spite of the handicap in the shape of an organized village ring that controlled the calling of elections and in many ways sought to hamper the recording of a fair expression of opinion, the annexationists defeated the village Board at all points.³⁰

Defeat in two referendums nine days apart meant the loss of the oppositionist cause in Brighton Village. Before an annexation bill was to pass the legislature, however, the city would suffer reversals in attempting to make full use of the initiative it had thus gained.

The day after Brighton Village conducted its referendum on annexation, the afternoon press published a map indicating the borders of the proposed annexation described in the bill prepared by the corporation counsel's office. ³¹ The map showed that the city intended to take large blocks of territory north and south of the village--an amount of land which was at least equal in area to the village itself. The land outside the village that the city wanted lay mostly in the Town of Brighton, but included a tier of lots on the east side of Culver Road in the Town of Irondequoit. ³² The land south of the village encompassed the planned Cobbs Hill reservoir, with surrounding lands that later became Cobbs Hill Park. The land north of the village included an area as densely settled as the village, called the "Holland Settlement" because of large numbers of Netherlander immigrants living there.

The revelation that the city intended taking large portions of the Town as well as the Village of Brighton caused consternation among many townspeople and induced Town Supervisor A. Emerson Babcock to take immediate action. On the afternoon the city plan was published Babcock called for a town meeting in the village fire hall. About 500 townspeople ³³ attended. Like the previous town meeting, this one was characterized by a good deal of lively debate and confused purpose. According to one newspaper reporter:

Supervisor Babcock, who presided, kept a level head and displayed fairness in his statement of the propositions and his rulings. But it was hard to keep even the semblance of order, so bitter had the feelings grown over the annexation question. ³⁴

Babcock, who had earlier expressed opposition to the annexation ³⁵ of Brighton Village, announced at the outset of the meeting that he

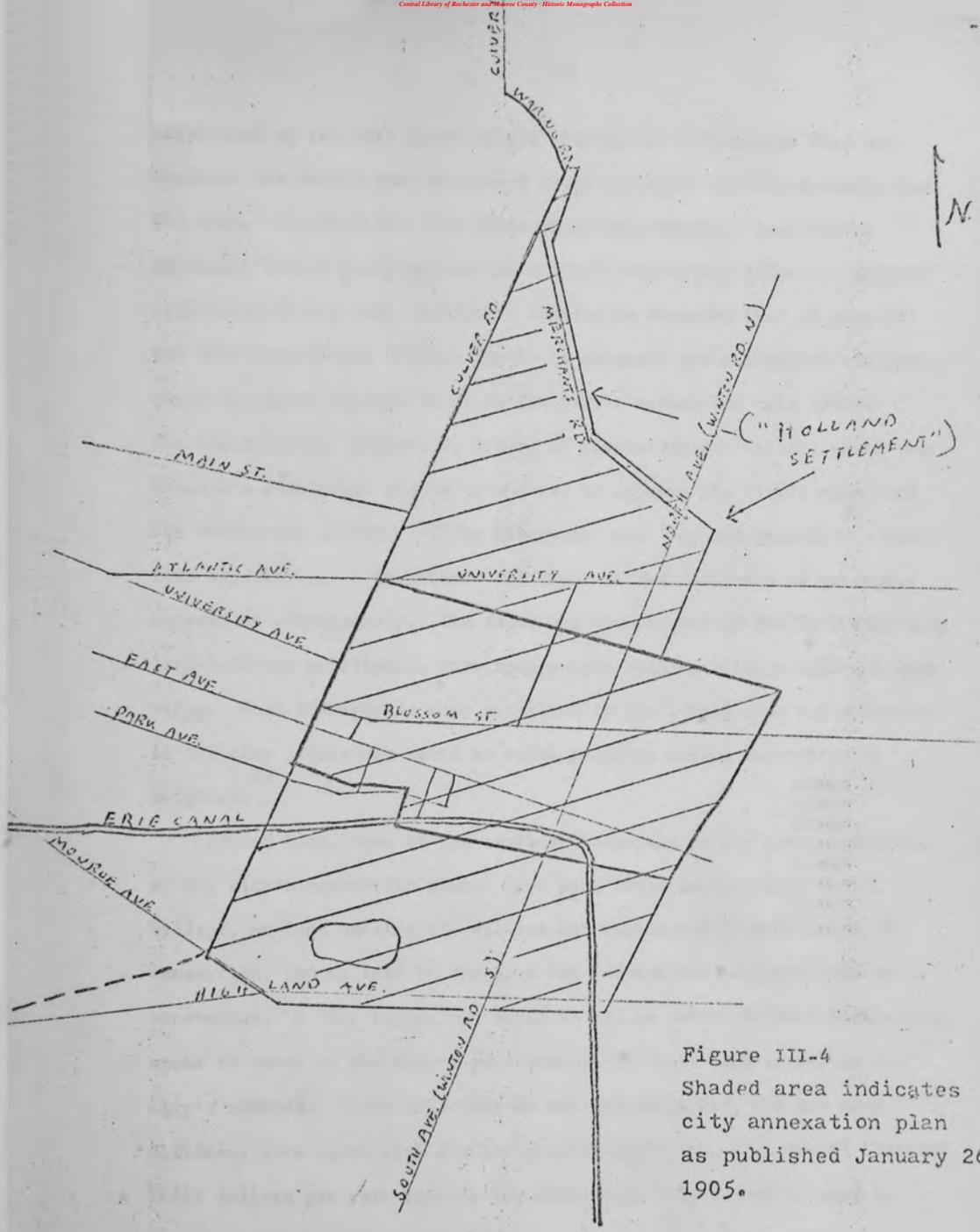


Figure III-4
 Shaded area indicates
 city annexation plan
 as published January 26,
 1905.

acquiesced in the vote taken in the village on the previous day, but deplored the city's plan to take a large amount of taxable property from the town. He asked for "the pleasure of the meeting," but when no spokesman seemed ready to make an initial resolution, offered a written resolution of his own. Babcock's resolution declared that no part of the town outside the village should be annexed, and authorized the Town Board to retain counsel to fight the city's annexation bill before the legislature. Charles J. Brown, an annexationist leader, moved that Babcock's resolution should be amended to approve the city's plan, and the debate was joined. "The discussion was long and heated." ³⁶ Some town oppositionists questioned the right of the villagers to determine annexation autonomously. The issue was complicated by the fact that some land-holdings overlapped, with townspeople holding village land and vice versa. Some townspeople were satisfied in the belief that any extension of the city limits was bound to raise property values everywhere in ³⁷ Brighton.

Edmund Lyon, "one of the heaviest taxpayers of the town," approved of the city's annexation plan. Lyon paid taxes on land inside the village, on land outside the village but within the proposed area of annexation, and on land in the town but outside the proposed area of annexation. A "Mr. Light, who lives in the so called Holland Settlement," spoke in favor of the city's plan because it would mean access to the city's schools. Light said that he and his neighbors, who had many children, were faced with the prospect of paying the City School District fifty dollars per year tuition for each child they wished to send to

high school. In addition, they now depended on the school located in Brighton Village for elementary education, but would lose their right to send children there if the village school became a city school and their neighborhood was not annexed. Interestingly, Light also said that "he made his living in Rochester and did not wish to dodge taxes." Another resident of the Holland Settlement, a Dr. H.H. Covill, said that his area needed sewers. Covill argued that if both the settlement and the village joined the city together, a sewer could be "built together." Otherwise, the village alone would get city sewer service and later, "if the settlement was annexed to the city, the sewer would have to be torn up and enlarged." The only way to insure adequate sewer service would be to see that the section outside the village was annexed
38
now.

At this juncture in the meeting an ex-supervisor of the town, William L. Manning, asked Babcock what difference it would make if a large portion of the town were lost to the city. "Why could not a small town have as low a rate as a large town," he asked. Babcock's reply included the argument that loss of the proposed territory would lower the town's tax base to about \$1,000,000, and that Brighton taxpayers would then be hard pressed to pay their share of the costs of road improvements now mandated by state law. Manning cited examples of rural towns in the county that had smaller tax bases. Babcock thought that if the proposed annexation took place, Brighton would be left so small that the town would have to be abolished and its territory divided among surrounding towns. "The statement was volunteered in answer that the town of Brighton would never be wiped off the map."

In the next part of the meeting there occurred one of those incidents which typify the informal confusion of a small town gathering and provide material for future argument among the participants. Dr. William M. Brown rose to propose an amendment to the original question: "not a very parliamentary procedure," said the Herald. Brown's motion was swiftly carried, but immediately afterward annexationists began arguing with their opponents about what the motion had been. According to the annexationists, who supported the motion, Brown's proposal was that another town meeting be called at which taxpayers of the section outside the village which the city planned to annex would be given the opportunity to vote on the question. But according to Brown himself, the proposal was for another town meeting at which all taxpayers of the town, within or outside the proposed area of annexation, and within or outside the village would participate in the referendum. The annexationists were bitterly opposed to this second interpretation of the motion. They contended that since the villagers had already voted on annexation (in their favor), it would not be proper to hold a second referendum there. The annexationists also had reason to fear the inclusion of the Brighton farmers outside the annexation district in any new plebiscite, since these taxpayers would naturally agree with Supervisor Babcock's point of view: why allow a large block of taxable property to leave the town?

Since Dr. Brown had not submitted his motion in written form, the two parties could not resolve the mixup in open meeting. Supervisor Babcock therefore adjourned the town meeting and immediately announced a session of the Town Board. The Board consisted of five members:

Babcock himself, Town Clerk Andrew Miller, who was also President of the Village, and three Justices of the Peace. The annexationist leaders remained on hand as spectators to see what the next move of the Board would be. One of the Board members, Justice Howard, moved that a special town meeting (referendum) be held of the taxpayers of the town outside the village who lived in the territory to be annexed. When Supervisor Babcock began putting this motion in written form, Andrew Miller, an unreconstructed oppositionist, left the room. Then Justice E.C. Smith, who had not been present originally, appeared and called Justice Howard out of the room. The three men, Miller, Smith, and Howard,

went over to Mr. Miller's house. Supervisor Babcock and Justice Rowland waited for some time while the crowd of annexationists stood by, wondering what was coming next.

Finally Supervisor Babcock remarked that he would go over to Mr. Miller's house and see what had become of the three members of the board. He then left the company with Justice Rowland, to hunt up the three retiring members.

After a long wait the five members of the town board finally returned to the hall.

Whatever discussion took place among the five men at President Miller's house, the outcome was that they accepted the annexationist interpretation of the motion carried during the open meeting. On returning to the hall, the Board adopted Justice Howard's resolution.

Despite the elements of farce at the meeting on January 27, the referendum held February 7 which was its result dealt a decisive blow to the city's large-scale annexation plan. During the intervening period annexationists in the Holland Settlement and Cobbs Hill areas argued the need for city services and pointed out a "sure rise" in land values if their neighborhoods joined the city. Oppositionists countered by pointing

out the threat of city taxes, saying that the small farms of 10-25 acres would be particularly hard hit. The annexationists answered this argument by saying that the farms, if cut into building lots, would double in market value once city services were available. On February 7, the taxpayers of the Holland Settlement and Cobbs Hill sections voted against annexation 164 to 46; 260 persons were eligible to vote.

Meanwhile, on January 28, a formidable deputation of Irondequoit citizens had called on Mayor Cutler and successfully protested the city's plan to take a small slice of their town north of the Holland Settlement. The Irondequoiters, who were led by their Supervisor and members of the Town Board, presented the Mayor with a petition against annexation signed by every affected Irondequoit property owner.

"I don't see what object you have in taking in part of our town," declared the Supervisor without any preliminary sparring for wind.

"No object," deprecatingly answered the Mayor, as he bowed to the delegation with the grace of a Chesterfield. "Don't you think that I would be pleased to have as my constituents such fine, able-bodied men as are represented in this delegation?"⁴¹

The Mayor's flattery was to no avail, since present in his office that morning was State Senator Merton E. Lewis, whose cooperation was necessary if the city was to pass an annexation bill through the legislature.

*The annexationists also made ready sleighs for carrying voters to the polls. The sign on the side of one sleigh read:

ANNEXATION SLEIGH
 SHALL WE STAND STILL OR GO AHEAD?
 VOTE FOR YOUR CHILDREN
 VOTE FOR 5-CENT FARES ON THE GLEN HAVEN R.R.
 SCHOOLS, FIRE PROTECTION, WATER.
 (Democrat and Chronicle, February 8, 1905)

Lewis agreed with the men from Irondequoit that the annexation of part of their town was unjustified. According to Irondequoit Supervisor Aman⁴² (and the Rochester Evening Times), the territory in Irondequoit that the city wanted was farmland, and therefore should not be part of Rochester or be taxed at city rates.

"Every property owner in the . . . portion of the town it was proposed to annex has signed the protest against annexation," said Senator Lewis at this point. "The bill should be amended so as to leave them out."

"I agree with you Senator," said the Mayor.

"But let me tell you," broke in Corporation Counsel Webb, "if any of these gentlemen wish to take advantage of the benefits of the trunk sewer they will have to come in."

"The trunk sewer does not run so far down in Irondequoit and they would not be benefited," replied Senator Lewis.⁴³

According to the Evening Times, the Irondequoiters were happy over their easy victory. On leaving the Mayor's office one farmer invited Cutler and his associates to "drop in upon us when you are down our way and drink some cider."

The reason for Senator Lewis' presence in Mayor Cutler's office that morning was that he and other members of the local delegation to the legislature were conferring with top city officials about the proposed annexation bill. As a result of this meeting, Senator Lewis and Assemblyman DeWitt Clinton Becker agreed to submit the annexation bill (modified to exclude Irondequoit) in both chambers of the legislature during the following week. Faced with innumerable legal details and the necessity of last minute revisions, the corporation counsel's office worked "day and night" during the next few days to prepare a final version of the bill for the approval of the Mayor and the local legislators.

In abbreviated form the bill ran to 472 newspaper column lines. The local delegation to the legislature agreed to hold this weighty piece of legislation until the result of the Holland Settlement and Cobbs Hill referendum was made known.

As we have seen, the voters of these areas registered an overwhelming sentiment against annexation. The subsequent events during February revealed that the city was capable of a certain amount of maneuvering to retain the advantage it had gained from the favorable referendum among Brighton Villagers on January 26, but that it would finally yield to the wishes of taxpayers within the proposed annexation who lived outside the village.

At first the city administration seemed disposed to resist any changes in its annexation bill. From the city's point of view, the taxes it anticipated from the Holland Settlement were a necessary part of the bargain by which the city was committing itself to provide services for the Brighton Village area. Additionally, the city did not want to pay taxes to the Town of Brighton for its reservoir lands on Cobbs Hill.* On the morning after the unfavorable referendum, a reporter asked Corporation Counsel William W. Webb if he thought the city would now amend the annexation bill to exclude town property.

"While I cannot say what will be done," said Mr. Webb, "I believe the bill should not be changed to cut off the town property and I do not think it should be /sic/. If

*Within a few days after passage of an annexation bill, an initial parcel of Cobbs Hill lands were purchased by the city for \$35,000. The real estate deal had been in negotiation for some time.

the city should change the bill so as to annex the village alone it would get only the drainage of the village. That certainly would not be to the city's advantage.

"Rather than to annex the village alone," continued Mr. Webb, "I would prefer to annex only that strip which would naturally drain into the east side sewer. We might take in a strip 500 or 600 feet deep, extending from Park Avenue to the New York Central tracks and including Blossom Street."⁴⁵

Later, Webb elaborated on the reasons he felt the city should choose between the large annexation or a very limited one. As a member of the city's Board of Estimate, Webb was engaged in preparing budget estimates for the coming fiscal year. Part of his task-- which was greatly complicated by the fact that annexation remained an unsettled question--was to estimate the costs of providing services for the new district. Webb found that the list of new services needed was lengthy:

"If we annex the territory covered in our bill . . . it means that there are about 600 school children in this area, and that we will have to give the school board \$25 for each of these pupils.(!) Then we will have to provide for garbage collection and ash collection in the territory annexed, and for policing and lighting the whole district.

"There are about ten miles of street in the territory proposed to be taken in. We must make some appropriation for caring for these streets and for keeping the sidewalks in repair. The drainage and other matters must also be considered. . . ."⁴⁶

The corporation counsel restated his position that the city would be better off making a very limited annexation rather than taking the whole of Brighton Village without adjacent town lands.

While Webb acted as administration spokesman before the local press, Mayor Cutler traveled to Albany on February 9 to confer with the legislators from Monroe County. ⁴⁷ It is probable that Cutler attempted to

persuade the legislators to submit the annexation bill they were holding in abeyance. He was unsuccessful. Senator Lewis, who visited Rochester two days later, stated that it was his position that no territory should be joined to the city where taxpayers had voted against it:

"The majority should rule. Of course there would be some opposed to annexation in any section, but if the majority of any section wants to be annexed and will prepare a bill I am ready to introduce it."⁴⁸

Lewis informed Corporation Counsel Webb that he would not introduce the annexation bill in its present form.

It is possible that the city administration had an ulterior motive for publicizing the idea of a limited annexation. The prospect of losing the west end of the village generated enthusiasm among Brightonians for annexation of the entire village, as it had done before. During these first weeks of February the overwhelming defeat of the annexation question by residents of the Holland Settlement combined with revelation of the fact that one local legislator would not automatically cooperate with city plans seemed to make tenuous the idea that any annexation at all would take place. As a result, annexationists in Brighton Village once again spoke up in defense of their narrow 84 to 83 victory on January 26.

On this point a Brighton resident who is an annexation enthusiast said yesterday [February 13]

"If the Mayor and the legislators do not want to take in the Holland Settlement because the people in that section voted against annexation, the same argument would compel them to take in the village, because the village voted for annexation. That is, of course, if it is a vote that settles the question.

"I think that it is generally conceded that the village is to be annexed. While the vote, 84 for annexation to 83 against, was numerically close, it is a fact that the vote was not close when taxable property is considered."⁴⁹

The city administration may have hoped that this type of verbal support from annexationists in the village would help persuade the legislators to act on the city's original annexation bill. Failing this, the support of village annexationists would help the administration if it decided to fall back on an annexation plan that included the village and Cobbs Hill, but left out the Holland Settlement.

Ultimately, this latter plan was the one that the city adopted. On February 18 the local legislators again conferred with officials of the city administration in Mayor Cutler's office. Again Senator Lewis declared his opposition to annexation of the Holland Settlement. The conference agreed to kill the annexation bill in its present form and directed the Corporation Counsel to draft two new bills. One of the new bills would provide for annexation of Cobbs Hill and the western section of Brighton Village that drained naturally toward the city's existing sewers. The alternate bill would provide for the annexation of Cobbs Hill and the entire village. It was agreed that Senator Lewis would introduce both bills in the Legislature, and that a final decision on which annexation would take place would be made later. The conferees hoped that interested parties would come forward in the near future to state their opinions.

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The city administration was not long in waiting for its expected response from the village annexationists. Five days after the conference with local legislators, a large delegation from Brighton Village called on the mayor's office. The village delegation was as formidable as the one from Irondequoit had been, but opposite to it in purpose.

Without exception the property owners said they wanted the entire village annexed in preference to the scheme to annex only a small strip of the village east of Culver street. . . . In the delegation were James S. Havens, Charles J. Brown, Dr. William Brown, William L. Manning and many other well known residents of Brighton.⁵¹

In addition to convincing the city officials of the strength of annexationist support, the delegation successfully argued that taking the entire village would not mean a financial loss for the city. They estimated that village expenses for the coming fiscal year would be about \$6,000, and that school expenses would add about \$7,5000. The total cost to the city for assuming the expenses of Brighton Village for one year would thus be about \$12,750. Since the assessed valuation of the village for 1905 was expected to be \$900,000 and the city tax rate between \$17.00 and \$18.00 per thousand, the new territory would generate more than enough taxes to meet its expenses.⁵² The villagers neglected to mention the added costs of new services which were the reason they desired annexation in the first place.

After this latest demonstration of support from the residents of Brighton Village, Mayor Cutler had no difficulty persuading Senator Lewis and the other legislators to rush passage of a bill for the annexation of the entire village and the Cobbs Hill property.^{53*} By March 24, both houses of the legislature had passed the bill despite half-hearted objections by lobbyists for the Rochester and Lake Ontario Water Company

*The bill also took a small parcel of land from the Town of Brighton which contained the Rochester Orphan Asylum on Highland Avenue.

(which wanted to maintain its suburban markets). In conformity with the local law provisions of the State Constitution, the legislature sent the bill to Rochester for the city's official approval. The bill was debated briefly in the common council on March 31. Largely as a matter of form, the Democratic minority on the council opposed the measure, expressing the belief that annexation of the village would be a losing proposition for the city. The mayor and the council Republicans refused to debate at length, since their majority was assured, but did speak of the growth of "Greater Rochester." The council approved the bill by a vote of twelve to four, and Governor Frank W. Higgins signed the bill making Brighton Village the Twenty-first Ward of Rochester on
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April 5, 1905.

As soon as the annexation of Brighton Village was effected, city officials were faced with a variety of immediate responsibilities for the governing of Rochester's new ward. Under provisions of the bill, the duty of collecting taxes owed to the village and Brighton school district was transferred to the city. Likewise, the city became responsible for all valid contracts entered into by the village and school district. All public property, including the contents of the village treasury, was
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transferred to city ownership.

The City Engineer had to make surveys of village streets, renaming them where duplication of existing names in the city occurred, and had to renumber the houses. The Commissioner of Public Works was responsible for maintaining the streets to city standards, and began laying plans for

paving the major thoroughfares. The Commissioner of Public Safety ordered mounted and bicycle police officers to patrol the new district until a precinct house could be built. He also arranged for fire protection. For the time being, the volunteer fire company would continue to function, but city engine companies on University and Monroe Avenues received definite orders to assist in responding to calls. The city Board of Education assumed management of the Brighton elementary school and had to estimate the number of students from the Twenty-first Ward who would attend Rochester's East High School now that tuition would be free. The new territory also added to the responsibilities of city building and health inspectors.

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The city did not neglect to extend the privilege of paying for these services to its new taxpayers. Well before the governor's signature on the annexation bill was dry, members of the city's Board of Assessors canvassed the village and entered about 300 assessments in a new roll book for the Twenty-first Ward. True to anticipations, the President of the Board estimated the total value of the new assessments to be between \$850,000 and \$900,000. The Board of Estimate budgeted the sum of \$15,000 to cover extra expenses of the various city departments, an allowance which approximately matched the tax revenues expected from the new ward.

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The residents and taxpayers of Brighton Village, whose village board disappeared at the stroke of a pen, were guaranteed representation in the city government under the terms of the annexation bill. The Rochester Common Council was to select temporary ward officers, an alderman and supervisor, without delay. The temporary officers would

serve until January 1, 1906, when regularly elected officials would take their place. The Common Council chose Henry J. Peck for Alderman and William L. Manning for Supervisor. Peck was a former Republican village president, and Manning a former Democratic Brighton supervisor. ⁵⁸

In the succeeding years, as the population of the Twenty-first Ward continued to grow, its absorption into the city at large was reflected by its acquisition of additional parts of an urban plant. Annexation expedited the installation of sidewalks, street pavements, gas mains, electric lighting, and the construction of new buildings to house policemen, firemen, and school children.

One part of the urban plant that residents of the area most eagerly awaited was a system of sewers. Although the city was able to quickly extend sewer service to residents of the west end of the ward, it was several years before construction of a "Brighton" sewage treatment plant (located in city territory next to Irondequoit Bay) made drainage of the rest of the ward feasible. The first Brighton plant was constructed in ⁵⁹ 1910. Ironically, the city's Brighton sewage plant was located in about the same place the village board had projected construction of a plant in connection with their independent sewer plan. Rather than construct new water mains, the city contracted with the Ontario Water Company for water service in the Twenty-first Ward. This arrangement would be repeated in future years as the city annexed other districts which had franchised the company rather than invite annexation and Hemlock water. ⁶⁰

The addition of Brighton Village to the city in 1905 was by no means the largest annexation, in terms of either area or population, to

take place in the course of Rochester's twenty-five year era of twentieth century annexations. Nor was it the most difficult annexation to accomplish. The village's proximate location to the city's built-up east side and its own state of development virtually dictated the logic of immediate annexation. Moreover, the city's efforts were ably abetted by a coterie of hard-core annexationists in the village, led by wealthy and respected taxpayers some of whom had petitioned the city for connection in the first place.

But the annexation of Brighton Village was a significant introduction to the city's attempts to add suburban territory during the following two decades. The debate over urban services and city taxation would be re-enacted repeatedly. At times the emphasis on which urban service was pre-eminently important would shift--for Brighton Village it was sewers; for Charlotte ten years later it would be professional policemen to control unruly elements and close houses of ill-fame. In its first 1905 annexation bill, the city attempted to take the Holland Settlement along with Brighton Village, but subsequently yielded to pressures to limit its annexation plans. This, too, was a pattern repeated in subsequent years. It is illustrated by the example of the Holland Settlement, which, after being included in annexation plans in 1905, 1908, and 1910, finally joined the city in 1914. In effect, the city was continually forced to settle for piecemeal annexation of suburban territory, with the result that areas left outside the city were given the opportunity to provide services for themselves in a piecemeal fashion. As a consequence, the city's only telling argument to persuade suburbanites

to support annexation--that it would insure a full range of urban services-- was continually undermined by autonomous provision of services by the suburbs satisfying immediately felt needs. The case for annexation of Brighton Village was weakened by the water mains of the Ontario Water Company; it would have been largely negated if the village board had acted earlier on an independent sewer system.

Again, one aspect of the Brighton Village episode that reoccurred during later events was the reluctance to bring residents of a given area into the city where a majority had voted against annexation. This reluctance was shared by city officials, state legislators, and even suburban annexationists. At times, during the following decades, Rochester would override the wishes of suburban residents democratically expressed in referendum and effect an annexation despite their opposition, but often the city was a "paper tiger." A central irony of Rochester's era of annexations was contained in the repeated assurances given suburbanites by city officials that they would not annex territory against the wishes of its residents. Given the general reluctance of townspeople and villagers to pay city taxes, such assurances were hardly compatible with belief in the inevitability of city expansion and the logic of orderly urban growth.

In certain instances, suburban oppositionists had legitimate reasons to fight city annexation plans. Such instances occurred when farmers in suburban districts the city proposed to annex planned to continue raising produce for city markets indefinitely. The owners of small farms like those adjacent to Rochester at the turn of the century usually presided over crops of 10-25 acres, and had no need for pavements,

sewers, street lighting, or other urban improvements. At a well-attended meeting in the Holland Settlement on February 2, Town of Brighton Supervisor Babcock warned that annexation of farmland could bring financial ruin to its owners. He cited examples of Irondequoit farms put out of business in recent years because they were located in areas the city annexed. At the same meeting, the annexationist Edmund Lyon estimated the assessed valuation of homes in the Holland Settlement at \$1,000 to \$1,200.⁶¹ Since the market value of the "garden" farms in Brighton and Irondequoit was as much as \$1,000 per acre, it is probable that farmers in the Holland Settlement were contemplating city tax bills several times as large as those of neighboring non-farm homeowners. The annexationist reply to this fear was that the small farms, if cut into building lots, would bring a handsome profit, particularly if the land was already in the city. This was small comfort to the farmers who wished to continue their way of life, or to those farmers whose land was not yet in line for residential development. Edmund Lyon conceded that "if a farm was to remain a farm for the production of onions and other farm produce, it would receive no benefit by annexation. A farm would raise no better onions because it was taken into the city."^{*}

^{*}At the same meeting, the President of Rochester's Board of Assessors, Charles F. Pond, repeated the pledge that the city would treat Brighton property owners fairly. He submitted a written statement "to the effect that the valuation placed on the property was as high as would be made by the city if the property should be annexed." In other words, farmers should not have to worry about reassessments of annexed land. On the other hand, they still needed to be concerned about application of the city tax rate on their old village or town assessments.

At the time the annexation of Brighton Village and surrounding lands was being debated, one newly organized newspaper in need of building circulation printed a number of stories denouncing the fact that city annexation plans called for taking in small farms. The Rochester Evening Times reminded voters in the Holland Settlement of the financial loss suffered by Irondequoit farmers caused by annexations in past years, and urged them not to support annexation on February 7. ⁶² It is difficult to assess how effective this propaganda was. How great a role did small farmers play in defeating annexation referendums like those conducted in the Holland Settlement and in later years? Certainly the number of farmers in a given suburban area was an inverse measurement of that area's urban development. And, in any annexation proposal of significant size during this era the city was bound to include some farmlands. We can dismiss as unrealistic the argument used by the Evening Times and other critics that the city was never justified in taking in farmland: the pattern of suburban development was always irregular, and there is nothing intrinsically wrong with a city containing some open land. In general terms, the mixture of farmland and residential development normally found in suburban areas posed a tricky obstacle to the success of annexation attempts. As long as an area remained relatively undeveloped, the city faced the solid opposition of farmers. During the time the area contained an equal mixture of farmland and residential subdivisions, the city had to contend with the opposition of farmers and of non-farm residents who did not wish urban services or who felt they could provide them independently. By the time the area reached the stage of

development when it contained relatively few farms, the non-farm residents might already have provided many of the needed urban services autonomously.

This brings us back to the point made earlier about the reluctance of all parties to forcefully annex suburban residents despite their wishes. To the degree that the generalized model outlined above is accurate, the era's universal faith in the inevitability of annexation was naive. At least, the derivative belief that the residents of a suburban area would at some time acquiesce to annexation was unsupportable. In fact, the positive referendum that took place in Brighton Village (and which was hardly an overwhelming annexationist victory) was anomalous. During Rochester's future attempts to add suburban territory, the results of referendums were usually negative, and when the city was successful in adding occupied territory it usually had to overcome a good deal of suburban resistance. Rochester's success in 1905 was partly due to the fact that Brighton Village was at a particular stage of urbanization: it contained farmland, but not too much: it contained a few residential subdivisions, and a sufficient number of non-farm homeowners: it already enjoyed a number of urban services, but a vital one was missing. Moreover, there was an annexationist leadership in Brighton Village made up largely of men wealthy enough to take a long-range view of the future benefits to be derived from paying higher city taxes in the present.

The events of 1904-05 take on significance for what wasn't said as well as what was said. Like later participants in annexation debates during the early decades of the twentieth century, the parties in the Brighton Village controversy by and large confined themselves to

discussing pragmatic details of taxation and needed services. At no time did village oppositionists place a theoretical value on maintaining Brighton Village as a small-scale unit of democracy. All participants in the debate seemed to agree with the annexationist James LeClare who said he'd "as soon take my chances . . . with the Common Council of Rochester as with the Village Board of Brighton." The closest approximation to a value judgement comparing city government with the virtues of autonomous suburban government was contained in Village Clerk Caley's suggestion that a city managed sewer project would be burdened with the expenses of graft. Apparently, this was an isolated expression of opinion. And, while some participants in the debate were not convinced by the economies of scale inherent in city management of services, none, save perhaps members of the village board, were ready to shed a tear over the passing of Brighton Village as a legal and historic entity.

Today, an idle person standing near the reservoir on Cobbs Hill can instantly scan most of the territory that was once Brighton Village. The prospect is dominated in the foreground by the busy expressway occupying a right-of-way that was once the Erie Canal. Beyond that, numerous trees obscure but do not hide a view of the residential neighborhoods along East Avenue. Further northeast, the smokestacks and buildings of small industries in the northern part of the erstwhile village interrupt the skyline, competing with a few large apartment houses on East Avenue near the old village center. The modern visitor to the intersection of East Avenue and Winton Road finds little indication that this was once the center of a country village. East Avenue

and Winton Road is now indistinguishable from a dozen other commercial intersections in Rochester's periphery; the four corners are occupied by a multi-storied bank building, a small shopping center and two service stations. A hundred yards nearer the city center on the Avenue there is another shopping center, supermarkets, and numerous stores. A bowling alley, named "Brighton Bowl" although it is firmly located in the City of Rochester, is occupying the approximate site of Sullivan Brothers' carriage factory in Brighton Village. The best way the modern visitor can recapture a sense of Brighton Village in 1905 is by walking eastward from Culver Road along East Avenue. He will admire the architectural distinctiveness of the large homes set back from the Avenue in impressive lawns. Halfway to Winton Road, he has come to the end of Rochester's old "boulevard of the wealthy."

NOTES

Chapter III

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14. U&A, December 9, 1904.
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16. U&A, December 19, 1904.
17. D&C, December 15, 1904.
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23. Herald, December 13, 31, 1904, January 3, 12, 1905; Post Express, December 2, 1904.
24. Herald, January 17, 1905.
25. D&C, January 19, 1905.
26. Herald, January 19, 1905.
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28. U&A, January 26, 1905.
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31. U&A, January 26, 1905.
32. Herald, January 27, 1905; D&C, Evening Times, January 28, 1905.
33. Evening Times, January 28, 1905.
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35. Herald, December 13, 1904.
36. Herald, January 28, 1905.
37. D&C, January 28, 1905.
38. Direct quotes and details of the meeting are drawn from Herald, January 28, 1905.
39. U&A, February 3, 1905; D&C, February 7, 1905.
40. D&C, February 8, 1905.
41. Evening Times, January 28, 1905.
42. Evening Times, February 4, 6, 1905.
43. Evening Times, January 28, 1905.
44. D&C, January 30, 1905; U&A, February 1, 1905.

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45. U&A, February 8, 1905.
46. U&A, February 9, 1905.
47. Evening Times, February 9, 1905.
48. U&A, February 11, 1905.
49. D&C, February 14, 1905.
50. U&A, February 18, 1905.
51. U&A, February 23, 1905.
52. D&C, February 24, 1905.
53. U&A, February 25, 1905.
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Chapter IV

Ten Years of Growth: 1908-1918

It is apparent that the city is expanding in every direction, so that its boundaries will have to be enlarged.... (A) greater Rochester is no longer a future possibility, but a present fact. If the people of the outlying districts are to receive the benefits of better fire and police protection, and enjoy the security of stable and effective government, they should be taken into the corporate limits. Legislation to this end will undoubtedly be presented in the Legislature, and should receive the thoughtful attention of all who are interested in the future development of our city.¹

(Mayor Hiram H. Edgerton, Annual Message to the Common Council, January 10, 1910)

Words similar to Mayor Edgerton's would be heard frequently during the ten years which formed the peak of Rochester's era of annexations. During these ten years, which coincided with the zenith of the city's golden age, the city added nearly 9,000 acres to its territory. These acres constituted the bulk of the total additions made between 1901 and 1926 (Table IV-1). Annexation--proposed, debated, or accomplished--was a major theme of Hiram Edgerton's extraordinary administration. While annexation only occasionally managed to occupy center stage in the public imagination, it became a perennial feature in news accounts of local political affairs, usually blossoming in midwinter well after fall elections and before adjournment of the New York State Legislature in early spring. These ten years witnessed repeated attempts by the city administration at "omnibus annexation" comparable in scale to the great annexation of 1874; while such attempts were only partly successful, and normally were resisted for several years before final accomplishment,

two annexation bills pushed through in 1913 and in 1918 added several thousand acres apiece to every side of the municipal territory. The annexation debates of 1908-1918 thoroughly illustrate the methods of persuasion and resistance which characterized the issue. Moreover, despite the city's general success at maintaining its political hegemony over the urbanized area, events during these years also illustrate the gradual evolution of circumstances which would prove fatal to further expansion plans in the 1920s.

The central character in the annexation plans of this period was "Hizzoner," Mayor Hiram H. Edgerton. The local press delighted in the use of nicknames such as "Hi" or "Hizzoner" when referring to Edgerton. He enjoyed seven consecutive two-year terms in office (1908-1922), an unusual accomplishment in a city which had rarely re-elected an incumbent mayor once. In fact, only one Rochester mayor before Edgerton had served for more than two terms. Edgerton earned something of the status of a beloved institution, and not merely because of longevity in office. As mayor, Edgerton managed the city's business with a fair degree of competence.

Under terms of the "White" charter* which was the basis of Rochester's governmental organization between the turn of the century and the mid-20s, a good deal of power was concentrated in the mayor's office. The mayor was popularly elected rather than chosen by city council as he would be after 1928; moreover, he held the power to make all major appointments, chaired the Board of Estimate and Apportionment and Board of Contract and

*The uniform charter for cities drafted in the 1890s by a legislative commission headed by Horace White.

Supply, and prepared the executive budget. This was a far cry from the situation which had prevailed in the late nineteenth century, when, after a series of charter amendments (1865, 1872, 1876, 1879, 1880), almost all the executive powers of Rochester's mayor had been stripped away. Between 1880 and 1900 the mayor merely "presided over the deliberations of the common council, acted as chairman of the board of health which he appointed, with the approval of the council, and served as the third member of the board of police commissioners." Real power was concentrated in the hands of a series of state-mandated commissions headed by an executive board which operated independently of the mayor and of the common council as well.

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During Edgerton's term in office, the Republican machine led by Boss Aldridge reinforced the new autonomy of the mayoralty as much as it detracted from it. Edgerton was no mere figurehead. Something more than simply Aldridge's trusted lieutenant and something less than a completely independent political power, Edgerton derived a high degree of administrative ease from the council majorities which the machine assured. Since Edgerton's fourteen years in office coincided with a period when Aldridge pursued state and even national ambitions, the boss rarely had the time or the inclination to intervene in local affairs. Edgerton for his part considered the mayoralty the pinnacle of his career--he was sixty years old on assuming office--and gave signs of enjoying the position immensely. There was no question of rivalry between the popular mayor, who relished public exposure, and the quiet boss, who shunned it. Each complimented the other and contributed his own brand of leadership to the perpetuation

of the machine. Small wonder that the opposition press in time began referring to the city administration, with mild humor, as "Hi and I."³

The Aldridge machine and the Edgerton administration which served for fourteen years as its power base were not the ring of rapacious thieves which the phrase "machine politics" often conjures in the popular imagination. Rather, it was a political organization which provided the city with a fairly beneficent and competent continuity in municipal administration while it provided its own members with moderate rewards. Perhaps nothing attests to this fact quite as pointedly as the circumstances surrounding Edgerton's selection as Republican candidate for mayor⁴ in 1907.

In Rochester, organized opposition to machine politics of the "good government" brand characteristic of the progressive era peaked out in the late 1890s and the early years of the twentieth century. The good government forces, led by reformer Joseph T. Alling and members of the Protestant clergy, had in fact supported a Democratic candidate for mayor in 1895 and 1897 and were probably instrumental in his election. These victories were modest ones, however, given Mayor George E. Warner's limited powers under the old charter and consistent Republican majorities in the common council. The drafting of the uniform White charter in the late 1890s, which was scheduled to take effect on January 1, 1900, induced Alling and Boss Aldridge to reach an accommodation. In return for "goo-goo" friendship, Aldridge agreed to safeguard the political independence of the Board of Education and to confer with Alling on the selection of candidates for mayor. Warner's Republican successors, George A. Carnahan

and Adolph J. Rodenbeck, elected in 1899 and 1901 respectively, enjoyed Good Government support--but both men proved too independent in office to suit Aldridge and neither won Republican renomination. In 1903, the political situation became further complicated when a group of Republican and Democratic insurgents, joined by some reformers, advanced a Citizen's slate challenging both regular party organizations. Faced with a crisis, Aldridge needed a candidate who could win broad support from all elements of the electorate, including the reformers. He found such a man in James G. Cutler, a highly respected businessman and architect who had served as President of the Chamber of Commerce, member of the commission which had drafted the White Charter, and Commissioner of Public Safety in Carnahan's administration. As a result, Good Government voting power was entirely divided in the election of 1903, with some going to Cutler, some to the Democrat Warner, and some to the Republican insurgent, James Johnston. But Cutler won the election handily, and was renominated in 1905.

Cutler's accomplishments in office (1904-1908) fulfilled the expectations generated by his qualifications for the job. He authorized needed refurbishment of the equipment and buildings for the fire and police forces, developed recreational facilities, launched a large-scale sewers program, and pressed the utilities for reductions in rates and for underground installation of conduits. Within his wide-range program of civic improvements was a campaign to upgrade Rochester's legal status from that of a second-class to a first-class city. The change in charter status meant increased powers for the mayor as well as greater municipal

control over franchises, two developments which Aldridge disliked. Cutler was forced to combat Aldridge-inspired opposition in the common council to win approval of the new charter. Once again, Aldridge found a mayor becoming too independent for his liking, and cast about for a replacement.

Aldridge found a logical successor in Hiram H. Edgerton, who had served as President of the Common Council since 1899. Before then, Edgerton had unsuccessfully run for mayor against Warner in 1895 and had served as a school commissioner from 1871 to 1875.⁵ Edgerton was a well-known figure in Rochester, a joiner of atheletic and fraternal societies, and a successful building contractor. By this time, Aldridge needed to concern himself little with the advice and consent of Joseph T. Alling. The good government forces had dissipated their influence by making accommodations with the boss in the first place, were further weakened by the debacle of 1903, and had been outflanked by the mayoralty of the respected James G. Cutler, who was, after all, the candidate of the regular Republican organization. Perhaps if Cutler, who was 64 in 1907 and eager to return to private business, had been less willing to give up the office, he might have enlisted the aid of the reformers in an attempt to influence Aldridge. Cutler, however, was too pragmatic to consider such a course even if inclined to seek a third term as mayor. A showdown between Aldridge and the waning good government forces in 1907 would most probably have been disastrous for the latter, who would have found themselves in opposition to a Republican running on Cutler's record. In fact, by offering the name of a popular man like Edgerton, Aldridge again divided the ranks of voters with reformist impulses. The close result of the election of 1907, 19,027 votes for Edgerton to 17,888 for

he Democrat William Ward and 890 for the Socialist Cad Martindale, was a pattern which would be repeated in several of Edgerton's subsequent re-election. The closeness of such results, however, was not as much a negative commentary on Edgerton's popularity as it was a reflection of the large and ever-growing numbers of nominally Democratic voters, swelled by the tide of immigration. Despite their paper strength, the Democratic organization was unsuccessful against the Aldridge machine and, as has been mentioned, was unable to win control of the city until 1933, well after Aldridge and Edgerton had passed from the scene.

The voters of Rochester during the administration of Edgerton and throughout the 1920s could fairly be characterized as complacent. This was partly due to the general disorganization of political reform forces after 1907, weakened for reasons already cited and by Edgerton's popularity, which evolved into ingrained familiarity. His "institutionalization" was reinforced by solid achievements in office, some of which, like the construction of the model sewer system, expansion of the water works, extension of the parks and recreational program, and establishment of a public library, were the fulfillment of programs initiated during Cutler's four years (Edgerton, as President of the Common Council, had actually tabled Cutler's proposal for a public library but revived the idea during his own term as mayor). Since Boss Aldridge's personal interest in the local utility combine had been liquidated by outside interests years before, Edgerton was able to freely joust against the street railway company, loudly demanding lower fares, better service, and improved trackage in the grand tradition of progressive era mayors.

Another factor behind Rochester's political complacency was the relative absence of obvious speculation or mismanagement by the machine. If the opportunity to expose serious scandal existed during Edgerton's administration, it undoubtedly would have been capitalized by the healthy opposition press, led by the well-written anti-Aldridge Rochester Herald. During Edgerton's fourteen years in office, however, no serious wrongdoing was ever uncovered within his administration. The political temper of these halcyon days in Rochester seemed to easily digest the routine job placement service and distribution of contracts which must characterize the day-to-day workings of any political machine.

Powerful evidence that the city's political managers were doing a reasonably honest job was provided in the middle of Edgerton's tenure with the issuance of a lengthy General Survey published by the Rochester Bureau of Municipal Research. The newly formed Bureau, financed by George Eastman and entirely independent from city government, had commissioned the New York Bureau of Municipal Research to conduct a full scale survey of Rochester's affairs in 1914. The 546-page report which appeared the following year suggested a host of changes in managerial detail, but averred that:

. . . (T)here is obvious opportunity and need for improvement. But, speaking comparatively, Rochester's government is better organized and better managed than any which has come to the Bureau's notice. It is of interest to consider the elements of difference [between Rochester and other cities] which seem to account for the superiority.⁶

The main reason, according to the authors of the report, was the smooth functioning of Rochester's strong-mayor system of government. (Ironically, ten years later while the local machine lay wracked by factionalism, a new good government movement led by businessmen and idealistic reformers

successfully pushed through charter amendments scrapping the elected executive and substituting a small council and city manager system. The new reforms did not prove a panacea.)

The progress of Rochester's growth through municipal annexation during Edgerton's administration began auspiciously on the first day of the Mayor's term of office, January 1, 1908. On that day, legislation approved the previous year added over 500 acres of parkland to the city. The bulk of the new land was contained in a large lakeside parcel donated by George Eastman and by Dr. Henry S. Durand in a philanthropic gesture.⁷ This formed the nucleus for the impressive Durand-Eastman Park, characterized by unusually deep ravines, virgin woods, and thousands of feet of public bathing beach.

It was also the beginning of the curious "inkblot" appearance of Rochester's modern municipal boundaries. Since the southernmost edge of the parcel was nearly five miles from the closest boundary of the city, attorneys in the Corporation Counsel's Office connected the new park to Rochester with an irregular strip of land 66 feet wide running along Norton Street and Culver Road. The justification for creating this "shoestring" effect was twofold. Since the connecting strip was coterminous with the roadways which would serve as the logical route for extending street railway service to the new park, the city's lawyers assured municipal control over that service under existing and future franchise agreements. A second reason for the "shoestring" (the term would become applicable again, when, in 1915-16, the city annexed the northerly Village of Charlotte) was to stave off possible court objections

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to creation of a bifurcated municipality. Indeed, Durand-Eastman Park was connected to the City of Rochester by the Culver Road shoestring, but as a consequence the Town of Irondequoit was divided into two parts! Decades after the 1908 annexation, as suburban development proceeded apace in the two parts of Irondequoit, citizens of that town erected separate East and West Irondequoit School Districts and in other ways demonstrated a sometimes subtle sense of apartness. (One amusing modern consequence of the Durand-Eastman annexation is that motorists traveling on the northern part of Culver Road between Norton Street and the park see "Entering Irondequoit" signs on both sides of major intersections.)

Besides the annexation of what was to become Durand-Eastman Park, the law of January 1, 1908 provided for the addition of several small parcels on two sides of the city. One, shaped like a crooked tentacle extending from the city's northeast corner to Irondequoit Bay was in fact Densmore Creek, which had the unfortunate task of serving as a major drainage outlet for the city. Since the creek in its natural state permitted overflows and flooding of Irondequoit farmlands, generating numerous claims for damages, the city's doughty Engineer, Edwin A. Fisher, had determined that it should be lined with concrete. Annexation of the proposed culvert was deemed advisable to insure the city's jurisdiction and to obviate need for paying Irondequoit taxes on the creek's improvement.

Also included in the bill drafted in 1907 were very small additions from the Town of Gates to the city's west side. The additions were merely extensions of the city line from the edge to the center of three roadways girdling the modest residential tract annexed in 1891. City

ownership of these twelve-foot strips facilitated installation of services benefitting property owners who fronted the three roads. In effect, these annexations were an adjustment of a previous technical error.

These minor additions, as well as the annexation of Durand-Eastman Park, were the accomplishments of Mayor James G. Cutler's administration, as had been the annexation of Brighton Village in 1905. Early in Edgerton's first term in office, however, the new mayor proved his interest in the growth of Rochester. He accepted the gift of 101 acres from Miss Frances A. Baker for an addition to Genesee Valley Park. The addition of the Baker farm, annexed May 19, 1908 by a law which took immediate effect, increased the size of the park to first place within the system and also represented the southernmost extension of its limits that the city would
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achieve.

Given the fact that this more-or-less routine* parkland annexation was in the works, Edgerton attempted to capitalize on the opportunity by inviting property owners along Highland Avenue in the Town of Brighton to come into the city as well. The proposal was tied to Edgerton's plan to construct a twenty mile boulevard system around the city--part of which would be an improved Highland Avenue. The boulevard idea was not original with Edgerton; segments of its circular course had already been constructed in a piecemeal fashion. Edgerton's proposal to unite these segments in a continuous system generated a good deal of comment, including the charge that it would be too costly and that the boulevards would
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chiefly benefit the "carriage crowd." The mayor postponed the plan

*"Routine" in the sense that no local or legislative opposition to the city's annexation of its own parkland could be expected.

indefinitely--these were only his first months in office--and accepted a rebuff to his invitation of annexation from most of the Highland Avenue property owners.

That Highland Avenue, or even Elmwood Avenue to the south of it, was the logical southern boundary of the city in that section few would deny. The existing southern line followed a highly irregular course, zig-zagging in a northeasterly direction from the southern edge of Genesee Valley Park up to the Twenty-first Ward. Moreover, recent improvements in the city north of the section of Highland Avenue still in Brighton seemed to dictate the sensibility of straightening the line along one of the avenues. In 1908 the new Cobbs Hill reservoir was nearing completion. It would be filled with water in the winter of 1908-09, and with its enormous capacity could easily supply the needs of residents in the gradually developing sections of Brighton. ¹² In fact, the reservoir had been deliberately "overdesigned" to provide for years of future city growth and expansion.

Using a tactic he would resort to from time to time in the future, Edgerton merely presented the idea of city residency to the Highland Avenue section and awaited developments. Of course, combining the annexation proposal with the boulevard scheme was perhaps a highly inadvisable procedure. While Edgerton had not spelled out his thinking on financing the boulevards, the prevailing theories of local political economy said that benefitting property owners paid part if not all the cost of improvements. People of the Highland section demonstrated in 1908 and in later years that they were not interested in seeing their avenue become a

boulevard! The city line was not extended to Highland Avenue in 1908, but Edgerton did manage to include a triangular section of about 30 acres on the southern limits in the May 19 bill. This was the intersection Clinton Avenue and Field Street, which was also the intersection of two city water mains. The triangle contributed to, rather than lessened, the irregularity of the southern city line.

During his second year in office, Mayor Edgerton pursued no ambitious annexation plans, but did order a bill prepared that would have brought the southern city line down to Highland Avenue. Once again the results were discouraging. According to the Rochester Post-Express:

. . . (T)here was such a loud and almost unanimous chorus of objection on the part of the interested property owners that the administration relented and Mayor Edgerton announced no territory would be annexed without the consent of the annexed.¹³

Edgerton's announcement of 1909 was his first formal concession to "crabgrass democracy," as one historian has recently characterized the principle of suburban self-rule.¹⁴ In subsequent years, the Mayor occasionally reformulated his pledge, and about as often ignored the fact that he had made it.

The following year marked the beginning of Edgerton's sustained campaign to annex all the suburban districts which were developing around the city. At the end of an eight-year effort, Edgerton would realize nearly all of his annexation goals. The struggle was not won, however, until the Mayor and members of his administration had exhausted nearly all persuasive techniques and had gradually shifted from a policy of tolerance toward suburban resistance to one of firmness.

In his annual message to the common council marking the beginning of his second term in office, Edgerton stated his position that "a greater Rochester is no longer a future possibility but a present fact." The January 10 message stopped short of specific annexation proposals, but, alluding to the obvious degree of suburban development on all sides of the city, promised extensive legislative proposals in the coming months. The mayor's invitation to "all who are interested in the future development of our city" to give the matter their "thoughtful attention" produced mixed results.

The Rochester Evening Times, normally an administration supporter, responded a few days later with an editorial calling for the annexation of Charlotte.* This, said the newspaper, would be in line with civic spirit and the "impetus to a Greater Rochester" generated by Edgerton's message. ¹⁵ The northerly Village of Charlotte, which served as Rochester's port, had been the subject of annexation discussions for some years, and would not finally be annexed until 1915. The story of its annexation has been allotted a separate chapter, owing to the unique character of the village. However, the reader will want to bear in mind that events leading to Charlotte's annexation overlapped chronologically with, and were sometimes a part of, Mayor Edgerton's scale annexation campaign.

The editorial in the Evening Times elicited no immediate reaction. Throughout the months of January and February, however, it is apparent that annexation rumors began to grow; this was, after all, one of

*Shar-LAHT, " an unusual pronunciation once remarked upon by Samuel Clemens, who thought the pronunciation to be one of Rochester's distinguishing characteristics.

motives for publicizing the idea. During the second week of February the Post-Express, the city's "quality" afternoon newspaper, commented on this development:

The usual midwinter annexation rumors are in circulation, only, like scarlet fever, they are a little more severe this winter than most. This time Irondequoit Bay, Kodak Park, Lincoln Park, Charlotte and about everything else in sight is threatened to be swallowed up in the maelstrom of city government and taxation.¹⁶

The Post-Express, sarcastically commenting on the failure of Edgerton's small scale annexation plan along Highland Avenue, wondered how the administration hoped to effect any large scale annexations. The paper recalled that "at that time" Edgerton had promised no annexation without consent. Consent, observed the Post-Express, is difficult to obtain, and ". . . cannot be obtained in the case of large tracts."¹⁷

On the same day these comments appeared in the Post-Express, the Evening Times reported that A. Emerson Babcock, Supervisor of Brighton, called upon Edgerton "to protest against any more territory being sliced off his town for the aggrandizement of Rochester." The Brighton Town Board had a dual battle on its hands at this time, with threats of annexation in the air and a near-unanimous protest on the part of the Brighton citizenry against the State's proposal to construct a tuberculosis hospital in the town--near existing state mental facilities in the south end of the city. According to one city hall reporter, Edgerton fended off Babcock's protest by intimating it might be a kindness for the city to annex the proposed hospital site, ". . . but the supervisor was some time in perceiving the humor of the situation."¹⁸

Earlier, the Herald had sent a reporter to the Mayor for confirmation or denial of the rumors of definite annexation plans, but Edgerton had refused comment. ¹⁹ The staunchly Republican Democrat and Chronicle contented itself with a speculative article pointing out additional suburban tracts, which, in its opinion, were worthy of inclusion in the forthcoming annexation bill.

The D&C concentrated its attention on the developing section located west of the city's Nineteenth Ward in the Town of Gates. The area was loosely known as Lincoln Park, although technically the name applied to an industrial tract purchased by the Chamber of Commerce at the turn of ²⁰ the century. The Chamber's plan was to distribute the then-undeveloped acres free to industries who agreed to locate in (or actually near) the city. Owing to the site's ample rail facilities and nearby power and labor resources the plan was eminently successful and within ten years more than a half dozen substantial factories crowded the new industrial park. As quickly as the area became developed industrially, it attracted residential development--although, in fact, the presence of the factories first generated a boom in house construction within the Nineteenth Ward where a full range of city services was available. In 1910, some houses had been constructed in the Lincoln Park section of Gates, but the plat-²¹ books reveal extensive subdivision of empty land. Throughout this period, references to residents of the Lincoln Park section were frequently inclusive of persons living in nearby city territory. Doubtless the D&C was thinking, in part, of these city residents when it observed that western suburban residents want "the factories in this area to come

under city control and be governed by the smoke ordinance." But the newspaper aimed specifically at both industrial and residential property owners in Gates when it said:

This district already has the protection of the city fire and police departments, and the general opinion is that it should be taken into the city and receive other benefits and share the burdens.²²

The D&C also observed that, on the city's east side, residents north of Main Street East and east of Culver Road "have repeatedly signified their willingness to be taken in, so that they might have water and sewer privileges." The area the paper referred to was part of the Holland Settlement section, north of the erstwhile Brighton Village.

And what had become of the Holland Settlement since the city's earlier attempt to annex it along with Brighton Village in 1905? At that time the area was rather sparsely settled, with no more than perhaps one hundred inhabitants whose unimproved residential streets ran between, and through, garden farms and nurseries. In 1910, the Post-Express characterized it thusly:

This is a strictly residence district, differing from nearly all of the other suburban settlements in being devoid of manufacturing interests. Holland Settlement, too, is one of the oldest suburbs of the city, but since the extension of the Main Street east trolley line to the Blossom Road, the introduction of a water supply by the Rochester and Lake Ontario Water Company and the installation of electric lights, gas and other conveniences the district has greatly increased in population.²³

According to the Evening Times, which published the following statement the same day that the above description appeared in the Post-Express, "The Holland Settlement, as it is familiarly called, has grown to considerable proportions, and has all the advantages of the city without sharing in the usual expense of city life."

There is strong justification for the speculation that these newspaper statements concerning the Holland Settlement were the product of quiet interviews with administration officials. The following day, March 1, 1910, the city announced that a bill for the annexation of the area had been prepared in the Corporation Counsel's Office and would "immediately be sent down to Albany for introduction in the Legislature." ²⁴ The announcement was made on a Tuesday; on Thursday evening a meeting of the Holland-American Republican Club was held in the settlement, amply attended by area residents who protested the scheme. The "indignation meeting" (as such gatherings were inevitably called) decided to circulate an oppositionist petition and chose a "select committee" to call on Mayor Edgerton. The committee consisted of Town Supervisor Babcock, Justice of the Peace Jacob DeBert, and Cornelius DeBryan.

The Evening Times, reporting the following day that opposition to the bill had "already" developed, described the three man delegation which was expected to call on Edgerton. "This," observed the paper, "has been the procedure in all annexation projects ever advanced by the city, so it is no suprise to the administration." ²⁵ DeBryan was less blase, and was soon quoted in the press in the following terms:

The people of the Holland Settlement are up in arms about this thing. On all the street corners you see men discussing it. They are all opposed to it. Most of them own their little homes, or are paying for them. Their taxes will be increased if they are taken into the city and they will get no additional benefits. For some it will mean the losing of their homes.

DeBryan added that about 120 out of 150 affected taxpayers had already signed the oppositionist petition (this was March 6, five days after

announcement of the annexation bill) and that perhaps 6 or 7 taxpayers
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in the settlement were annexationists.

On March 7 the Evening Times reported the delegation's visit to Edgerton in humorous terms. Simultaneous with the arrival of the Holland Settlement committee, the city hall police officer found a half-frozen bat from the belfry in the city hall vestibule. He brought it to the mayor's office to thaw near the steam radiator, where it recovered during the conference. The Times did not know whether the bat was an evil portent for the Mayor's annexation plans. The conference itself was inconclusive; Edgerton listened to the protestors sympathetically but made no promises.

Three days later "an emphatic protest" was registered by about fifty Irondequoit residents in a meeting called to block annexation of a small section of that town. The parcel in question was the northern corner of the territory described in the annexation bill. The city had included a small part of Irondequoit--150 feet on the northeast sides of Merchants and Culver Roads and a triangle of about 25 acres bounded by the two roads and the Brighton town line--to rationalize the proposed new boundary between the town and the city. (Doubtless, City Engineer Edwin Fisher had a good deal of influence in fixing such boundaries, as the city officer solely responsible for planning future service main extensions and other physical improvements.) The affected property owners, however, had little concern for the aesthetics of the city boundary line, and no wish to begin paying higher taxes in anticipation of sewers and the like. They persuaded the Town Board to oppose unanimously the

annexation of Irondequoit territory, save a "compromise parcel"--the tier of lots on the east side of Culver Road. The annexation of these lots would enable the city to make proper assessments for the maintenance and improvement of the road, which was already city territory. The Irondequoit meeting concluded with the appointment of a committee to call on the local legislators.

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Perhaps the entire issue was best summarized by one of the series of brilliant political cartoons by "Clubb" which appeared regularly in the Herald. The cartoon published March 9 was titled, "Come, take it my boy, don't be afraid of the pup." Mayor Edgerton is pictured in a more-than-usually avuncular caricature, a stocky figure holding an "annexation" peppermint stick in one hand and a small, friendly "city taxes" dog on a short leash with the other. The Holland Settlement, a boy with complete Dutch costume and saucer eyes, watches warily from behind a tree a few feet away.

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In the face of determined opposition from both Brighton and Irondequoit, the administration quietly tore up its March annexation bill. Clearly, different tactics would be needed if Edgerton was to accomplish his ends in a peaceful fashion--and honor his pledge to refrain from annexing the unwilling. The Mayor's disappointing experiences with the Highland Avenue property owners had probably been a factor influencing the administration's procedure in the winter of 1909-10. Edgerton's annexation proposal contained in his annual message in January 1910 elicited comment in the press but little positive response from the suburbs. The rather abrupt announcement in early March that an annexation bill was on its way to Albany was probably made with the hope that

Holland Settlement residents would accept its annexation as a fait accompli. If not, perhaps the bill would slip through the legislature in its closing weeks before resistance could be organized. Ordinarily, the legislature adjourned in March or early April, and typically dealt with numerous odds and ends--such as minor special city laws--at that time. The tactic failed.

The single optimistic development during the winter was a little-noted event in Charlotte. There, the Beach Avenue Improvement Association, "composed for the most part of Rochester people who make their summer homes in the lakeside village" had gone on record February 25 as emphatically favoring annexation. Moreover, the Village President, Frank Pye, had been one of the speakers in favor of joining the city!²⁹ Curiously, residents adjacent to the city had little taste for annexation while here was favorable sentiment in a village five miles distant.

The Mayor no doubt gave these matters some thought during the spring of 1910, and discussed annexation with Frank Pye and others in Charlotte as well. Since several attempts at annexing particular parcels in Brighton and Irondequoit had failed, Edgerton determined on a new course: omnibus annexation. He would capitalize on the favorable sentiment which existed in Charlotte and make the annexation of the port the centerpiece in a grand annexation proposal the magnitude of which, hopefully, would overpower suburban objections wherever they cropped up.

Carefully timing his announcement to coincide with ceremonies attending the inaugural service of a new passenger steamship, the "Rochester," Edgerton attempted to inject as much drama into the

situation as possible. The two newspapers normally cooperative with the administration, the Evening Times and the D&C, were briefed in detail in advance, and the plan was outlined by Edgerton during his speech aboard the "Rochester," delivered while standing congenially next to Frank Pye. The big news on June 18 was not the new steamship but the "Greater Rochester" to be.

"Mayor Edgerton Planning For A Greater Rochester," headlined the D&C in type size unusually large for local stories. The banner in the Evening Times, even larger, proclaimed: "TO ANNEX CHARLOTTE AND OTHER TERRITORY; Mayor Edgerton To Make a Survey of A Comprehensive Plan For
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Greater Rochester."

Mayor Edgerton was interviewed this morning on the subject by an Evening Times reporter and His Honor declared himself in no uncertain terms and in harmony with the progressive spirit of Rochester.

"We shall annex Charlotte and a considerable territory adjacent to other quarters than the north side of the city," said he. "We shall get everything right before we start, but when we start we shall go through with it. We don't want an annexation bill in the Legislature every year or two, so we shall have our annexation plan on a comprehensive scale.

"The city was not ready for it this last winter, or the necessary legislation would have been introduced. It is an important subject and requires certain detailed consideration. I am going to give this matter personal attention at once and look over the territory adjacent to all quarters of the city and will consider with others what is best to be done."

In grandiloquent terms the Mayor sketched out the future benefits annexation would bring. Annexation of the port village was vital, he said, "not only for the development of the harbor and its trade but for the

future development of trade at the port for the benefit of the city." This was somewhat circular, but the Mayor explained his hope that the city could widen and deepen the harbor, by persuading the (federal) government to take action. "With proper harbor facilities the lake passenger boats will continue to make Charlotte a port of entry and tourists from all over the country will come to Rochester to start their lake trips instead of going to Buffalo or Toronto."³¹

On the southwest, Edgerton indicated he had definite designs on Lincoln Park and the Thurston Road section. Said the D&C:

In this section are many factories, notably the Co-operative Foundry, the Pneumatic Signal Works, the Pfaudler plant and the new Symington plant, with a dozen more large concerns, which are now just outside the city. These will be taken in and permitted to pay their share of the city taxes.³²

The Mayor declined to say he had a definite western boundary in mind, but thought that Dewey Avenue would make a splendid straight boulevard northward clear to the lake. The avenue would then begin

attracting large dwellings with show yards like those to be seen on East Boulevard, East Avenue and similar thoroughfares
(D)evelopment of Dewey Avenue due northward is logical and as certain as the growth of any other part of the city.³³

On the east side, the Holland Settlement was "sure" to be taken in, perhaps along with considerable Irondequoit territory--along the Bay and between St. Paul Boulevard and the Genesee River. "It is," admitted the Mayor, "pretty hard on people to annex their farmlands."³⁴

For this and other reasons the whole omnibus annexation plan was going to require careful study as well as the Mayor's personal attention.

There was no doubt as to the degree of importance to the city's general well-being which Edgerton attached to expansion. It could, according to the administration, even help alleviate the shortage of homes at reasonable prices. Annexation could afford the opportunity for capital to be invested in the development of new tracts of land, obtainable at low prices near good transportation lines. "In no other way, it is claimed by those who have studied the housing problem, can a sufficient number of moderate-priced homes be provided."³⁵

By coloring in his new annexation proposal in the boldest possible strokes, Edgerton succeeded in creating a generally favorable climate of opinion towards city expansion in the summer of 1910. Since drawing up the omnibus bill would take time, and the bill would not be introduced in the legislature until the following winter, oppositionists in places like the Holland Settlement who had organized a virulent protest a few months before were lulled into inactivity. There is no record that Cornelius DeBruyan, who in March had expressed the fear that annexation would mean the loss of homes in the Holland Settlement, made any public reaction at all in June. The exaggerated disaster of city taxation lay comfortably in the future.

The new climate of opinion which prevailed during the summer seemed to tacitly agree with the administration's seriousness of purpose. The expansion of the city limits, after all, was in line with the impetus to create a "Greater Rochester," a slogan which referred to more than mere geography. In the year 1910 the city was at the midpoint of a multifaceted campaign for improvement of what its citizens considered an already

outstanding social and economic order. The campaign was joined by groups as diverse as the Chamber of Commerce, the Ministerial Association, the Labor Lyceum, and a Civic Betterment Committee. These groups, with others were associated in an umbrella organization called the Civic Improvement League. The Chamber led the fight for creation of a "Greater Rochester" with a barrage of promotional activities mainly designed to attract new industry. Its Secretary, Sidney R. Clarke, promoted two new slogans in 1907 and 1908--"Do It For Rochester" and "Rochester Made Means Quality." Both slogans quickly gained wide currency and the former, particularly, became a catch phrase at every fund raising event, political rally, or reformers' gathering. Following Edgerton's proposals of mid-June, citizens of Charlotte who pondered the annexation question, according to one newspaper, reached the following verdict: "Charlotte needs Rochester, and Rochester, Charlotte." Therefore, "Do it for Charlotte as well as Rochester."

What seemed to be a growing annexationist movement in Charlotte, (evidenced, for example, by a Charlotte delegation which attended the annual County Supervisors picnic in August with the express purpose of approaching George W. Aldridge), combined with little evidence of protest from other quarters, generated optimism within the administration throughout the summer and the beginning of fall. Numerous petitions from property owners in adjacent territory for connection to city water or sewer mains were granted, reversing the traditional policy. The common council, certain that all such property owners would soon be in the city anyway, acted on Engineer Fisher's recommendation that the connections be permitted,

"on the condition that the owners each separately execute and deliver to the city a contract to be approved by the Corporation Counsel, which would provide for a just assessment and return for the privilege."³⁹

An isolated expression of indignation was registered by farmers at a Town of Greece meeting in September. Although some of the farmers seemed opposed to any annexation of Greece territory by Rochester, others held that "the city could just as well take in the West Side Boulevard,* which is used principally by Rochester people and the village and let it go at that." The familiar argument against annexation of farms was heard, and some speakers seemed bitter that annexation sentiment had been stirred up "entirely" by the cottagers of Ontario Beach, "who are dissatisfied with the taxes imposed upon them by the Village of Charlotte." Others charged that annexation was being supported by "liquor interests" who wanted to stay open until 1:00 A.M. instead of 11:00 P.M., an apparent reference to differing saloon regulations in village and city. The D&C, reporting the town meeting, observed that Greece had nearly voted dry in last fall's election.

The grudge of the farmers then was that their hired help deserted as soon as they got a month's pay and bathed in the alcoholic delights of Charlotte and Ontario Beach. Now the farmers have the added grievance of proposed annexation.⁴⁰

If temperance sentiment was a serious objection to Charlotte annexation in 1910, ironically, in a few years it became an important motivation

*The roadway connecting Charlotte with the city was called a variety of names: "West Side Boulevard," "Charlotte Boulevard," "Lake Boulevard or Avenue," and sometimes simply "Boulevard." It carried streetcars and much carriage and auto pleasure traffic.

behind the final drive for annexation in Charlotte itself after the village acquired the reputation as a "wide-open" town.

The administration remained sanguine in the face of this singular Grecian protest; there was plenty of time remaining for study before the new legislature would convene in January. If it would prove necessary to studiously avoid including farmland in the omnibus annexation bill, there was little problem in doing so; Charlotte could be attached to the Kodak Park section by a shoestring. This was a detail. Most sections which the city was proposing to annex remained silent. Here and there individual property owners underscored the case for annexation with their petitions for service. In October, 600 residents of Lincoln Park submitted a petition to the streetcar company for extension of rails to their section. ⁴¹ While it was not essential that Lincoln Park be annexed to get streetcars, the petition was a favorable omen. Obviously, both the city and the neighborhood would want to see construction of the rails conform to specifications set forth in the service-at-cost contract between the railway company and the city and residents would want the five-cent universal fare guaranteed at the time by that contract.

Also in October, Mayor Edgerton and the Chamber of Commerce dispatched a request to the Dutch Ambassador in London (why London is a mystery). Citing the volume of business between Rochester firms and the Netherlands, and the fact that a large number of Dutch-Americans in the Holland Settlement would soon become Rochesterians, they respectfully requested the posting of a Vice-consul in Rochester. ⁴²

Simultaneously, events far removed from Rochester were taking place which would prove fatal to the mayor's "Greater Rochester" plan of 1910.

Since 1894, with the ascendancy of Thomas C. Platt, the "Easy Boss," the state Republican machine had held Tammany in check by maintaining a firm grip on both the legislature and the governor's mansion. The task was not always an easy one, however. Theodore Roosevelt proved annoyingly independent as governor in 1899 and 1900, which convinced Platt that he should be kicked upstairs to the Vice-presidency. With McKinley's assassination however, the plan backfired. T.R. gathered the federal patronage in New York into his own hands, undermining Platt's influence. The result was the transformation of the state machine, by 1906, into an alliance of local bosses such as George Aldridge. Beset by factionalism, and aware of a serious threat of defeat at the polls by the Democratic organization, the Republican convention in 1906 chose Charles E. Hughes as a highly presentable gubernatorial candidate. Hughes had just completed making his reputation with the investigation of insurance company scandals in New York City. As governor (1906-1910), Hughes championed numerous reforms, helping to maintain his own popularity and insuring Republican victories. However, his relations with the party heirarchy became increasingly strained as he found his efforts blocked at every turn; the bosses, for their part, found Hughes' independence increasingly annoying.

Now, in October 1910, the governor resigned his position to accept a seat on the United States Supreme Court. With Hughes out of the picture, Tammany rode to victory at the polls, electing not only John A. Dix as governor but majorities in both houses of the legislature as well. Rochester's Monroe County was one of the few in the state still able to send a Republican delegation to Albany.

Without Republican control of the legislature, Edgerton's omnibus annexation plan apparently lay in ruins. While the city administration maintained official silence, the anti-Aldridge Herald explained to Rochester, on November 25, what it believed was the fate of the annexation plan.

(T)he Republican organization had planned this winter to have enacted a sweeping annexation act. . . . Undoubtedly there would have been objections made to some portions of the programme, but under old conditions no attention need to have been paid to the objections. After the bill was drafted and approved by the Republican organization, that ended it. It was bound to receive the support of all the legislators from Monroe County and in the case of a local measure that meant the unanimous support of all the Republican legislators in the Senate and Assembly /However, / the Republican delegation from Monroe is the only solid Republican delegation in the state. . . . In a Republican Legislature this solidity might be of considerable advantage in gaining political favors. In a Democratic Senate and Assembly, the support of the Monroe County delegation will be a handicap rather than an aid in securing the passage of an annexation bill that will add Republican votes to the city population.

A "quiet canvass," according to the newspaper, revealed that "leaders will probably refrain from writing an annexation bill . . . at least a sweeping one, and probably none at all. If there had been any suspicion of the cyclone that was coming, the organization would have put its annexation bill through last winter, when it had the opportunity." ⁴⁴

Edgerton, for his part, did not seem entirely discouraged as yet. A report in the afternoon Union and Advertiser which appeared the same day as the lengthy analysis in the morning Herald said that Edgerton, following his latest conference with Frank Pye, reiterated his statement that he was urging the annexation of Charlotte. ⁴⁵ A week later, however, Edgerton denied he had made such a statement.

In the absence of definitive action by the administration, the issue of annexation continued to be hashed out in the press. The Evening Times, contradicting the Herald point-blank, loudly proclaimed that the city would press its wide-range annexation plan. County Democrats, said the Times, will "doubtless" oppose the plan to deny Republicans the credit. However, the Republican delegation would "have sufficient influence" to counteract opposition. The Times followed up its debatable assertions the next day with a strong editorial of support for annexation. The editorial, titled "For a Greater Rochester," proved the newspaper's capability for taking a broad view:

Great as has been the growth of this city during the last ten years, its percentage of increase has not equalled that of Cleveland and some other middle west cities which have taken into their corporate limits suburban sections as fast as the mutual interests of both city and suburb seemed to warrant.

Part of the reason Rochesterians were disappointed at not finding the recent census count top 250,000 was that they had come to look upon the thickly settled areas like the Holland Settlement as part of the city. (Rochester's population in the 1910 census was counted as 218,149.)

Some of these suburban communities have sprung up around manufacturing plants, while others have been founded by people who desired to live within working distance of the city and at the same time escape their share of the city's cost of government.⁴⁶

No doubt Mayor Edgerton heartily shared in the sentiments expressed in the Times, but his position during this month of stunning Republican defeat was a difficult one. The situation pictured in a "Clubb" cartoon

was an orphan girl, "Charlotte," seated on a doorstep asking, "Am I Going To Get In Now?" A portly gentleman, "Father Rochester" stands in the doorway looking down in utter perplexity.

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Even faithful Charlotte began to waver during December. A series of letters to the editor and news reports published that month revealed that annexationist sentiment was not as strong in the village as had been supposed. By mid-December, following the familiar pattern, petitions had been circulated among businessmen and residents, a majority of whom it now seemed were in opposition to joining Rochester. The Village President, Frank Pye, stated that while he was still in favor of annexation, he would concede to the will of the majority.

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Such was the ungraceful conclusion of Edgerton's grand annexation initiative of 1910. In a desultory fashion the city again submitted its Holland Settlement annexation bill in the 1911 legislative session, but the legislature, as expected, failed to act on it. A year later the Post-Express sent a reporter to interview Assistant Corporation Counsel Benjamin B. Cunningham about the effect of a Democratic legislature on bills desired by the city.

Reporter: "What legislation are you preparing for the city to be introduced at the next session?"

"Not any," was the answer, "what's the use?"

"But even a Tammanyized state legislature will not interfere with the orderly transaction of the city's business will it?"

"It seems so. . . . The Tammany legislature last winter failed to pass the bill desired by the city providing for the annexation of Holland Settlement in Brighton. That territory should have been annexed before work on the Twelfth and Twenty-first ward sewer system was begun so it could have been included in the scheme as it will have to be in the end."

"What did the legislature do with that bill?"

"Nothing; just let it die."⁴⁹

The Democratic state organization, however, was not enjoying its new-found power in complete tranquility. The complex and often squalid events taking place in Albany during these years, reflecting little credit on either major party, had a direct bearing on the success or failure of the Rochester administration's attempts at expansion. The four years of Democratic ascendancy in the state government, 1910-1914, were marked by bitter intraparty struggles. In the first legislative session following the Democratic victory in 1910, state government lay paralyzed for months while the party debated the selection of a new United States Senator. The candidates proposed by Tammany were unacceptable to more northern Democrats like the new State Senator Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who led the opposition. At the end of the struggle, which ended in compromise, the party was hopelessly divided and could accomplish little. Meanwhile, Governor John A. Dix managed to alienate both reformers and regulars and was replaced as the party's candidate by a Tammany man, William Sulzer. Sulzer, however, proved too independent to suit Boss Charles E. Murphy and was impeached in October 1913, an event marking one of the lowest points in New York State politics. Sulzer was succeeded by Lieutenant Governor Martin H. Glynn, who, as Democratic candidate in 1914, was defeated by Charles S. Whitman. The election of 1914, a Republican year because it was midterm of a Democratic national administration, saw the return of the state legislature as well to Republican hands.

During the first half of these four chaotic years in state politics, the routine business of government was largely disrupted. The normal changeover in legislative committee organization and in the filling of

key appointments was protracted by the distress within Democratic ranks; the situation became further tangled when, in 1912, the Republicans recaptured the Assembly but not the Senate. Chaos was increased by the inability of two governors in succession, Dix and Sulzer, to provide effective leadership. In short, Benjamin B. Cunningham's evaluation of the situation with regard to the prospect of writing local bills-- "What's the use?"--was fully justified. Towards the second half of these four years, however, conditions in the legislature improved as resourceful Democrats like Robert F. Wagner in the Senate and Alfred E. Smith in the Assembly began providing the party with a sense of direction. Democratic legislators, faced with frequently slim majorities, increasingly turned to Republicans in a spirit of compromise. This, in broad terms, explains why the Monroe County delegation was again able to pursue Edgerton's annexation program in 1913 and 1914, despite a Democratic state government.

Two developments in the winter of 1912-13 encouraged the city administration in a new campaign for expansion. In November 1912 a newly formed organization in Charlotte calling itself the Law and Order League held a taxpayers meeting to discuss the annexation issue. For reasons which will be detailed in the next chapter, there was now a growing body of opinion in Charlotte that the village was plagued by an excessive number of saloons and certain "disorderly elements." In a fashion typical of the times, individuals maintained that the moral issue, serious enough as it was, had a bearing on the village economy. "It was made plain [at the meeting] by the utterances of leading men

of the village that Charlotte's growth has been seriously retarded by
 its past reputation for wide open conditions.⁵¹ The League named a
 three man committee from among its leaders, Reverend H.F. Gilt,
 Reverend William Payne, and John Henderson, to call on Mayor Edgerton
 and request annexation; the results of that conference, held a few days
 later, are unknown since neither party cared to discuss the outcome.⁵²
 Probably Edgerton urged the annexationists to maintain a low profile
 and await, as he was, the organization of the new state legislature
 in a few months' time.

Three months later, in February 1913, loud protests were heard from
 residents of the Dewey Avenue section in the city's Tenth Ward who had
 just received assessments for construction of the Dewey Avenue sewer.
 The costly sewer was serving not only city residents, but also an
 (unspecified) number of property owners outside the city whose petitions
 for sewer service had been granted by the common council. Furthermore,
 development of suburban sections just outside the Tenth Ward--particularly
 the Kodak Park district to the west and north of it--promised further
 inequities in the future. The Tenth Ward alderman had no difficulty in
 persuading his colleagues that his constituents' complaint was just.
 The common council unanimously adopted three resolutions: one directed
 the city engineer to determine what, if any, sewers were draining into
 the Dewey Avenue main; another set aside present assessments and directed
 the city assessors to prepare a new roll; a third directed Mayor Edgerton
 to draw up a bill for the annexation of Kodak Park. "This territory,"
 said the Democrat & Chronicle, "is continually asking the common council
 to grant permission to use sewers and city water, but does not want to
 be annexed."⁵³

On March 6 the city announced that Assistant Corporation Counsel Benjamin B. Cunningham had drawn up an "omnibus annexation bill" intended to increase the area of the city by more than one half* and its population by at least 10,000. The bill represented the most ambitious annexation plan to date. In addition to Charlotte, Kodak Park, Lincoln Park, and the Holland Settlement, territory described in the bill included St. Paul Street and all the Irondequoit territory west of it (a long narrow strip along the Genesee River); all of "West Brighton" (an extension of the south city line down to Elmwood Avenue); a sizable block on the city's northeast (encompassed by raising the northeastern border from Norton Street to Ridge Road East in the Town of Irondequoit); and an addition to Durand-Eastman Park for the construction of the proposed sewage treatment plant. Every town adjacent to the city would be substantially affected by the bill. Cunningham announced a full-scale meeting to be held with town supervisors and officers on March 8.

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That meeting, which was held at city hall and attended by over 100 local officials, was the occasion for a full scale debate touching on every aspect of the issue of city expansion. Not suprisingly, the local officials occupied an adversary role, returning again and again to the reluctance of suburban residents to pay city taxes.

Cunningham, the author of the annexation bill, served as the city administration's spokesman. Addressing the members of the town and village boards, he said:

*Contemporary news reports underestimated the scale of the proposed territorial expansion by describing it as an increase of one-fifth.

This annexation plan is going to make a better city and a better county. It will improve the health of the county by its improved sewage systems and sanitation. It will aid the county by increasing the prosperity of the city. The city aims to be entirely fair with the towns.

What was good for the city, said Cunningham, was good for the county.

Paraphrasing William Jennings Bryan, he asked the town officials, "If there were no city here what would your farm values be?" He said that the city was spending \$2,000,000 on its plan to take the sewage out of the river. Meanwhile, the Town of Greece was contemplating two new sewers designed to empty directly into the river. Even if the state should permit the Greece plan to be followed, at some near future date the Greece sewage would have to be taken out of the river and money could be saved by connecting the Greece sewers to the new city interceptor
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now.

In addition to improved sanitation and health protection, said Cunningham, persons in adjacent territory would receive better fire and police protection. And, judging from the experience of the Twenty-first Ward, real estate values would increase rapidly in the annexed territory. "If former plans for the annexation of Lincoln Park territory had gone through all the lands in the town of Gates would have doubled in value." The Supervisor for the Town of Gates, George J. Saile, responded that it was not fair to ask manufacturers to build factories in Gates with a prospect of low taxes and then annex them to the city. "This view,"
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noted the D&C," was applauded by a number of manufacturers."

Another spokesman from Gates pointed out that the town had recently installed "a great sewer for which it has paid \$288,000." In addition, the town had a good water system and supply (from the Lake Ontario Water

Company) for the plants, and the plants were equipped with fire apparatus. The average man in Gates, he said, was not in favor of annexation. "The business plants located there because of the shipping facilities and low taxes, and they should be considered." A third Gates man, however, said he believed householders in Gates favored annexation to the city.⁵⁷

A major portion of the meeting conducted by Cunningham dealt with matters of taxation and finance. It developed that town tax rates, while significantly lower than the city's, were not extraordinarily lower. The Greece rate was \$12.50 per \$1,000 assessed valuation, not including school district costs (which were low in Kodak Park and high outside of it). This compared to a city rate of \$19.345, which included City School District costs. School costs varied greatly from town to town, averaging perhaps \$3.00 or \$4.00 per \$1,000 assessed valuation. The range was represented at its low end by School District Number 1 in Greece, the Kodak Park section, which voted a 6¢ tax rate in 1913--owing to the modest needs of a single school house and presence of Eastman Kodak's principle manufacturing facility. The other end of the scale was represented by the Charlotte school district--boasting the only high school outside the city--whose tax rate was so high that combined village and school rates climbed well above the city's rate in the years preceding annexation.

As towns were beginning to provide a variety of services including pavement of their principle thoroughfares, their tax rates crept upward. The 1913 Greece rate of \$12.50 just alluded to had risen from \$8.47 in 1912 and \$7.22 in 1911. The average increase in tax rates for the five adjacent towns and Charlotte in 1912 (reflecting increases over the 1911

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figures) was almost 29 per cent. Meanwhile, the city tax rate was very stable during these years--\$19.32 in 1910; \$19.345 in 1913; and \$19.73 in 1915.

These trends were not apparent to contemporaries, particularly to some suburban oppositionists who objected to helping pay the city's debt service on its capital improvements. It is difficult to see the logic of their argument, given the fact that all city residents--and even some non-contributing suburbanites--benefitted from the city's fire apparatus, its parks, and its improved thoroughfares. If the suburbanite became a city resident, he was then entitled to additional benefits, such as free access to the city's high schools, sewage system, and water works--and upon joining the city his taxes reflected the costs of retiring the debt on these improvements. The question was posed to Cunningham: "Will the towns have to assist in paying the bonded indebtedness of the city?"

Cunningham replied that the indebtedness would be paid by the city at large. He explained that it would cost the city a very large sum during the next five years to extend city services to the territory annexed and the sum would be far greater than the proportion paid by the annexed residents for city indebtedness. To a query as to whether the people in Gates and Greece would have to pay for Lake Ontario water at a high rate and at the same time pay for Hemlock water for the rest of the city, Cunningham replied that the Hemlock water works system was self-sustaining; it paid all the interest on the bonds issued and established a sinking fund with which the original debt would eventually be paid. Elaborating on problems of debt financing, Cunningham said

that if the plans for annexation took in a school district or even half of it, the city would assume the entire district debt. Further, in the case of a district only partially annexed, the city would permit children of the whole district to attend city schools without charge.*

Reaction to the city's latest omnibus annexation proposal was swift. The town officials returned to their bailiwicks and organized a series of protest meetings during the week following Cunningham's presentation. As the Times put it, the "town solons were suffering from annexationitis and seeking cures." Brighton Supervisor Hiram Shaw called a meeting in the Holland Settlement and elicited a taxpayers' vote of 84 to 18 against annexation, as well as authorization from his town board to engage an attorney who would travel to Albany, if necessary, to fight the annexation bill. The Supervisor of Irondequoit, Louis J. Dubelbeiss, in a visit to the County Court House was quoted as saying, "Why they want to take our polling place. We of the second district in Irondequoit have been voting at Scheutzen Park and the city wants to grab it. If they succeed, where do we vote?"⁶⁰ Dubelbeiss managed to collect only 60

*This magnanimous proposal, reiterated by the city administration on several occasions in subsequent years, seemed both generous and sensible at the time. Its implementation, however, was to have extraordinary consequences which Benjamin Cunningham could hardly have supposed. The annexation of several schools in the towns was accompanied with agreements, written into state law, that the City of Rochester would provide free education for resident children in a number of adjoining tracts. At the time these tracts were only lightly populated, and the city administration anticipated their eventual annexation. But the process of municipal expansion came to a halt in the 1920s, the suburban towns continued to attract population, and by the 1970s several thousand school pupils would annually be sent from numerous "free school districts" to attend the city schools. The larger free school districts in the Town of Greece became sufficiently organized to elect school commissioners who now arrange for the purchase of school buses paid for by a small property tax.

taxpayers for a town meeting, but persuaded them to resolve that

. . . such annexation is not to be desired; that it would remove from the assets of our town valuable property and property rights and deprive us of a valuable and large source of revenue, and that the annexation of such land is not necessary to the welfare of Rochester and consists in the most part of farm land arbitrarily chosen.⁶¹

In Greece, over 120 taxpayers from the section north of the Tenth Ward and south of Charlotte gathered to hear Supervisor Frank Dobson and Willis N. Britton. Britton, said to be the largest property owner next to Eastman Kodak in the Town of Greece, held that he could see advantages and disadvantages in the city's plan, and remained noncommittal. Dobson, however, was less sanguine and persuaded the gathering to subscribe their names to a statement that the "annexation plan is meritless." An oppositionist committee was appointed with the purpose of carrying its message to other sections of Greece and to call on Mayor Edgerton; if the city administration could not be made to back down, then the delegation would travel to Albany.⁶²

Two days later Dobson called a second meeting at the fire hall in Charlotte. About 150 persons attended, including a large delegation from parts of Greece outside the village and even some Gates oppositionists led by Supervisor Sailes. John C. Henderson, a Charlotte man and perennial annexationist, spoke strongly in favor of joining the city. He intimated he would rather be a lamp post in the city than an arc light in the village--a reference to the rather creaky condition of municipal service facilities in Charlotte. Other support for annexation at the meeting came from representatives of the Beach Avenue Association, the organization of the summer cottagers, and from individuals who charged

that the remainder of the town was reluctant to lose Charlotte because it would mean the loss of \$7,000 annually in excise taxes paid in the town treasury. The bulk of the excise tax came from Charlotte saloons. Annexationists also pointed out that the (combined school and) village tax rate was up to \$23.00, about \$4.00 higher than Rochester's rate, and felt that villagers had little to show for their money.

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Frank Pye, no longer Village President but still a figure to be reckoned with in Charlotte politics, was said to be in control of the meeting. Pye was now in league with Dobson in opposition to Edgerton's plans. According to the Democrat & Chronicle, many of the voters present at the meeting were in favor of annexation; many more were on the fence and did not vote. A vote, taken on the proposition to annex the village to the city, was defeated by a margin of twenty. The meeting also chose a committee which was unanimously opposed to annexation to confer with Edgerton.

Except for the case of Charlotte, taxation was everywhere the principle objection to annexation. The Herald, often a critic of the administration, analyzed the results of the meetings in the five adjacent towns and concluded that city officials were correct in charging that "fear of increased taxes" as a "main argument against annexation" was unfair and selfish. The newspaper thought, however, that this time around the administration's plan was too ambitious.

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An anonymous city official who was quoted extensively in the Union and Advertiser seemed particularly bitter on the subject of manufacturers who escaped taxation in Lincoln Park:

Don't josh yourself into the belief that this factory plan is all fair and equitable. These plants move to Rochester because this is a progressive city and a good manufacturing center. They receive their mail here, they have their offices here, they do their banking here, but they carefully see to it that they avoid taxation for these privileges by stepping beyond the boundary line.

The city officer also pointed out the need for adequate regulation of industrial installations.

Take the Buffalo, Rochester, and Pittsburgh roundhouse. There are some two hundred acres of good land surrounding it, yet it is unavailable for home sites under present conditions. The chimneys give off a smudge that blackens the faces of men passing near the place and makes living disagreeable anywhere in the vicinity. With this property inside the boundaries, the city could make short work of the nuisance.⁶⁵

Another expression of official disapproval of suburban nuisances came from County Sheriff Harley E. Hamil. Declaring himself "strong for annexation," the Sheriff said he was tired of spending all his spare time during the summer checking for violations in the Charlotte saloons.⁶⁶

In a last attempt at persuasion of the local officials, the city administration arranged a hearing for them before Mayor Edgerton one week after Cunningham's presentation. About 75 officials and property owners gathered at city hall, not, however, to be persuaded but to register a vehement protest. Edgerton, Cunningham, and Fisher had copies of the bill and their arguments in readiness. The suburban officials, on their part, had their instructions, and as a consequence the meeting was "a spirited affair." The Evening Times said that "it verged for a few moments almost on the acrimonious and personalities were indulged in." At the end of the meeting, there was a general understanding that most, if not all, the town boards would engage attorneys to lobby in opposition at the legislature.⁶⁷

Early in the following week, the administration announced that it was paring down its expansion plan. "Half a loaf is better than no bread--⁶⁸ thus Mayor Hiram H. Edgerton argues in the case of the annexation bill." Still arguing that annexation benefits the annexed more than the city, Edgerton said he was dropping plans to annex the large expanse of territory on the city's west side included in the original bill, but was still intending to take in some Irondequoit territory on the city's northeast, and the Holland Settlement as well as other Brighton land.⁶⁹ The west side had expressed more vehement objections to proposed annexation, and, in terms of immediate plans for sewer extensions, the need to take in the east side suburbs was more compelling.

Somewhat ironically, on the same day that Edgerton made his announcement, a village election in Charlotte said to focus on the annexation issue swept the miniature Frank Pye "machine" from power. The new Village President, Charles Hannah, enjoyed the support of the Law and Order League and other good government elements in defeating Pye's candidate for the job.⁷⁰ Two weeks later the Charlotte Law and Order League held a taxpayer's meeting which resulted in a vote of 115 to 4 in favor of annexation.⁷¹ Despite these encouraging developments, the city administration made no move to reincorporate Charlotte in its 1913 annexation program. Perhaps Edgerton wished to concentrate his energies on the east side, or believed it would be opportune to wait until the section of Greece between Charlotte and the city became more developed before reaching out for the port village.

Of course, the city was not reluctant to include neighborhoods where property owners made definite appeals for annexation. Such was

the case, for example with the small section of Irondequoit north of Norton Street roughly bounded by the river, Ridge Road, and Joseph Avenue. A few days after Edgerton's announcement of a pared down annexation plan, property owners in a section of Gates bounded by Chili Avenue and the barge canal petitioned for connection to the Nineteenth Ward. Residents and developers alike in this section were anxious for sewer extensions. The parcel was adjacent to, but not part of, Lincoln Park proper. In May, only a few days before final passage of the administration's bill, the owners of the Moerlbach Brewery on Emerson Street, also in Gates, successfully petitioned for annexation as well. 72

During the third week of March the city announced that an annexation bill was on its way to Albany under custody of the local legislators. In addition to the Gates and Irondequoit sections described above, the bill provided for annexation of the Holland Settlement and a substantial section of Brighton south of the Twenty-first Ward, an area south and east of the city's Cobbs Hill. The dimensions of the proposed Brighton annexation were, in fact, similar to those first proposed eight years before (Figure III-4) in connection with the annexation of Brighton Village. The city's revised plan received swift endorsement from the Chamber of Commerce. 73

While the bulk of opinion in the Holland Settlement was unfavorable to annexation, most homeowners in southern part of the described territory in Brighton were not oppositionist. This "Highland Avenue section" (bounded on the south by the Avenue but not the same part of Highland Avenue which Edgerton previously had proposed to turn into a boulevard) was physically and psychologically separated from the Holland Settlement.

It had undergone residential development during the past eight years but enjoyed little in the way of improvements.

Not suprisingly, soon after the city's announcement of an annexation bill on the way, the Brighton Town Board called a plebiscite in the affected territory. On the day before the vote, March 31, annexationists in the Settlement joined forces with those in the southern section and published an announcement in the newspapers. Among other things, they said:

By coming into the city the taxes will be about 20% more, while the benefits will amount to fully 100% more each year. . . . We need better street car service, a sewer system, a new school building, . . . fire protection, grades established and cement walks, police protection, street lighting, streets numbered, mail carried to our doors, the car tracks laid in the center of Main Street, and Winton Road paved, the cost of which would be largely paid by the street car company.⁷⁴

The result of the plebiscite, however, showed that "the Dutchman of the Holland Settlement are frankly afraid of the Rochester tax rate." The vote was 154 to 77 against annexation. The D&C archly noted that the saloon interests "were said" to be a factor in the outcome. Saloon operators were faced with a \$500 increase in license fees if annexation took place, and "it was noted that beer was flowing freely and wagon loads of it were backed up to the polling place as soon as the result
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was announced."

The Brighton Town Board met immediately after the votes were counted and decided to retain an attorney to lobby in Albany. This action found little favor in the south section where property owners, 32 strong, had voted seven to one in favor of annexation. They darkly threatened to bring suit against the Town Board for relief of the injustice of having

to help pay the attorney's fees, but, as events were shortly to prove, soon had little reason to do so. Despite the opposition of Brighton, Mayor Edgerton and City Engineer Fisher were determined that the Holland Settlement would not escape this time. Annexation was necessary, they said, to provide for the development of sewer plans.

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Meanwhile, the scene of conflict had shifted to the legislative halls of Albany, where Assemblyman Simon Adler of Rochester had introduced the administration's bill a week before. Attorney John J. McInerny, a former Assemblyman, was also in Albany representing the Town Board of Brighton. On April 10, a date late in the legislative session, the annexation bill reached the Assembly's calendar. Much to Adler's surprise, consideration of the bill was postponed at the request of Assemblyman Ward D. Jackson of Buffalo, who said he had amendments to offer. The Rochester newspapers took this as a sign that the Democratic leadership in the legislature was not going to permit passage of the bill. On the floor of the Assembly, Adler requested explanation for the Buffalo legislator's interest in a "Rochester bill." Neither the Speaker nor Majority Leader seemed to know, and two days later Jackson withdrew his opposition and the bill cleared the Assembly. In rapid succession the Senate Cities Committee and the Senate itself added their approval. The Senate's final action came on May 3, the day of adjournment. As the Union and Advertiser observed, the Republican Rochester delegation had been "very successful" with its local legislation during the year despite a Democratic legislature.

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Part of the explanation for the successful passage of the annexation bill no doubt lay in the fact that the Monroe County Democratic Chairman, George Noeth, who was also a Brighton

resident, chose to remain neutral. Of much greater importance, perhaps, was the degree of accommodation with Democratic legislators which the Rochester delegation had achieved.

Between Mayor Edgerton's announcement, on May 9, that a formal hearing would be held on the bill and May 17, when the hearing took place, the Brighton Town Board considered taking further steps to block the annexation by hiring a second lobbyist to appeal to Governor Sulzer. They quietly dropped the plan, however, and the hearing in city hall was a peaceful one attended mainly by annexationists. Mayor Edgerton signed the bill at the close of the hearing, telling those opposed "that they could not stop Rochester from growing."⁷⁸

An event which occurred later in the month might have given Mayor Edgerton pause before making further statements along those lines, if he gave it full consideration. As it was, the event passed without apparent reaction on the part of the city administration--which was all the more ominous in terms of prospects for future city expansion. Members of a recently organized cooperative lot association called the Acres Community Club voted on May 21 to undertake construction of an independent sewer system rather than seek annexation of their subdivision, the Home Acres Tract, to the city. The Home Acres Tract was an ambitious residential development at the foot of Cobbs Hill in the Town of Brighton, featuring curved streets and landscaping in the romantic tradition. It was located just south and west of the Highland Avenue section contained in the administration's most recent annexation bill. The Tract's plan featured a gateway opening at the intersection of Highland and Monroe Avenue.

The Home Acres Tract was a deliberately planned project. To characterize it as a "cooperative lot association" is a little misleading since the designation belies its upper income nature. But, like the cooperative lot associations typically organized by immigrant groups in the nineteenth century city, the Home Acres project was a vehicle for individuals to acquire lots for construction of their own private residences.

Some members of the Acres Community Club argued that improvements in the tract would be better and cheaper in the long run if made by the city. Many improvements, however, had already been accomplished independently. The tract had invited service from the Lake Ontario Water Company, and, although very few homes had as yet been constructed, the entire development was equipped with water mains and fire hydrants. The Rochester Railway and Light Company had already laid gas and electric conduits in some portions, and had promised that conduits would be laid in all portions without delay. Streetcar service was no problem, since the existing Monroe Avenue line terminated at the tract's doorstep. Like Brighton Village nine years before, however, the Home Acres Tract faced a pressing decision on sewers. The three alternatives available were to seek annexation, construct an independent sewer system, or depend on "individual sewage disposal plants" (the newly perfected underground septic system). The Town Board of Brighton had "agreed to do what it can toward aiding the club members to improve the tract." ⁷⁹ A majority of the club members decided, therefore, that it would be feasible and probably cheaper to build an independent sewer system designed to discharge by way of Allens Creek through town territory to Irondequoit Bay. The same argument prevailed in the case of ash and refuse collection: that it

would be cheaper to have the work performed through private contract than through the agency of city departments. As the Herald put it:

Having provided for water, lights and sewers--and apparently relying on the generosity of the city for fire protection--the saving was figured to be sufficient to induce the property owners to remain outside the city. Any attempt, therefore, to include that tract in the city later will be fought.⁸⁰

The meeting at which the Acres Community Club determined to remain outside of greater Rochester was held in the common council chambers of city hall. It was the city's policy to permit free use of the building by community groups.

The decision by the Home Acres owners to provide services autonomously was by no means an isolated example of independent suburban development. Throughout the era of annexations sections adjacent to the city independently provided services to satisfy immediately felt needs, usually through the device of the special taxing district. The independent one room, or, more accurately, one building schoolhouse was a traditional feature of suburban life. The special taxing districts which paid for these schools served as prototypes for the wide variety of special districts which multiplied during the early decades of the twentieth century. The sewers being constructed in the Kodak Park section of Greece and the Lake Ontario Water in Lincoln Park and the Holland Settlement are all examples of services, already mentioned, which were paid for by special districts. Other examples abound. In 1912 residents of the area between the Tenth Ward and Charlotte set up a lighting district. Rochester Railway and Light Company agreed to

supply poles, lights, and power at the same price it charged in the city,
 and to be governed by a franchise from the Greece Town Board. ⁸¹ (In 1913
 the same area persuaded the town board to hire two night policemen for
 their section, "made necessary by the vicinity of the city and the extra-
 ordinary growth of population in Greece." ⁸²) In February and March of
 1914, even as the city was contemplating further annexations, the
 Brighton Town Board set up a large water district for the eastern half
 of the town, designed to serve the immediate needs of about 300 families
 and to speed development of the section. The Lake Ontario Water Company
 was the franchisee, and planned to draw water from its standpipe on
 Cobbs Hill. The standpipe was located on a small parcel of private
 land adjacent to the city's splendid new reservoir. ⁸³

Sewers, water, lighting, school--even, in the case of Greece,
 sidewalk--districts impeded the administration's plans to incorporate
 developing districts into the city's centralized governing and service
 supply structures. Suburbanites had little reason to accede to annexa-
 tion as long as they could buy services on an ad hoc basis, usually at
 prices reflecting a substantial savings over city taxes--in the short run.
 The city administration for its part was rarely articulate on the reasons
 for its higher tax rate, but instead emphasized what it felt was the in-
 justice of homeowners' and factories' escaping their "fair share" of city
 taxes.

The reason for the city's higher tax rate, broadly explained, was
 its provision of a full range of services inside the city limits from
 which all metropolitan residents benefited. The public comfort and safety
 of the entire urban area was insured by the city's professional fire,

police, and health bureaus. In the midst of urban expansion and suburbanization, the city's department of public works was constructing its ambitious sewage interceptor and treatment plant (designed to accommodate future growth, and, unlike many town sewage systems soon to be constructed, designed to maintain high standards of purification). In the latter two-thirds of the era of annexation, the city undertook extensive capital improvements, including improvements in the port facilities, library and high school construction, and construction of a rapid transit system. User fees compensated the city for only a small fraction of the cost of such improvements, which directly or indirectly benefitted the whole metropolitan area. Suburbanites took for granted that the city would perform a variety of housekeeping chores, such as street repair and the regulation of the street railway company which many of them used for daily commuting. Moreover, the city, without financial assistance from the suburban towns or the county, had the perennial task of checking rate increases by the local utilities through appeals to the courts and state regulatory agencies.

One inequity in the relationship between city and suburban taxpayers which seemed to capture the imaginations of city officials was the city's provision of fire protection for adjacent areas. In 1914, following the Kodak Park section's third, and latest refusal to acquiesce to annexation the city's Commissioner of Public Safety quietly gave orders that no fire equipment was to be sent beyond city limits without his approval. On March 4, a home on Avis Street in Greece owned by one George Eastman, a house painter, caught fire. Neighbors ran to the nearest city fire box on the corner of Lake and Ridgeway Avenues and

pulled the alarm. They returned to fight the blaze with garden hoses but were unsuccessful. Rochester firemen appeared on the scene two hours after the alarm was sounded and after the house was destroyed. Said the Herald the next day, "Greece citizens waxed indignant last night over the refusal of the department to respond."⁸⁴

Safety Commissioner Charles S. Owen was complacent in his remarks:

I take the entire responsibility for this and other similar cases. The part of the township where the fire did damage was a section which it was desired to annex to the city but the property owners objected. I feel that the Fire Department must be ready to efficiently protect property within the city, and that if the apparatus is sent outside of the limits and a fire breaks out in a part of Rochester which is unprotected because of the absence of the apparatus, the property owner has a cause for action against the city.⁸⁵

Owen explained that "a few days ago" Greece officials came to him with a map of a water system supplied by Lake Ontario water. He refused to look at the plan, told the officials he would send no equipment, and gave his opinion that to do so "would be a grave injustice to the city taxpayers who have to foot the bill for Fire Department maintenance."⁸⁶ Perhaps the Grecians had added insult to injury by bringing the hydrant location map.

Alderman Seiler, Chairman of the common council's Public Safety Committee, endorsed Owen's stand:

The city should not furnish police and fire protection, water or sewage facilities or light to sections outside the city limits. Many factories and families locate just outside the city because they think they will get city facilities and escape city taxes. City privileges should be given only to residents.⁸⁷

As refreshing as this new get-tough policy may have been to the annexationist members of the Edgerton administration, they apparently failed to grasp the fact that suburbs would continue to supply essential services for themselves in a piecemeal fashion--even going so far as to revive the volunteer fire companies which the nineteenth century city had outgrown--rather than gladly embrace city taxes.

One of the central ironies of the era of annexations lies in the fact that the escape from the costs of urban life was ephemeral. As each suburban section which escaped annexation added to the list of services which its residents demanded, the cost of local government crept upward. The average true tax rate inclusive of special districts in Rochester's suburban towns increased nearly 105 per cent between 1915 and 1930. Meanwhile, in the same period, true taxes in the city rose less than 18 per cent. In 1915, city taxes were 63 per cent higher than the average rate in the four towns; in 1930 the city rate was 6 per cent lower.* (The raw data from which these percentages were calculated and values for the individual towns are displayed in Table IV-2.) Suburban oppositionists in the era of annexations failed to recognize that continuation of the hit-or-miss method of providing services, as attractively cheap as it might appear in the short run, could not compare favorably with the economies of scale within the city in the long run. This generalization is the fruit of hindsight; it should be re-emphasized that the city administration and its annexationist allies during the era of annexations were not highly articulate on questions of taxation, and were generally content to limit their analysis to the theme of suburban escapism.

*See also pp. 149-150, supra.

The annexation bill approved in May 1913 became effective January 1, 1914. The annexation was a sizeable one, despite the administration's paring down of its plans. Three towns, Brighton, Gates and Irondequoit, were substantially affected. A fourth town, Chili, which shared only a very short border with Rochester on the city's southwest, contributed a small triangle of land cut off from the town by the proposed route of the state's Barge Canal. The "mini-omnibus" annexation of 1914 totaled nearly 2,500 acres containing, by contemporary newspaper estimates, about 5,000 persons. ⁸⁸ The acreage increased the city's geographic size by 19%. The added population was about two per cent of the city's existing total; indeed, a number of persons disproportionately small for the amount of conflict generated. Similarly the great annexation of 1918-1919, which virtually completed Mayor Edgerton's expansion plans, involved a population probably less than four per cent of the city's.

The historical record contains few clues about the attitudes of manufacturers towards annexation. As we will shortly see, the Eastman Kodak Company, Rochester's largest industry, remained aloof from the issue even while Kodak Park, its principle installation, was being annexed in 1918. But in 1914 the Moerlbach Brewery, which had requested annexation in order to be supplied with the city's superior Hemlock water, used the occasion for advertising purposes. Merlenbach Park, as the brewery's site was called, was the city's only important commercial acquisition in 1914. The Moerlbach owners rose to the occasion with a large New Years Day advertisement:

Coincident with the New Year MOERLBACH CO. becomes essentially a Rochester Institution. . . . Hereafter MOERLBACH will largely contribute to the city coffers and in return shall receive the numerous benefits accruing from the City's model government. . . . Its sacred Resolution this year will be--to remain forever steadfast in our faith in and affection for Rochester and its good people.

Early in 1914 Edgerton made still another attempt (at least his fourth) to straighten the south city line along Highland Avenue, between Highland Park and the intersection with Monroe Avenue. Once again he backed down in the face of opposition from some property owners along the Avenue, and the annexation proposal, modest to begin with, was pared down to slightly over 42 acres. In its final form the annexation bill, effective April 16, 1914, brought in two parcels at either end of the Highland Avenue section which insisted on remaining in Brighton. One "Taxpayer of the Town of Brighton," disgusted at the refusal of his Highland Avenue neighbors to join the city, sent the following letter to the newspapers:

The tax levy of the town of Brighton last year amounted to about \$4,730 thus showing the town to be in a prosperous condition, although improvements are very rare, in fact, none can be seen. Especially is this true in a large section of eastern Brighton including the Highland Avenue section/ where the streets are, with the exception of the summer months, next to impossible. . . . (I)t is a common occurrence for an automobile to get stuck in the mud. This happened last fall when a physician on a hurry call got stuck coming over the Pinnacle Hill, and was delayed nearly two hours. This is about 300 feet over the city line.

In the early part of January, the City of Rochester was about to annex a part of this section and thus give it all the improvements. The residents on Highland Avenue, near Clinton Avenue South, objected, for city improvements cost a little money. They prefer dust and mud rather than part with the good coin. "something for nothing" would appeal to them. These very parties hired two lawyers to fight against being annexed to the city and they won their point, as the city finally backed down. Lawyers charged counsel fees and their services have got to be paid for, the good coin was again in danger and something had to be done. The rumor is now spreading through the town that these parties had an understanding with the Brighton Town Board that their lawyers would be paid by the town at large. . . . Are the taxpayers of the Town of Brighton going to stand for this? Will they pay the expenses incurred by private individuals for their own sole benefit?⁹¹

The large and small annexations of 1913-1914, along with the annexation of Charlotte in 1915, set the stage for the city's great west side annexation of 1918. The "Big Steal," as it was sometimes referred to among Grecians in later years, amounted to nearly 5,000 acres containing both Kodak Park in Greece and Lincoln Park in Gates. As we have seen, this territory was first contained in Mayor Edgerton's annexation proposals of 1910. It was included in the annexation bills of 1913 and 1915 but was removed each time in the face of opposition. One result was that Charlotte was first joined to Rochester by a narrow strip of territory similar to the "shoestring" connecting Durand-Eastman Park to the city.

Now, in 1918, the city was prepared to eliminate that shoestring with the most ambitious annexation of Mayor Edgerton's administration. Indeed, the expansion of 1918 was second in size only to that of 1874. Curiously, it was also a highly anti-climactic conclusion to the Mayor's eight-year program. The great west side annexation generated a degree of opposition very small in proportion to its importance.

The explanation is simple. In the dreary winter months of 1918 the public's attention was diverted by the events of the World War. In Rochester as elsewhere in the United States, individuals grappled with a sense of emergency occasioned not only by news from the distant battlefields, but also by very immediate concerns. Rochesterians faced food shortages and a chronic coal shortage as well, which forced the adoption of "heatless days" and the closing of entire industries for weeks at a time. In addition, the registration of enemy aliens and draft eligible men, Liberty Bond drives, and a host of patriotic projects

demanded the attention of the public; the local press, mirror and shaper of the public consciousness as always, devoted the bulk of its space to war news home and abroad.

Small wonder that when Corporation Counsel Benjamin B. Cunningham announced, early in February, the administration's latest intention to annex Kodak and Lincoln Parks along with their adjacent residential territory, there was little immediate reaction of any type from the residents or the local officials concerned. At a conference the next month which Cunningham held with officials from Gates and Greece, no opposition was said to develop. Even Assemblyman Frank Dobson of Greece, who three years before had opposed to the bitter end the administration's bill annexing Charlotte, was now sanguine. "We are satisfied that it is for the best," he said. "Such needs of any built up section as fire protection and sanitary and health service make the step obviously sensible."

Rochester's annexation proposal of 1918 had no difficulty negotiating the now-solidly Republican state legislature, and the approval of Governor Charles S. Whitman, a friend of George Aldridge, was anticipated. On the day after the annexation bill was approved in the State Senate the Rochester Times Union offered a warm editorial of support. The Times Union was a new entry in the field of Rochester journalism. Its up-and-coming editor, Frank E. Gannett, offered the following observations:

The district in question requires the City services. Rochester has not followed the example of some western and Canadian cities in annexing huge tracts of prairie land. It has leaned almost too much to the side of conservatism. When a district is changing from a rural to an urban status there are considerable advantages in recognizing the fact

before organization on an incomplete and purely local basis has proceeded too far. Moreover There are tracts on the northeastern border of Rochester which for engineering and other reasons ought to be included within the city limits at an early date.⁹⁵

Gannett's assessment of the situation was not shared by all the affected parties. Edward G. Miner, representing the Pfaudler Company, objected to the annexation of Lincoln Park in time of war; his complaint was that the burden of city taxation would be unreasonable added to the demands of the present moment.⁹⁶ The theme of added war time burdens was taken up and repeated several times by spokesmen for the homeowners in both the Lincoln Park and Kodak Park sections. At the formal hearing on the annexation bill conducted by Mayor Edgerton in April, one property owner declared, "no annexation and no indemnities," a paraphrase of the allied peace terms which brought the applause of his neighbors.⁹⁷ At the same hearing a speaker from Greece produced petitions containing 490 signatures of property owners opposed to annexation and 57 in favor. A similar petition from Gates contained 250 signatures of persons opposed to annexation, while, it was said, not a single person in that town had publicly declared in favor of the administration's plan.⁹⁸

Mayor Edgerton, despite his previous assurances that the city would not take territory where residents were in opposition, was unpersuaded by the complaints mounted in Gates and Greece. His most recent assurances along those lines were now more than three years old. In 1915, with reference to Charlotte, he had said "if there is no enthusiasm for the annexation plan, it will not be carried farther," and, again, that "no territory will be annexed unless its residents strongly favor such action."⁹⁹ Now, however, the Mayor was little inclined to accede to the

suburban wish for independence. His only response to his audience at the formal hearing was the statement that he "would give the matter his careful attention before making any decision." ¹⁰⁰ Two days later he signed the annexation bill, telling reporters that the measure needed ¹⁰¹ no explanation.

An opposition committee in Greece did not feel that its work was quite finished, despite its failure to talk Mayor Edgerton out of his ¹⁰² own "administration measure." In what was surely a futile gesture it traveled to Albany in May to call on Governor Whitman. To be on the safe side, Edgerton dispatched Deputy Corporation Counsel Charles L. Pierce to attend the Grecians' meeting with the Governor and present ¹⁰³ the city's position. Whitman listened to the two parties, waited until the lobby from Greece was safely out of Albany, and signed the ¹⁰⁴ annexation measure.

What the Grecians, or Pierce, said during the interview is not contained in the record, but, judging from comments made by the opposition committee earlier in the month, Pierce would have had little difficulty in countering its arguments. On May 1st the committee's spokesmen claimed that annexation would benefit neither the city nor affected residents since 1) the city would have to assume a \$70,000 bonded debt for sidewalks and sewers and have to make additional improvements, 2) 1100 acres of cemetery land in the proposed annexation would be tax exempt (they were, of course, tax exempt in Greece), 3) two and a half miles of state road would have to be assumed by the city, and 4) Kodak Park residents would have to send their children further away for school (why this would be necessary is unclear, since the schools

already in the Kodak Park section would become part of the City School
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District). Interestingly, the spokesman at that time did not mention the higher city tax rate that residents would be faced with, but did say Greece residents were strongly upset over "the way they have been treated in the matter," and felt they should have been "allowed" a
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referendum.

The Eastman Kodak Company, by far the largest property owner in the affected territory in terms of value of improvements, was apparently unconcerned over the annexation. The company had long since provided Kodak Park proper with independent water and even sewage facilities, and the increased real estate taxes it faced as a result of annexation were small in comparison to its spiraling profits. Despite the fact that some Greece residents attempted to enlist George Eastman's support for the opposition effort, there is no evidence that Eastman personally took
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any interest in the annexation issue.

With the great west side annexation an accomplished fact on January 1, 1919, Hiram Edgerton could view the revised map of Rochester with a fair degree of satisfaction. Very nearly all the suburban parcels which had seemed ripe for annexation when he had assumed office in 1908 were now incorporated within the city limits--an addition, attributable to Edgerton's initiative, of slightly over 13 square miles to a city which contained slightly over 20 square miles when he began.

The motives behind Edgerton's and his associates' pursuit of expansion were mixed. One motive which was probably paramount in the minds of city leaders and not a few annexationist suburbanites was "to insure the orderly growth of greater Rochester." Typical of the

philosophy behind this oft-repeated statement was the comment Edgerton made while signing the Holland Settlement annexation bill: oppositionists "could not stop Rochester from growing." There was, however, more to the concept of orderly urban growth than the elementary notion that the de jure and de facto cities should coincide. To permit the city to become a balkanized region of uncoordinated municipalities was to invite bad planning of future development and expensive duplication of the administrative costs of providing services. The absurdity of such a situation was suggested by Edwin A. Fisher's complaint, in 1913, that Greece was planning to pollute the Genesee River while the city was spending \$2 million to clean it up. Money could be saved by planning a Grecian connection to the city's sewer system now, he said, rather than waiting a few years when existing facilities would have to be torn up. To the straightforward engineer, the proper planning of physical improvements was always the key argument for annexation.

Of course, the city administration was not always motivated entirely by pure logic or unselfish purposes in pressing forward with its annexation plans. There was always an unmeasured, and probably small, political advantage to be gained in advancing the cause of "Greater Rochester." In addition, the annexation of real estate had a beneficial stabilizing effect on the city tax rate--assuming that the costs of providing services in a given section did not outweigh the anticipated additional tax revenues; more often than not, it was probably a break-even proposition. Annexation could also raise the city's constitutional debt limit by increasing its total assessed valuation. The largest annexation of

the period, however, added only \$10.8 million valuation to the city's existing total of \$252 million, an increase of 4.3 per cent. ¹⁰⁹ More significantly, the annexation of sizable suburban sections, all of which contained substantial empty land and unfilled subdivisions, was a means of providing future increases in the fiscal resources of the City of Rochester parallel to the economic growth of the urbanized region.

The one suburban area in Edgerton's program which, at the end of the Mayor's ten^{year} effort, was still decidedly outside the city was the Highland Avenue section of Brighton between Clinton Avenue South and Monroe Avenue. Within this section was now the Home Acres Tract whose owners, along with the Town Board of Brighton, had pledged themselves to resist annexation. Another Highland Avenue section in Brighton, east of Winton Road (and east of the parcel annexed in 1913-14), was now in circumstances similar to ^{those of} the Home Acres Tract; it contained subdivisions attractive to upper income persons, was in line for development, and was a logical choice to be included in the city's next annexation plan. These areas became the focal points for annexation controversies in the 1920s when the city's territorial expansion finally ground to a halt.

Before dealing with that story at the conclusion we will, at this point, return to 1915 and Rochester's somewhat unusual annexation of its port village, Charlotte. In so doing the discussion will shift in point of view back to the experience of the individual suburb and away from the city at large.

Table IV-1

Rochester's Annexations, 1901-1926

<u>Effective Date</u> ¹	<u>Source</u>	<u>Added</u> (in acres)	<u>Total Area of City</u> (in acres)
(1899)			(11,456)
4/26/1901	Brighton	164.19	11,620.19
4/5/05	Brighton ²	748.67	12,368.86
1/1/08	Brighton, Gates, Irondequoit.	511.70	12,880.56
5/19/08	Brighton	130.99	13,011.55
1/1/14	Brighton, Chili, Gates, Irondequoit.	2,481.23	15,492.78
4/6/14	Brighton	41.32	15,534.10
1/1/16	Greece, ³ Irondequoit.	867.77	16,401.87
1/1/19	Gates, Greece.	4,879.72	21,281.69
1/1/23	Brighton, Irondequoit.	778.56	22,060.25
5/5/26	Brighton, Irondequoit.	185.65	22,245.80

1 In several instances annexation bills were passed in the year preceding their effective dates.

2 Brighton Village.

3 Charlotte Village.

Table IV-2

Tax Rates of Suburban Towns and Rochester, 1915-1930

	Tax Rate, per \$1,000 assessed valuation ¹	Equalization Ratio ²	"True" Tax Rate ³
Brighton			
1915.	\$14.00	90%	\$12.60
1920.	19.00	95	18.05
1925.	29.90	80	23.92
1930.	48.20	72	34.70
Irondequoit			
1915.	14.50	86	12.47
1920.	19.70	95	18.72
1925.	25.50	73	18.62
1930.	32.50	71	23.08
Greece			
1915.	13.80	91	12.56
1920.	27.70	91	25.21
1925.	27.50	58	15.95
1930.	31.00	73	22.63
Gates			
1915.	14.70	91	13.38
1920.	15.40	90	13.86
1925.	16.70	63	10.52
1930.	33.50	72	24.12
Average, Four Suburban Towns			
1915. . . . .	. . . . .	. . . . .	12.75
1920. . . . .	. . . . .	. . . . .	18.96
1925. . . . .	. . . . .	. . . . .	17.25
1930. . . . .	. . . . .	. . . . .	26.13
Rochester			
1915.	25.10	83	20.83
1920.	30.10	85	25.59
1925.	34.50	69	23.81
1930.	31.50	78	24.57

Source: Annual Reports of the New York State Tax Commission.

1. Inclusive of schools and other special districts, and state and county levy.
2. Assessed to full valuation; 1915 and 1920 ratios set by county; 1925 and 1930 ratios set by state.
3. Corrected for equalization ratio.

NOTES

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100. Times Union, April 23, 1918.
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Chapter V

The Annexation of Charlotte

Among the suburban municipalities in the vicinity of Rochester early in the twentieth century, Charlotte stood in a unique relationship with the city. The incorporated Village of Charlotte, occupying about 800 acres on the west side of the Genesee River where the river empties into Lake Ontario, served as Rochester's port. It was this economic function which first gave rise, during the nineteenth century, to plans for the village's annexation by the city. During the 1890s and the first decade of the twentieth century, Charlotte's economic--and social--connections with the city were strongly reinforced as the lakeside village became Rochester's principle summer resort and amusement center. Eventually, Charlotte's function as a "watering place" grew in importance to rival the significance of its role as transshipment point for lake commerce. By 1915, the quality of its services as an amusement center became as much an argument for annexation as schemes for the improvement of Rochester's shipping had been. Two sets of considerations, those relating to Charlotte as port and resort, were then successfully pressed by advocates of annexation despite the fact that Charlotte's southern edge was some four miles distant from the city's nearest boundary line.

More than a century before annexation, some promoters had seriously considered Charlotte to be the nucleus for the major city which they were certain would rise in the vicinity of the lower Genesee. The extensive exploitation of the Genesee's waterpower for milling awaited completion of the Erie Canal through Rochester in 1823. Before that time,

the main and lower falls of the Genesee, several miles inland from the river mouth, were regarded as much as a hindrance to commerce as a potential source of power.² The products of the Genesee country were carried downstream by raft as far as the rapids just above the main falls. Here began a difficult portage to one of several landings with access to the lucrative lake trade: Tryon Town at the foot of Irondequoit Bay, Fall Town in the river gorge midway between the rapids and the river mouth, or Charlotte. Permanent settlement at Charlotte predated similar³ developments in Nathaniel Rochester's village by fully twenty years. Moreover, during those twenty years (1792-1812), Charlottesburg, as it was sometimes called, achieved a temporary preeminence over its shipping rivals, largely as the result of bad luck in the neighboring settlements. The pioneers of Fall Town were decimated by epidemic fever. The mouth of Irondequoit Bay became silted over, discouraging development at Tryon Town. By 1805, when federal authorities designated Charlotte a Port of Entry and appointed the first customs collector for the district of Genesee,⁴ goods that left Tryon for distant cities were carried first on lighters to Charlotte for transshipment. Within a few years Charlotte became the principal settlement on the lake between Oswego and Lewiston, and controlled an expanding export business in frontier produce demanded⁵ in Canadian ports.

The War of 1812, accompanied by several British raids on the lower⁶ Genesee, delivered an initial setback to Charlotte's bright prospects. One result was the revival of interest in settlement at the lower falls; a tow path, dock, and other improvements began drawing lake vessels to a new landing called Carthage located opposite the old Fall Town. An

even more serious diversion of trade, affecting Carthage and Charlotte alike, took place following completion of the Erie Canal. A resurgence of trade between western New York and Canada following the war had, in fact, been one of De Witt Clinton's arguments for a canal; why, he asked, should merchants in Montreal profit from trade that New York and Albany should have?⁷

The canal insured commercial leadership to Rochester, a relative newcomer among the lower Genesee settlements. During Rochester's flour city period (1820s through the 1870s), the lake trade played only a supplementary role to the inland commerce carried first by canal, and later, by railroad. The unequal competition between lake and inland trade routes is illustrated by statistics for the export of flour in the 1820s. In 1820, the collector for the port reported the shipment of 17,300 barrels of flour.⁸ In 1823, the first year of the canal's operation in Rochester, 64,000 barrels left by that route, and 202,000 in 1826.⁹ Though the volume of lake exports would continue to increase in an absolute sense for some time, the rate of increase would not match that of the early years, nor could it begin to keep pace with the expansion of the inland trade. Moreover, Charlotte's economic importance declined greatly not only in relation to Rochester's canal and railroad traffic,¹⁰ but also in comparison to other lake ports, notably Oswego and Buffalo.

If the economic potentials of Charlotte often seemed neglected, at least part of the reason, until the mid-nineteenth century, was its isolation from the City of Rochester. The few intervening miles between Rochester and Charlotte were interrupted by rugged terrain which featured deep ravines. Not until 1849 was the Indian trail to Charlotte improved

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by a plank road company,¹² and not until 1854 was Charlotte served by a
steam railroad. Meanwhile, Carthage enjoyed a brief distinction as
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Rochester's principal port. But Carthage, located at the base of the
formidable Genesee River gorge, was able to serve effectively as Rochester's
port only because of a rather elaborate connection to the city by means
of an inclined plane and horse railroad.

Following extension of a New York Central Railroad spur to Charlotte
in 1854, the lakeside village assumed undisputed leadership over Carthage
and other potential rivals. But the commercial center of the Genesee
country was now clearly established at Rochester, and its merchants and
manufacturers continued to find greater economic opportunities using the
inland trade arteries of canal and railroad rather than by fully exploit-
ing commercial possibilities offered by the lake port. Of course, the
"choice" of which economic hinterland was more important to the pros-
perity of Rochester was influenced by complex circumstances and decisions
often not of local origin. For example, the port of Oswego was given an
obvious advantage over other New York ports on the lakes by its state-
constructed connection with the canal system. And Rochester businessmen,
along with their counterparts in cities on both sides of the lakes, were
sometimes frustrated by quixotic changes in national policies restricting
trade between the United States and Canada.

A succession of steamship companies, some Canadian and some American
owned, made repeated attempts to promote trade at Charlotte during the
second half of the nineteenth century. Their efforts were only partly
successful, as the economies of both North American nations continued
to become more self-sufficient during this period and east-west commerce

was diverted to the railroads. In terms of value of imports, the record year at Charlotte was 1855, when over one and a half million dollars in goods was reported (much of it western grain for Rochester's flour mills).¹⁴ Several developments during this half century were prophetic for the future of Charlotte and its significance (or lack of it) for the economy of Rochester. One was the increased importance of passenger traffic at the port as a substitute for freight carriage. Daily packet service was provided between Toronto and Charlotte and short excursions in the lake or Genesee River gorge.¹⁵ In 1882, a Rochester and Charlotte Turnpike (later Boulevard) Company completed an improved toll road to the village which stimulated its use as an amusement center and home for summer cottagers.¹⁶

Two years later a small group of Rochester and Charlotte businessmen formed the Ontario Beach Improvement Company with the financial encouragement of the New York Central Railroad. The new venture was intended to exploit Charlotte's potential as a resort, an undertaking which was eminently successful. The company constructed a resort hotel on a grand scale on real estate fronting the lake beach and the river, added a large pavilion, bandshells, and other improvements, and began reaping large profits from the start. Independence Day, 1885, brought a crowd of 20,000 to Charlotte, many of whom rode special trains from the city. Commenting on the Improvement Company's success, the Rochester Union and Advertiser observed, "Saturday's mammoth crowd at the lake shows that some things can be done as well as others."¹⁷ The pre-eminence of Charlotte as Rochester's lakeside resort was assured, in 1889, by the

extension of electric trolleys north from the city along the boulevard, Grandview, and Crescent beaches. Other beach places--Manitou, to the west of Charlotte, and Summerville, White City, and Sea Breeze on the east side of the river--were subsequently connected by electric railway to Charlotte rather than directly to the city. ¹⁸ Five years later, the Union and Advertiser in a pre-July 4th review of places to go, characterized Charlotte in this manner:

It is the favorite day resort of Rochesterians and will ever be so. The blue expanse of waters, shady streets, well kept glazas of green turf, its merry-go-rounds, bath houses, roller coasters, fakirs, and all the life and business of a modern watering place, will appeal always very strongly to those who are seeking to be amused and entertained, while its quiet inns and more pretentious hotels vie with one another in hospitable attention to the pleasure seeker. ¹⁹

While the development of its resort facilities became the dominant theme in Charlotte's late nineteenth century history, other events there were not without importance. Throughout the century Charlotte's industrial activities were, by and large, restricted to small-scale enterprises typical of village life, such as blacksmithing, fruit processing, and barrel making. ²⁰ In 1869, however, the year of village incorporation, a group of Rochester entrepreneurs constructed a blast furnace at Charlotte ²¹ for the manufacture of pig iron. The Rochester Iron Manufacturing Company was an oddity in the economic history of the city; heavy or primary industries were not appropriate because of Rochester's location and its relative disadvantages compared to places like Pittsburgh, Toledo, or urban New Jersey. Nevertheless, the promoters of the Charlotte blast furnace enjoyed a tenuous degree of success most years owing, no doubt, to the ready market for iron among Rochester's numerous foundries. The

blast furnace was forced to close down at the beginning of the depression of 1893 and operated sporadically thereafter until its destruction in 1927. While in operation its feasibility depended on the conjunction of rail lines and port facilities in Charlotte, for the carriage of its bulky raw materials and heavy finished product.

That same conjunction of rail and water stimulated another enterprise at Charlotte in this period which was somewhat less dramatic but which was more firmly rooted in economic realities. Harbor dredging and the extension of the piers at the river mouth by the federal government permitted the movement of large coal barges in and out of the port by the mid 1870s. The Buffalo, Rochester, and Pittsburgh Railroad, which had been explicitly designed to give western New York easier access to the Pennsylvania coal supply, was completed in 1883. A spur of that railroad was extended to Charlotte harbor, where Arthur G. Yates, a prominent Rochester businessman, constructed a large trestle for loading coal barges by gravity. The shipment of Pennsylvania coal to Canadian cities became a major activity of the port, a one-way trade which for many decades overshadowed the port's other commercial activities. In 1905 the B., R., & P. and Grand Trunk Railroads jointly backed a new company known as the Ontario Car Ferry which launched "floating freight yards." These large ferries plied the lake for many decades carrying loaded cars, mainly filled with coal, to Canada and returning the empties to Charlotte. The coal export business, as important as it was to maintaining activity at the port, was, however, essentially independent of the Rochester economy.

The same was true of shipments of other commodities at the port, and this fact, combined with the fluctuating statistics for both imports and exports, renders the task of assessing the overall importance of the lake trade in Rochester's economic life a difficult one. But a review of a few of those statistics leads inescapably to the impression that the port never played more than a secondary role in Rochester's commerce.

The export of coal for a time assumed overwhelming proportions compared with other trade at Charlotte. In 1890 the volume of coal handled amounted to 350,000 tons while other exports totaled less than 20,000 tons.²³ Similar proportions were maintained throughout the 1890s,²⁴ when commerce at the port ranged from 340,000 to 480,000 tons per year. During the early decades of the twentieth century the pattern changed only in detail. The car ferries did bolster the export business and even stimulated passenger traffic, as the ferries were able to carry automobiles as well as railroad cars. Other passengers, principally excursionists, by 1909 could travel aboard three large steamers (owned by the Richelieu and Ontario Navigation Company)²⁵ which called at Charlotte in the warm months. This period also witnessed an increase in the import of Canadian bulk products, such as pulp, feldspar, and shingles, a trade which began to balance American shipment of coal, but which, like the coal shipments, generally had little to do with the internal economy of Rochester.

No doubt one reason for the fact that Charlotte never achieved major status as a port lay in the physical limitations of the actual harbor. In its original condition the outlet of the Genesee River, emerging from between the steep wall of its gorge, spread out to form a grassy marsh,

shoals, and a sandbar a half mile offshore. Early navigators threaded their way through and around these obstacles, and sought relief from the federal government. In 1829 the Army Engineers constructed wooden piers through the bay to encourage the river, in springtime, to "scour" its own channel. This technique increased the navigable depth at Charlotte from eight to twelve feet and necessitated later extensions and improvements of the piers as the slow moving Genesee repeatedly redeposited silt in the channel. In 1882 the Engineers launched a major assault on the recalcitrant river, projecting improved piers greater than 3,200 feet in length and occasional dredging to maintain a channel at least fifteen feet deep. In the course of eighteen seasons they expended over half a million dollars to achieve these goals (later amended to provide a sixteen foot channel), but in April 1901 a steamer leaving Charlotte with coal bound for Ogdensburg ran firmly aground in water three-fourths as deep as it was supposed to be. ²⁶ Apparently as a result of this incident, the Engineers' report for the year acknowledged that the "Charlotte" channel . . . requires more or less redredging annually on account of ²⁷ sediment deposited by the Genesee River in freshets."

Despite these efforts by the Army Engineers, there was a consistent opinion in Rochester that the United States government habitually short-changed Charlotte in terms of improvements. Resentment over the alleged injustice from time to time found its way into the public prints. In point of fact, federal improvements at Oswego, for example, had cost \$1½ million by 1882 while expenditures at Charlotte totalled a paltry \$353,000. At the turn of the century total expenditures at Oswego had risen to nearly \$2 million while those at Charlotte stood at \$531,000.

Part of the reason for the disparity was the more interesting set of physical problems presented at Oswego. That city had no natural harbor whatever, and so was dependent on a massive breakwater--for the maintenance of which the Engineers proposed spending \$215,000 during fiscal 1901-1903. For the same two years they requested \$30,000 for work at Charlotte, which now handled an annual tonnage in imports and exports greater than Oswego's. 28

Whether any amount of harbor improvements would have had a significant impact on the volume of traffic at Charlotte is a moot point. In retrospect, the existing improvements seem to have been adequate for the accommodation of potential traffic, but this view was not current among Greater Rochester advocates during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

To these men, harbor improvements and the expansion of Rochester's lake trade were one and the same goal. In addition, at a very early stage the hope of obtaining expanded port facilities became tied to the plan to annex Charlotte to the city, as annexation was thought to be a prior necessity.

Thus it was that Rochester's fledgling Chamber of Commerce, which at the time filled the role of a debating society, undertook the question of harbor improvements during the early 1890s in the larger context of municipal expansion. 29 At its meeting on October 9, 1893 the Chamber dismissed the then-current proposals to annex the Hawaiian Islands on anti-imperialistic grounds, but gave the second item on its evening agenda a somewhat warmer reception. Several speakers advanced the notion that extension of the city limits to the lake was

the key to getting harbor improvements, and rectifying the injustice of Buffalo's receiving millions of dollars in federal money for each \$100,000 that Charlotte was allotted. If Charlotte were annexed, advocates maintained, the port's name could be changed from the Port of Genesee to the Port of Rochester; then local Congressmen would be able to argue more intelligibly for increased harbor appropriations. It was pointed out that Rochester deserved a better harbor because of its favorable location: among the cities on the Great Lakes, it was closest to the anthracite coal fields.

A few members of the Chamber in the course of the discussion that evening proposed an even more ambitious scheme. If the limits of Rochester could be pushed northward to the lake, could they not with equal ease be moved eastward to take in Irondequoit Bay? Because of its size, the bay was potentially a grand harbor for the city. The engineering difficulty posed by its clogged outlet was one which some advocates felt could be overcome by ingenuity and effort. At one point in the evening a well-prepared Chamber member stated that Rochester's area was not one-fourth that of Buffalo's, Syracuse's, or Rome's. The latter city's population was less than 15,000. If Rochester would extend its area, said the expansion advocate, its population could number 200,000.³⁰ Heavily implied in this statement was the idea that Rochester was permitting itself to be shortchanged in the census returns. The city's true importance, relative to its upstate New York rivals, could be clarified by a boundary adjustment.

A special Chamber of Commerce committee designated to study the issue met the following month with representatives of the suburban towns. Like their figurative descendants during the era of annexations a generation later, the suburban representatives were not uniformly enthusiastic over the prospect of annexation. One or two private citizens of Charlotte favored the proposal, but the village President described his posture as "cautious." The deputation from the Town of Irondequoit was unanimously opposed. Some of the eight committee members were taking a conservative position as well. George C. Buell, a wholesale grocer, YMCA leader, and leading light of the Chamber, opined that extension of the city should be gradual. He thought that if the Chamber was to take a position at all, it should limit its annexation ambitions to Charlotte and perhaps some east side neighborhoods. He also reminded his listeners that annexation decisions were not made in the Chamber of Commerce: "We don't propose to go to Albany and fight for this thing against the Common Council and the [Town] supervisors." ³¹

Nevertheless, the committee returned a report favoring annexation of Charlotte, the Village of Brighton, and a few assorted smaller parcels. (A minority report advocated the far grander scheme of annexing all of Irondequoit.) While there is nothing to indicate that the city administration responded to the committee's proposals, reaction in Charlotte was intense. An indignation meeting of some two hundred taxpayers at the Charlotte fire hall took place early in February. Nearly unanimously the Charlotte taxpayers felt that annexation would mean heavy taxes to pay for new sewers and pavements, professional firemen, and city schools. ³²

The next day the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle announced:

Goy Little Charlotte! Scared Half to Death by
Big Rochester's Proposal. Over Young to Marry.
She prefers her village ways to the brilliancy
and extravagance of city life and turns her back
on her wooer.³³

A week later a committee of Charlotte taxpayers said they had collected 161 signatures on an anti-annexation petition. They pledged that they would "watch the city," particularly the Chamber of Commerce. Meanwhile, the tiny hamlet of Baldwinsville, hardly more than a crossroads on the south side of Charlotte, sent a petition to the village board seeking annexation by Charlotte as a means of staying out of the city!³⁴

Hard on the heels of these events came the mid-February annual meeting of the Chamber of Commerce during which incoming Chamber President Ira L. Otis delivered his inaugural address. Otis chose the issue of city expansion as the major theme of his remarks. Growth, he said, was vital to the city's economic well-being. Furthermore, according to Otis, Rochester was dilatory in this respect as compared to other cities. St. Paul, Providence, and Omaha (Rochester's neighbors on the scale listing American cities by size), and Buffalo, Syracuse, and Utica had all provided space enough to keep population density below 11 persons per acre; Rochester's population density, on the other hand, was 19.4 persons per acre. Otis also emphasized the value in Rochester's control over the port.³⁵

Hindsight permits the observation that the Chamber's boom for municipal expansion in 1893 and 1894 was premature. The Chamber's advocacy sparked little interest within Rochester's political leadership, then being consolidated under George W. Aldridge.³⁶ In 1895 a group of about fifty

Charlotte residents successfully agitated for drafting of an annexation bill, but opponents arranged a meeting with Assemblymen William Armstrong and James O'Grady, who agreed to act as arbitrators between the two parties, and ended by killing the bill with inaction. ³⁷ Despite the persistent strength evidenced by the oppositionist faction, however, Charlotte annexationists again raised the issue in 1896. This time they invited the former local Congressman, Charles S. Baker, to speak in behalf of annexation. Citing the municipal improvements which Charlotte had already made, Baker suggested "how much better it would be" if the city were invited to make the rest. He also said:

During the six years I was your representative in Congress, I got appropriations by saying Charlotte is the gate to Rochester. I did not say it was a village which had no spirit of improvement.... As long as you keep out improvements you will continue to be known as a fine summer resort and a village with no industry other than that of a beer garden.

But a local attorney, W.M. Richmond, who was also present with Baker at the village meeting, presented a convincing argument against annexation: "Your tax rate will be more than doubled, yes, more than trebled and your taxes will be six times what they are now." Annexation of Charlotte by the city hardly seemed a distinct possibility in the mid-1890s. A newspaper correspondent in the country village of Webster, northeast of Rochester observed, "We are pleased to notice in one of our Rochester papers that an effort in being made to annex Charlotte to that city. We always ³⁸ thought Rochester would never amount to anything without Charlotte."

The Charlotte annexation movement of the mid-1890s quietly fizzled out. The arguments relating to port improvements would be taken up again

twenty years later during the final, successful, annexation campaign. Meanwhile, the fact that the subject of Charlotte's annexation had been seriously raised at all contributed, during the intervening years, to a sense of the question's being "in the air." Given the hard kernel of resistance ever-present among suburban residents whose annexation the city contemplated, this was not enough to effect annexation, nor was the need for a port suitable to Greater Rochester sufficiently persuasive to a majority of Charlotte residents when it was first restated by Hiram Edgerton in 1910 (pp. 135-136 supra). Once raised, however, the idea of Charlotte's becoming the port of Rochester in name as well as in fact provided a favorable undercurrent which, when combined with anxieties over the village's moral tone--reaching a peak just before 1915--was enough to convince even Charlotte that annexation was desirable.

No one familiar with the debate over the saloon in the decades preceding national prohibition, or with the content of newspapers of the period, can fail to appreciate the degree to which the liquor traffic became a symbol for all that was wrong with urban life. Criminality, disease, poverty, and sexual deviancy were freely associated with the saloon and its customs. A hundred years or more of temperance advocacy, one of the central features of the Protestant reforms spirit in American life, created mental reflexes which automatically attributed any social evil to the consequences of liquor. A contrary set of traditions in the national culture, encouraging alcoholic excesses and demanding an unregulated traffic in liquor, contributed substantially to the truth of much of what temperance spokesmen said. While a majority of persons were neither ardent prohibitionists nor libertines,

the terms of debate over the liquor question characteristically assumed
 the colors of the most extreme positions.³⁹

Although the movement for national prohibition found its greatest strength in rural areas and in the South, anti-saloon sentiment was by no means absent in the cities. Rochester, like other cities with large numbers of European immigrants and their offsprings, contained a substantial majority opposed to prohibitory legislation. Nevertheless, its vocal temperance advocates persuaded a significant number of their fellow citizens that the saloon, if not outlawed completely, should be hedged about with as many business restrictions as possible. Accordingly, a series of regulatory laws and ordinances imposed at the state and local level at the turn of the century enjoyed some support. The effort to "tame" the saloon through regulatory action represented an uneasy compromise between prohibitionists and their opponents. Often the result was that a particular regulation--or the saloons' habitual violation of a regulation--would take on exaggerated importance. Such was undoubtedly the case with the numerous campaigns to enforce Sunday closing regulations in Rochester during the 1890s and after the turn of the century.⁴⁰ The vigor with which temperance leaders, like Rochester's Clinton Howard,^{*} hounded mayors and police commissioners suggests that the motive was more than mere sabbatarianism.

Throughout New York State the effort to close saloons on Sunday took on ironic, or even farcical overtones following passage of the so-called Raines Law in 1896. The state law prohibited sales of alcoholic beverages

*Howard was an ardent--an vocal--spokesman for the cause and earned some reputation in the national prohibition movement.

on Sundays except in hotels. Consequently many saloon keepers hastened to conform by installing one or more beds. In the end the Raines Law merely contributed to vice by multiplying the potential sites for illicit sexual relations.⁴¹

Of course, not all saloons became "Raines Law hotels," and not all the "hotels" were operated as places of assignation or commercial sex. But the phenomena, where it occurred, served as a powerful reinforcement for commonly held assumptions about the saloon and alcoholic indulgence. So powerful was the intricate connection between the saloon and illicit sex in the public imagination that it is often difficult, from a modern perspective, to sort out the exact nature of the lawlessness which contemporaries charged to the saloon. The several clean-up campaigns or crackdowns on "vice" which Rochester police periodically performed to gratify public pressure often involved nothing more than saloons which curtained their windows, operated with defective licenses, or featured dancing or ladies' sitting rooms. On the other hand, from time to time police action was aimed against vice of a more ominous sort, for it seems clear that the saloon sometimes served as an adjunct to organized prostitution and gambling. Contemporary accounts of vice tended to assume a good deal of knowledge on the part of readers, for reasons of delicacy. Thus we are left with a good many elliptic references to the "disorderly persons" who frequented the saloons of Rochester and Charlotte, or to the village's "appalling moral conditions" and "low element."

As early as 1899 there were indications that certain amusements at Charlotte were subject to criticism. In April as the resort season opened

Village President Goulding announced his intention to ban slot machines, fake games, and baseball games on Sunday. The Evening Times, with apparent sarcasm, headlined the story "Moral Wave at Charlotte." The same story carried an announcement by the Rochester Retail Liquor Dealers Association of a crusade against "Raines Law hotels" in Charlotte. Sale of beer and liquor on Sunday in Charlotte, said the city barkeepers, was cutting into their weekday business. ⁴² To what extent the Charlotte saloons were able to seriously drain Rochester liquor retailing is indicated by the number of establishments there at the turn of the century.

The Raines Law, besides banning saloon openings on Sunday, called for an annual excise tax of \$100 per saloon in places of fewer than 1,200 inhabitants and \$200 in places with more than 1,200. According to new federal census figures published in April 1901 the population of Charlotte was 1,400 (up from 930 in 1890). Since Charlotte was a summer resort, and since census takers made their canvass in June 1900 saloonkeepers vowed to fight the increased excise tax based on what they said was an incorrect population figure. A "prominent citizen," resident of the village for 42 years, was quoted as saying he knew everyone in the village and that the population couldn't be over 900. He was proven wrong, however, by the results of a special enumeration made by two men hired by the 35 saloons in the village. Apparently the results they obtained showed a figure greater than 1,200, since the saloon owners, who had promised a legal test of their increased taxes, quietly dropped the issue.*⁴³

*The enumeration of summer residents along with the year-round Charlotte people was deliberate, in conformity with rules issued to censustakers in 1900; their instructions were to record persons at their residence "as of June 1, 1900." While this was perhaps silly, as a result we have an indication of the size of the summer population. Subtracting the saloonkeepers' tally, which by inference was greater than 1,200, from the census figure of 1,400 indicates a summer (or "cottage") population of something less than 200. But day visitors on summer weekends could swell the number of people in Charlotte by many thousands.

An early advertising campaign by the New York Central Railroad, owner of the Ontario Beach Hotel and amusement park, had given Charlotte the sobriquet "Coney Island of the West."⁴⁴ With the number of saloons there standing at 35--more than one for each of the 28 street corners along Charlotte's principal thoroughfares--the epithet seemed well deserved. The ratio of people to saloons, using the official population figure of 1,400, was 40 to 1; a similar calculation for the city (the Rochester Directory listed 394 saloons in 1900) yields a ratio of 412 to 1. These ratios compare with the widely quoted national statistic of one saloon⁴⁵ for every two hundred Americans.

Of course, the Charlotte liquor trade was supported in large measure by visitors from Rochester. Often these were respectable persons--couples out for a promenade, or parents whose children amused themselves in other ways while they sipped glasses of beer at one or another of the lavish Charlotte beer gardens. But other types of visitors arrived on the trolley cars or excursion trains as well. In May of 1901 the Charlotte Village Board adopted a curfew law, requiring children under 15 to be at home by 9:00 P.M. during the summer months. The measure was adopted at the urging of village ministers who pointed out the large number of "undesirables"⁴⁶ from the city who visited Charlotte in hot weather.

The numerous references to unsavory visitors that were heard during the years before Charlotte's annexation no doubt reflected ethnic bigotries against members of Rochester's polyglot citizenry, but at least some of the complaints seemed to be motivated by more substantial concerns. Charlotte's "wide open conditions" made it, in the words of an annexationist,

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"the sinkhole of Rochester." With each successive clean up of vice areas in the city, operators of "low class saloons" looked for refuge beyond the city limits, and drew their patrons after them. Often these included the gamblers and prostitutes who represented the nadir of vice respectable persons feared. It would be impossible to produce a precise measurement of how large this displaced vice was, but in any case its significance lies in the way it was perceived by contemporaries. One village proponent of annexation declared, in 1915, that "one cannot take a car to the lake shore in summer on a Sunday without colliding with a band of disorderly persons." 48

As a resort, Charlotte had probably always attracted at least some unsavory establishments, but from the late 1890s onward the problem became progressively worse. In 1897 Clinton Howard organized a Prohibition Union of Christian Men, a group of activists pledged to pressure the city administration into closing saloons on Sunday and dance halls entirely. Not content with occasional symbolic raids against one or two establishments, Howard's men volunteered to place themselves in the field to watch for violations of the law. With the reluctant cooperation of the mayor and police officials, by 1899 they had succeeded in closing the city saloons on Sunday, and in driving most of the Raines Law hotels out. However, the problems of Sunday drinking and worse forms of vice would not stay dead. In 1904 Howard's organization along with the local chapter of the Anti-Saloon League and a Ministerial Association invoked another concerted campaign against the city's saloons, dance halls, houses of ill repute, and motion picture theatres. 49

Once again questionable entertainment was exiled from the city; some of it drifted back after the heat was off, but some found a more congenial environment in Charlotte.

The climax of Rochester's series of clean ups came following appointment of Chief of Police Joseph M. Quigley by Mayor Edgerton in 1908. Often known as "Holy Joe" Quigley by his critics, the new chief launched his administration with a vigorous drive against vagrants, loiterers, and obscene postcards. In 1912 Quigley called in all known gamblers and operators of bawdy houses and warned them to move on. The few who ignored his warning were promptly arrested; Quigley thereafter tirelessly congratulated himself on his "clean" city, but much of the vice problem had merely been pushed beyond the city limits, particularly into the resort village of Charlotte.
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Now Charlotte's extraordinarily plentiful saloons were joined and frequented by some of Rochester's most vicious elements.

Mayor Edgerton first proposed the annexation of Charlotte in 1910 as part of the larger scheme to take in all the west side suburbs. Because of political developments at the state level, that plan failed. A second grand initiative in 1913 was only partly successful, resulting chiefly in the annexation of the Holland Settlement north of old Brighton Village. Despite evidence of a desire by Charlotte citizens, led by a Law and Order League, to join the city at that time, Edgerton cautiously omitted Charlotte from his annexation bill in order to get "half a loaf" (pp. 145-146, 156, supra).

Encouraged by Republican gains in the state capital, Edgerton doggedly announced another bill for the annexation of Charlotte in January 1915. In the plan he outlined for the press, the mayor stated his intention to take in Lincoln Park, the Kodak Park district of Greece, and Summerville

(the Irondequoit land between the mouth of the Genesee and Durand Eastman Park), as well as the port village. Edgerton felt that factory owners in Gates and Greece had been getting away without paying city taxes long enough, and he pointed out that businessmen in Charlotte had "rallied" to the annexation idea--except for the liquor dealers whose annual tax would rise to \$750.*51

One initial reaction to the plan came from former Mayor James Cutler, who dispatched a letter-to-the editor of the Democrat and Chronicle in which he darkly hinted that "certain financial interests" desired the annexation of Lincoln Park. In an obscure incident, the Town of Gates had recently defaulted on some sewer bonds. Cutler made the imputation that annexation might be a preliminary step to the city's assuming responsibility for the bonds. The former mayor bombastically denied he meant to accuse the city administration of knowledge of the scheme, and was indeed reluctant "to commit to cold type and unblushing ink the talk current as to the moving causes of the annexationists." But he did maintain that contemplation of harbor improvements in Charlotte posed another threat to the Rochester taxpayer.⁵² Cutler's letter sparked a series of letters from a variety of citizens which appeared on editorial pages in the ensuing months, adding on unusual degree of interest to the 1915 annexation campaign.

A letter which appeared in the same newspaper two days later was from George W. Thayer, President of the Rochester Chamber of Commerce. Thayer favored annexation, particularly the annexation of Charlotte. Among the "decided advantages" of such a move, he emphasized two which ultimately

*Edgerton said the Charlotte tax on saloons was \$150. Undoubtedly the tax savings was a powerful inducement for saloons to locate in the village, in addition to lax enforcement of regulations.

proved decisive in persuading the city administration and Charlotte residents to go through with the plan. First was the matter of disorderly elements in the resort. With the introduction of Rochester police, "more wholesome social conditions could be established and controlled than now exist." Secondly, Thayer pointed out that the cities of Hamilton and Toronto were spending millions of dollars on harbor improvements; Rochester, he suggested, was being dilatory. The putative argument was that annexation by the city would make it easier to obtain federal harbor appropriations for Charlotte. Finally, Thayer said he knew of no "hidden reason" actuating anybody in the matter. But he thought that the city's assumption of the defaulted sewer bonds, if actually contemplated, was a good idea. "The good name of the city is involved in this matter," wrote Thayer, since⁵³ bond purchases had been led to believe they were city bonds.

Nothing more appeared in the press concerning the Gates sewer bonds, but several letters quickly followed Thayer's expressing support for annexation. George A. Gillette, a city lawyer and realty man, wrote a letter to Mayor Edgerton which appeared in the Democrat and Chronicle a few days after Thayer's. Gillette indicated that the real estate community was pleased with the annexation idea; in his view, north was a logical direction for the city's further expansion, since the Barge Canal and Pinnacle Hills blocked southerly growth. Gillette felt that the (city's) taxpayers had⁵⁴ already invested indirectly in suburban expansion. By implication he meant that the suburbs depended on the city's existence, which entailed public outlays particularly for capital improvements. Protection of the city taxpayers' investment suggested control of the suburbs, as justice suggested that suburban property holders begin contributing to the cost of city services.

Another strong letter of support was written by John C. Henderson, partner in a coal firm and resident of Seneca Parkway--a street in the city's northwestern Tenth Ward. Henderson apparently had a second house in Charlotte as well. His major concern was with the lack of vice controls in the village:

The moral welfare of the youth of the city should be considered of greater value than any material gain. Charlotte is wide open, and the only hope of tightening down the lid is being annexed to the city. What use is it for the city to be strict in the enforcement of law if the opposite condition exist with all the attractions beyond the city line?⁵⁶

Henderson also reiterated the argument concerning port appropriations, contrasting Oswego's fine harbor facilities with Rochester's. He felt that city control of the beach parks, then owned by the New York Central and the Bartholomay brewery (one of Rochester's largest), was desirable. Henderson was persuaded by these arguments to suggest that the Charlotte annexation alone was sufficiently important for the city to go ahead and annex the village and connecting boulevard, leaving the "others" out, i.e., the factory districts in Gates and Greece, parts of Irondequoit, and the Greece territory intervening between Charlotte and Rochester.

Byron H. Punnett, another resident of the Tenth Ward (and owner of a firm dealing in office safes) wrote demanding that the Grecians be taken into the city. Punnett and his neighbors were upset over a special assessment laid on their property two years before to pay for a trunk sewer in Dewey Avenue. The sewer partly benefitted Greece residents in the section north of Rochester and south of Charlotte. "As many of the (1,500 to 2,000) residents of that section are employed in the city," wrote Punnett, "why should not the suburbanites pay city taxes for city services?"

Still another Tenth Warder, attorney John A. Bernhard, sent a discursive letter to Edgerton which was published in the Union and Advertiser. Bernhard repeated nearly every familiar argument in favor of city expansion, and emphasized the desirability of city building codes enforced in developing areas. His letter also contained no fewer than three restatements of the theme of inevitability ("No one will presume to argue that this territory will not sooner or later be annexed").

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Shortly after announcement of preparation of an annexation bill, Mayor Edgerton granted an interview on the subject in which he candidly expressed the belief that adding new areas to the city would mean a net expense to the taxpayers for four or five years. However, the mayor hastened to add, the city would ultimately benefit from control, and "the annexed territory would benefit in every way." Three weeks later a letter-to-the-editor from Katherine Smith, a city resident and probably a nurse,* appeared in the Democrat and Chronicle. Mrs. Smith thought that annexation would benefit no one except real estate dealers, and that "a downright hardship would be imposed on the small taxpayers at a time when they are having all they can do to retain possession of their homes, acquired through years of hard labor and frugality." Emma Tiernan, a manicurist and homeowner, took an opposite point of view. In answer to Katherine Smith she wrote one week later to say, "I don't think it would be right to ask that the wheels of progress be made to stand still that my taxes may be a little less burdensome." Mrs. Tiernan also suggested that the annexed property's rise in value would eventually make the annexation economical.

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*Three Katherine Smiths appear in the 1915 City Directory, but only the one identified as a nurse appears to be a homeowner.

Throughout the end of January and beginning of February 1915 no one, including members of the city administration, was certain what the final shape of the annexation bill would be. Although most enthusiasm for annexation seemed to be directed toward (and from) Charlotte, Mayor Edgerton, it will be recalled, had outlined a scheme for expansion on all sides. For this reason several of the public comments which appeared during January were vague about how much was to be annexed--except for Henderson's proposal that Charlotte alone could be taken. A mass meeting held in the Grange hall in Irondequoit at which two hundred residents unanimously resolved to fight annexation of any part of the town seemed to discourage expansion in that quarter. The Irondequoiters claimed to be mostly farmers, except for some who had "moved away from the city to get away from it."⁶²

A town meeting on the northwest side produced more positive--or at least mixed-- reactions. The Greece town meeting was attended by both Charlotte and Kodak Park residents. Many expressed pleasure at the idea of improved police protection, garbage collection, sewers, and schools. One man declared that the section was an "orphan" since the town would not spend money improving an area which it expects inevitably will be annexed. Another felt that improvements would be slow in coming, given what he said was the Town of Greece's bad credit; recently the town had failed to float a \$24,000 bond issue needed for school improvements. (Both these spokesmen seemed to represent the section outside Charlotte, since villagers did not look to the town for improvements.) William N. Britton, the largest owner of Greece real estate outside of the Eastman Kodak Company, announced that he was reserving judgement on the annexation issue pending a reply to a list of detailed questions he had sent to the city's corporation counsel.

Britton also felt that the opinion of the Eastman Company should be solicited. Consequently, no vote was taken at the meeting and the question was postponed indefinitely.

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By early February the Democrat and Chronicle felt that opposition from factory owners in Gates and from residents on the east side of the river in Irondequoit made annexation unfeasible "this year." When questioned about this, Mayor Edgerton replied,

I am still listening for the expression of the views of the people interested. If there is no enthusiasm for the annexation plan, it will not be carried further I do not intend to place the city under the large expense in annexing territory unless there is considerable demand for annexation.⁶⁴

Perhaps Edgerton's statement stimulated the Charlotte annexationists into action, because ten days later they announced a favorable petition which already contained the names of seventy Charlotte citizens. A spokesman for the petitioners said that "Charlotte was more or less a dumping ground for Rochester ... and [that] it is only a matter of time, anyhow, before the expansion of Rochester compels the bringing of the beach resort within the city boundary." The Reverend Henry S. Gilt, of Charlotte, added that there was "little sense in Rochester cleaning itself up only to have its good work undone in Charlotte."⁶⁵ Despite this expression of support Edgerton's policy remained lethargic. Towards the end of the month the Democrat and Chronicle observed that the mayor will annex no territory "unless its residents strongly favor such action, so it is believed that the plan is dead." The mayor kept postponing a final decision on the annexation bill--during the last week in February he worked overtime signing 1,900 municipal bonds with a broken wrist--and said he had noticed no great enthusiasm for annexation."⁶⁶

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Some Charlotte annexationists wanted to know why they had been "dropped" so coldly. ⁶⁷ Then, abruptly, ^{was} news received from Albany that State Senator George F. Argetsinger had introduced a bill in the legislature for the annexation of Charlotte. ⁶⁸ Argetsinger, a leader of the Rochester delegation at the capital and chairman of the Senate Cities Committee, introduced the bill two days before the annual village elections; whether this was deliberate or merely coincidental, the effect was to prevent any potential oppositionists from using the election to test sentiment on the issue.

In Rochester, Assistant Corporation Counsel Benjamin B. Cunningham, who had drafted the bill, explained its details. The boundaries of the proposed annexation included the Village of Charlotte, the Genesee River north to the lake including the harbor, and narrow strips of land on either side of the river. The strip on the west side would take in the boulevard which connected the village to the city (and which carried the tracks of the popular trolley car route). If the bill passed, Charlotte would become the city's Twenty-third Ward. The liquor tax would rise to the Rochester level and city police would enforce the Sunday laws and other regulations of amusement. Finally, said Cunningham, the bill explicitly required the Rochester Railway Company to lower the trolley fare between Charlotte and the rest of the city from ten cents to five cents--the ⁶⁹ price within the city limits set by the state Public Service Commission. Lowering the car fare by law insured that fares in the city would be consistent. The measure was also calculated to win wide approval from Charlotte residents and the Rochester public. So heavy was the traffic on the Charlotte cars that the Railway Company, which immediately requested a

legislative hearing on the fare reduction, calculated it would lose \$70,000
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a year in revenue if forced to reduce the fare.

The "hotly contested" village election which was held on March 17 returned the Republican incumbents to office. Charles L. Hannahs was given another term as Village President and Larry Sexton was returned as Police Justice. The two men were the dominant force on the village board. Sexton held a second job as Justice of the Peace in the Town of Greece as well. As the Evening Times pointed out, Sexton had much to lose from annexation, and not suprisingly he was eager to lead whatever opposition
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to the bill he could organize. On the day of the election he was quoted as saying that "the bill" had been conceived in the star chamber
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proceedings of the Chamber of Commerce of Rochester." Charles Hannahs was no less concerned over the threat to his position. The two men found an important ally in Charlotte resident Frank Dobson, who simultaneously held jobs as Greece Town Supervisor and (Republican) Assemblyman in the state legislature.

As March drew to a close, the Charlotte politicians staged a last-ditch effort to ward off annexation, despite a bland admission from Mayor Edgerton that the annexation bill was indeed "purely an administration
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measure." Quite the contrary from Sexton's excited charge that the bill was the brainchild of the city Chamber of Commerce, in fact the bill represented a policy decision approved by top leaders among the Aldridge organization who had duly weighed public sentiment for and against it in Charlotte and the city. Dobson, Hannahs, and Sexton nevertheless took the case to the people in two "mass meetings." At one of the evening

sessions Hannahs told the villagers he would lead the meeting impartially, but it was generally agreed he fell short of the goal. "The annexation bill," declared Hannahs in public forum, "is the most damnable bill I've
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ever heard of."

According to the three chief opponents of the bill, its defects included 1) omission of the Kodak Park district between Rochester and Charlotte, 2) the fact that high school students in Greece outside the village who attended the high school department of the Charlotte school would (probably) face a rise in annual tuition from \$20 to \$75, and 3) a boundary along the river bank which was drawn not as direct as it should be and which contained
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"too many abrupt turns." Frank Dobson, addressing his colleagues in the Assembly, said that "Rochester going through intervening unannexed territory with two finger-like appendices and fastening its clutch upon the little village by the lakeside [is] like a huge octopus reaching out with its
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tentacles to capture its prey."

Annexationists, who appeared to speak for the majority at the village
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meetings, charged the local politicians with using "specious arguments." Their leading spokesman, John C. Henderson, characterized the school situation as the "submarine" of the opposition, adding that he didn't believe annexation would cause the hardships (to students) which some people anticipated. In response to this statement Hannahs introduced Roy Butterfield, Principal of the Charlotte school. Butterfield's remarks didn't reinforce the village president's position as much as he hoped. While Butterfield thought it would be desirable for the city to make formal provisions for the out-of-village students, he trusted the Rochester school authorities to do the right thing after his school was incorporated into
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the City School District.

After Butterfield's remarks at the village meeting, Henderson spoke for many of those present when he said,

Education without moral force is no good. We must think of the moral prosperity of our youth. The moral conditions of Charlotte are appalling. Coming into the city will elevate the moral tone of Charlotte. The city will close the doors on many things and we shall have a decent Sabbath.

In addition to "moral prosperity," Henderson anticipated a good deal of material prosperity resulting from annexation. "This town will increase as a port of Rochester," he said. "It will grow in five years beyond our fondest expectations The five cent fare would bring the people here. People of the city would come down to live. Real estate values would double" ⁷⁹

Although Hannahs and his colleagues failed to secure hoped-for support from their constituents at the meetings, they deputized themselves as a delegation to call on Mayor Edgerton. Edgerton listened to the Charlotte men politely, but later told reporters, "they could not make a monkey out of him." ⁸⁰

Despite general support for the annexation bill from the public and organized groups--the city's Chamber of Commerce went on record approving it and the Rochester Real Estate Association took a neutral stand --Edgerton ⁸¹ suffered criticism from some quarters. The Herald, the city newspaper most critical of the administration, published an editorial which said, among other things, "Is there any human being in Rochester so simple as to suppose that a Canadian who finds it profitable to sell his products in Rochester, or to ship them to another point by way of Rochester, will be discouraged from doing so because the name of the port of Rochester is 'Charlotte'?" ⁸²

On the front page of the paper's Sunday edition next day appeared a "Clubb"

cartoon: Mayor Edgerton is seen atop a soapbox on the beach changing a "Port of Charlotte" sign to "Port of Rochester" with a can of "annexation paint." "Father Rochester," who witnesses the proceedings, asks, "Before you go any further, Hiram, what's this job going to cost me?" Three letters signed "Plain Citizen," "Disgusted," and "F." which appeared on the Herald's editorial page the following week criticized annexation as an example of Edgerton's liberality with tax money. One anonymous letter-writer characterized the program as "annexationitis Charlotti" and thought that the patient--the Rochester public--was too feeble to "kick." Yet even the Herald acknowledged that "the expansion of the city in all directions is as near a certainty as anything human can be."

Aside from Hannahs et al, the city administration's staunchest critic proved to be the Rochester Railway Company. Assistant Corporation Counsel Cunningham found it necessary to go to Albany to testify along with the trolley company's attorney, Daniel M. Beach, before the Cities Committee. The company was prepared to try to block annexation entirely rather than lower its ten-cent fare willingly. Beach claimed a moral justification for the company's position, since it had extended service at its own expense to vacant areas of the city which should be filled before additional annexation was contemplated. However, the company's real complaint was not that Charlotte riders should subsidize service extensions, but that it faced losing half the revenue from its most profitable line. Cunningham's retort was that a five cent fare to Charlotte would stimulate business and perhaps increase revenue. The Cities Committee was not impressed by Beach's arguments and passed Cunningham's bill along in unmodified form. The trolley monopoly,

though, had a hole card. Beach pointed out that the line to Charlotte was still owned, on paper, by an independent company. If necessary Rochester Railways could tear up the lease with its own subsidiary which could then continue to charge a higher fare, subject to further regulation by the Public Service Commission.*

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One of the most vocal of the annexation bill's critics was Assemblyman-Supervisor Frank Dobson. His impassioned speech to fellow legislators when the bill reached the floor of the Assembly moved the correspondent of the Post-Express to remark, "Thus he stood on the bridge of annexation which Father Rochester sought to cross to take Miss Charlotte for his bride when her guardians, the Legislature of her state and her Governor, would not interpose to save her from such a union." Dobson claimed that he was

compelled by force of reason to disagree with any colleagues from Monroe on the passage of this bill, because I believe it to be a bad measure, loosely drafted, and should not become a law. I have upon my desk petitions, resolutions and communications from people in the locality affected, protesting against the passage of this bill, and I should feel derelict in my duty if I should fail to express my sentiments....

In closing, Dobson said,

I shall bow to the will of the majority and allow this bill to go to the Mayor who will be required to give a hearing to the opponents of the bill. Feeling that it will be rejected either by him or the governor, I am content to withdraw my objection and be recorded in the negative.⁸⁹

Dobson's vote was in fact the only one recorded against the bill in the Assembly (a similar margin of 37 to 1 had prevailed in the State Senate).⁹⁰

*The railway company in fact did continue to fight the lowered fare in the courts with some success following annexation, an episode which forms part of the larger story of the city's long-term struggles with the company over fares and service.

The indication is that the bill's passage through the legislative labyrinth had been greased by the routine mechanisms for local laws described in an earlier chapter. Dobson may have been acting on maverick impulses, and perhaps even from sincere conviction. It seems likely, however, that his extraordinary performance was for the benefit of his Greece constituents, and was tolerated or even cleared by the state and local Republican organizations, with the understanding that no legislator was to take him seriously.

Mayor Edgerton conducted his formal hearing on the Charlotte annexation bill in mid-April. The story filed by the Democrat and Chronicle reporter on the day of the hearing was headlined "Mayor Cheered by Supporters of Charlotte Annexation." Fully two hundred supporters of annexation turned out, mostly from the village. The only dissident voice heard belonged to Daniel Beach, the trolley company attorney, who registered a pro forma denunciation of the proposed reduction in car fare. Chamber of Commerce President George Thayer promised that the city could get larger federal appropriations than Charlotte ever could,* pointing out to his listeners that scheduled improvements to the Welland Canal and Port of Toronto posed challenges that ought to be met.

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As for the residents of Charlotte, most, like James E. Kelso "and a number of others of the more prosperous people," were looking forward to moral elevation in the village. Already, according to Kelso (owner of a commercial laundry in the city), he and some of his friends were talking

*Ironically, ten years later the Rochester Chamber was still endeavoring to get the port's official name changed from Charlotte to Rochester. A sympathetic local Congressman even introduced legislation to change the name, but his bill was not acted upon. In 1926 Secretary Roland B. Woodward of the Chamber filed a petition for the name change with the U.S. Geographic Board.⁹¹ A telephone inquiry to the Coast Guard station in 1973 elicited the nonplussed reply that "Charlotte, the Port of Rochester" sounded right.

about building a YMCA; a new "interdenominational tabernacle" was not beyond
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the realm of possibility.

Mayor Edgerton and Governor Charles Whitman added their signatures to the Charlotte annexation bill in April, 1915, but the only immediate effect was to sharply curtail the powers of the village board, particularly its ability to borrow money. The law was scheduled to become fully effective at midnight, December 31st. On that night a few Charlotte folk used the occasion to take special notice that one of the area's oldest village's was passing out of legal existence. The Fire Department and Woman's Auxiliary held a ball attended by Mayor Edgerton and other city officials. At the Methodist church descendents of the first settlers were invited to speak. Present at the gathering was Rochester Police Chief Joseph Quigley, who promised that "the law would be strictly enforced at the lakeside," and that "the cancerous
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spots would do well to erase themselves immediately."

Under terms of the annexation law, the Rochester Common Council was authorized to appoint an alderman to represent the new ward until elections in November, 1916--in effect, Charlotte was stripped of representative government from April, 1915, when the powers of the village board were curtailed, until January 1, 1917, when its first elected alderman took his seat in the city council. The man appointed to the job, who was returned to office by the voters for several terms thereafter, was Charles Hannahs.

One effect of the annexation law was to abolish Greece School District 4, which had constructed the Charlotte school with taxes raised from a territory twice as large as Charlotte. The District 4 boundaries took in a sizable swath of land west and south of the village, composed primarily of

farms. City officials agreed to accept students who lived in parts of the old school district not included in the village; they would be permitted to attend the now city owned school in the Twenty-third Ward without paying tuition. The student's tuition-free status was formalized at first by a city ordinance, but the 1918 annexation law (which abolished the much smaller Greece District 10) amended the city charter to make the tuition--free grant mandatory. ⁹⁵ As was described in the preceding chapter (p. 152n), later suburban development gave rise to a "free district" problem of extraordinary proportions. By 1960 the remnants of Greece Districts 4 and 10 sent 1,547 ⁹⁶ students to attend city schools for free.

Such unhappy developments, however, lay far in the future. On the First of January most Rochesterians were pleased with the idea that the city had become, in the words of the Herald, "an actual port of the unsalted seas." ⁹⁷ Also pleasing, to both city residents and the erstwhile citizens of Charlotte, was the contemplated reduction in car fare--to become effective once the corporation counsel had bested the railway company's attorneys in court. But the change which seemed most significant was symbolized by the arrival in Charlotte, at midnight, of three Hibernians from the city police force. "Twelve bells saw Officers Doane, Christie, and Moore stationed on Broadway," said the Democrat and Chronicle, "commissioned to keep the law in Charlotte as it is kept in Rochester." ⁹⁸

NOTES

Chapter V

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2. Ibid., pp. 31-32.
3. Emma M. Pollard Greer, "Home Builders of Old Charlotte," Rochester Historical Society Publication Fund Series (1932), Vol. XI: Centennial History of Rochester, New York, Vol. II, pp. 245-260.
4. Edward R. Foreman, "Annals of Rochester," Rochester Historical Society Publication Fund Series (1931), Vol. X: Centennial History of Rochester, New York, Vol. I, p. 277.
5. McKelvey, "The Port of Rochester; A History of Its Lake Trade," Rochester History XVI (October, 1954), No. 4, pp. 3-4.
6. Ruth Marsh and Dorothy S. Truesdale, "War on Lake Ontario: 1812-1815," Rochester History IV (October, 1942), No. 4.
7. McKelvey, loc. cit.; William W. Campbell, DeWitt Clinton (New York, 1849), p. 113.
8. Rochester Telegraph, January 16, 1821. Bushels have been converted to barrels at 3.9:1.
9. Rochester Directory (1827), p. 115.
10. McKelvey, op. cit., pp. 7-9, and Water-Power City, pp. 169-170.
11. Emma M. Pollard Greer, History of Charlotte (typescript in Rochester Public Library, n.d. [1930?]) p. 255.
12. McKelvey, "The Port of Rochester," pp. 8-9.
13. Elon H. Hooker, "Memories of Carthage," Rochester Historical Society Publication Fund Series (1932) Vol. XI: Centennial History of Rochester, New York, Vol. II, pp. 229-242.
14. McKelvey, op. cit., p. 12.
15. Ibid.
16. Greer, op. cit., unpaginated chapter 38.
17. Rochester Union and Advertiser, July 6, 1885.

18. U&A, June 1, 1889; McKelvey, op. cit., p. 14.
19. U&A, July 3, 1895.
20. Greer, op. cit. pp. 100-109.
21. Ibid; McKelvey, op. cit., p. 13.
22. McKelvey, op. cit., pp. 12-13, 15.; George W. Hilton, The Great Lakes Car Ferries (Berkeley, Calif., 1962), pp. 237-244.
23. McKelvey, op. cit., p. 13.
24. Office of the Chief of Engineers, Annual Report upon the Improvement of Harbors on Lake Ontario and of St. Lawrence River and Harbors Thereon, New York (Washington, 1901), p. 593.
25. McKelvey, op. cit., p. 15.
26. Office of the Chief of Engineers, op. cit., pp. 3355-3356.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid, pp. 3355-3356 and 3365-3370.
29. McKelvey, "The First Four Decades of the Chamber of Commerce," Rochester History XXIV (October, 1962), No. 4, pp. 1-9.
30. U&A, October 10, 1893.
31. U&A, December 20, 1893.
32. U&A, February 3, 1894.
33. Quoted in Greer, op. cit., p. 273.
34. U&A, February 10, 1894.
35. U&A, February 13, 1894.
36. McKelvey, "The Mayors of Rochester's Mid Years: 1860-1900," Rochester History XXVIII (January, 1966), No. 1, p. 21.
37. Greer, op. cit., pp. 274-275.
38. Ibid, p. 276.
39. The most thorough discussion of the psychology of prohibition is contained in Andrew Sinclair, Prohibition; The Era of Excess (Boston, 1962), pp. 30-105. Sinclair's central thesis--that the issue of alcohol and its prohibition in America are emblematic of the opposition of extreme ideologies--is cogently stated. On the broad reasons for the vitality of prohibitionism in America, see

39. Robert H. Wiebe, The Search For Order 1877-1920 (New York, 1967), pp. 1-75. Richard Hofstadter, in The Age of Reform (New York, 1955), pp. 289-293, succinctly states the reasons for the intensity of the prohibition movement in the progressive era.
40. McKelvey, Rochester, The Quest for Quality 1890-1925 (Cambridge, Mass., 1956), pp. 30, 86, 94 and *passim*; McKelvey, "A History of the Police of Rochester, New York," Rochester History XXV (October, 1963), No. 4, p. 8.
41. See Clinton Howard, "An Organized Outlaw," in J. Frank Hanly and Oliver Wayne Stewart (eds.), Speeches of The Flying Squadron (Indianapolis, 1915), pp. 235-242.
42. Rochester Evening Times, April 13, 1899.
43. Rochester Herald, April 15, 1901.
44. Greer, *op. cit.*, p. 240.
45. Sinclair, *op. cit.*, p. 93.
46. Herald, May 7, 1901.
47. John C. Henderson quoted in Rochester Democrat and Chronicle, March 24, 1915.
48. USA, February 15, 1918; D&C, February 16, 1916.
49. McKelvey, Quest for Quality, pp. 122, 137.
50. McKelvey, "A History of the Police of Rochester," pp. 13-16.
51. D&C, January 18, 1915.
52. D&C, January 20, 1915.
53. D&C, January 22, 1915.
54. D&C, January 24, 1915.
55. Henderson actively participated in village meetings; the 1905 Rochester House Directory includes a "Mrs. John C. Henderson" among the Charlotte Post Office listings, who may have been his widowed mother.
56. D&C, January 25, 1915.
57. D&C, January 27, 1915.

58. U&A, January 21, 1915.
59. D&C, U&A, January 21, 1915.
60. D&C, February 10, 1915.
61. D&C, February 17, 1915.
62. D&C, Herald, January 28, 1915.
63. D&C, Herald, January 24, 1915.
64. D&C, February 4, 1915.
65. U&A, February 15; D&C, Herald, February 16, 1915.
66. D&C, February 22, 27, 1915.
67. Post-Express, March 1, 6, 1915.
68. D&C, March 16, 1915.
69. Herald, March 17, 1915.
70. Herald, March 24, 1915.
71. Evening Times, March 17, 1915.
72. Herald, March 17, 1915.
73. Post-Express, March 16, D&C, March 17, 1915.
74. D&C, March 25, 1915.
75. D&C, March 20, 1915.
76. Post-Express, April 6, 1915, cited in Greer, op. cit., unpaginated Chapter XLI.
77. Post-Express, March 20, 1915.
78. Herald, U&A, March 25, 1915.
79. D&C, March 25, 1915.
80. Post-Express, March 22, Herald, March 25, 1915.
81. Herald, March 17, D&C, April 13, 1915.

82. Herald, March 20, 1915.
83. Herald, March 21, 1915.
84. Herald, March 25, 1915.
85. Herald, March 27, 1915.
86. Ibid.
87. D&C, April 16, 1915.
88. Herald, Post-Express, March 24, 1915, Post-Express, April 6, 1918.
89. Greer, loc. cit.
90. D&C, March 26, April 6, 1915.
91. Herald, February 2, 1926.
92. D&C, April 16, 1915.
93. Herald, March 27, 1915.
94. D&C, January 1, 1916.
95. Chapter 547, Laws of 1918.
96. Rochester Times-Union, April 13, 1960.
97. Herald, March 20, 1915.
98. D&C, January 1, 1916.

Chapter VI

The End of An Era: 1922-1926

Nineteen twenty-one was a year of political change in Rochester. A protracted and bitter labor dispute between local industrialists and construction trade unions was climaxed that summer by Mayor Edgerton's acceptance of a position as seventh man on a board of arbitration. The board, on which Edgerton held the swing vote, rejected all of the unions' demands and conceded a fifteen percent wage cut which the contractors had requested. Shortly afterwards the aging mayor, now 74, announced his decision to retire and not seek an eighth term in office. The unpopular decision of the arbitration board would, in any case, have seriously lessened his chances for re-election.¹ However, the mayor's solid accomplishments during fourteen years in office elicited much praise on the occasion of his retirement. Typical was George Eastman's statement: "My appreciation of the knowledge and skill with which he has conducted the affairs of the city has increased from year to year. Mr. Edgerton, with his sturdy character and honesty of purpose has endeared himself to thousands of our citizens."²

Meanwhile, George Aldridge had advanced to one of the most rewarding positions available to a politician. President Warren G. Harding appointed him Collector for the Port of New York, a reward for Aldridge's contribution to the presidential campaign effort in the preceding election. Voters in the 1920 primary elections had participated in the first serious challenge to Aldridge's leadership of the local Republican organization. "Chip" Bostwick, ward heeler of the Tenth Ward--which, with additions from the

1919 annexation had become one of the city's most populous--ran against Aldridge for the post of state committeeman. Although Bostwick's attempt to displace Aldridge failed, the challenge was a foretaste of the serious dissension in Republican ranks to follow during the next few
3
years.

The Boss exercised his revenge against the underlings in the local organization by choosing Clarence D. Van Zandt as the party's nominee to succeed Edgerton. Van Zandt was the 68 year old president of a large wholesale drug concern, and though well-known in the city, was not a politician. He managed to win a narrow victory in a four-way race. Aldridge assisted in the naming of department heads in the new Van Zandt administration early in 1922 and returned to New York. The announcement that Aldridge had died suddenly of a heart attack on June 14 shocked
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Rochesterians, including Edgerton who met a similar fate five days later.

The passing of Aldridge and Edgerton left a serious power vacuum in the highest level of the city's political leadership. The local Republican organization soon split into two factions, one led by the ambitious Bostwick, the other by Aldridge's principal lieutenant, James Hotchkiss. The weakening of the machine enabled a coalition of well-meaning reformers spearheaded by the Bureau of Municipal Research and George Eastman to push for major charter reforms. Van Zandt himself, assuming the posture of an elder statesman, yielded to the demands of the City Manager League and assisted passage of the necessary charter amendments in the common council. The charter amendments required approval by the council to be placed on the ballot, where they were approved by the voters in November
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1925. The extensively revised city charter called for a city manager

plan modeled after the system which many American cities had adopted since 1901--and which several had already abandoned.⁶ The mayor as chief executive officer was replaced by a city manager appointed by the city council. The council was transformed from a large body with one alderman representing each ward to a small "combined" council of five members elected at-large and one elected from each of four districts. Henceforth the mayor, with few statutory powers and the informal role of party leader, was chosen by the nine-member council. The first city elections held under terms of the revised charter took place in November 1927, and the city manager plan became fully operative in January 1928.

Thus the administration of Clarence VanZandt, who was returned to office in 1923 and 1925--the last time Rochester popularly elected its mayor--represented the twilight of political era in the city's history. With Aldridge gone, infighting within his own party's ranks, and vociferous advocates of a city manager plan making themselves heard as early as his first year in office, Mayor Van Zandt maintained the momentum of city leadership set by his predecessor with difficulty. Still, Van Zandt did a creditable job. Programs which had been initiated during the Edgerton years, such as the public library system, subway construction, and the movement for a decent municipal hospital, received substantial impetus. Like his predecessor, Van Zandt displayed a lively interest in municipal expansion through annexation of developing suburbs.

The annexationist energies of the Van Zandt administration were due, at least in part, to the influence of Edwin A. Fisher. Fisher, the former City Engineer, like several of the top men in the new administration, had received his appointment from Hiram Edgerton. The previous mayor had

named him Planning Superintendent in 1918; Fisher's task was to coordinate and enliven the efforts of a new planning bureau which was established that year. Fisher brought a realistic, if somewhat conservative attitude to the job of chief planner. He rejected as too expensive several schemes for grand civic centers submitted by outside consultants and supported by local "city beautiful" advocates. On the other hand, he supported adoption of building codes and zoning regulations and insisted that real estate men submit plans for new subdivisions to him for prior approval.

As for development outside the city limits, Fisher had suffered personal frustration while working in the city engineer's office on the city's sewer plans; during the Edgerton years engineer Fisher was perplexed more than once when suburban oppositionists failed to perceive the merits of integrated sewer development. It is impossible to say with certainty how much of the enthusiasm for expansion displayed by the Van Zandt administration was Van Zandt's own, and how much was owed to the convictions of his Planning Superintendent. Fisher played a prominent role as the city's spokesman in behalf of annexation schemes. But Van Zandt, Fisher, and other officers of the mayor's cabinet displayed a united front.

If the Van Zandt administration exhibited renewed expansionist energies on the part of the city in the 1920s, suburban leaders, as we shall see, demonstrated a hardened spirit of resistance to annexation plans. Residents of certain sections of the Town of Brighton, in particular, mounted an effective counter-program, the key element of which was establishment of an independent sewer district. By 1926 it

was becoming clear that future annexations of significant suburban territory would require surmounting of the greatest obstacles--even before a modification of the state constitution in 1927 made such annexations nearly impossible. Ironically, some suburbanites as well as city officials continued to declare, during these years, that future annexations of the suburbs by Rochester were not only possible but inevitable.

Mayor Van Zandt and his cabinet gave prompt attention to expansion plans in the first month of the new administration. During the first two weeks of January 1922 Van Zandt held a conference with Edwin Fisher, City Engineer C. Arthur Poole, and Corporation Counsel Charles L. Pierce. The immediate reasons for raising the subject of annexation included proposals, then in the early stages of discussion, for a major building program of the University of Rochester on an eighty-seven acre tract on the southern outskirts. Construction of the new "River Campus," university officials proposed, could be combined with a nearby medical center and municipal hospital--also in the talking stages. While the eighty-seven acre Oak Hill golf course was already within the city limits, the section south of Elmwood Avenue where it was proposed to build a medical center was not. City officials gave annexation of the proposed medical center site high priority. In connection with annexation of the site itself, they proposed taking a sizeable section some 350 acres in extent which would bring the city line down to the Barge Canal in that area.

A second "priority" annexation discussed by Van Zandt and his lieutenants included territory along Highland Avenue between Goodman

Street and Monroe Avenue. The purpose of annexing this section, according to the officials, was to eliminate the city's "jig-saw" southern boundary and to gain access to Highland Avenue so that widening and other improvements could go through. If Fisher or his colleagues remembered that this section had rebuffed Mayor Edgerton's annexation proposals four times in the past, they did not mention the fact.

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In addition to the two parcels considered to be priority items on the city's annexation agenda--both in the Town of Brighton--the administration announced that it was considering a third piece of Brighton, the large section southeast of the city's Cobbs Hill Reservoir bounded on the north by Highland Avenue, on the south by Elmwood Avenue, and lying between Monroe Avenue and Clover Street. If annexation of that section--perhaps 600 acres--was only an afterthought, the fact was somewhat ironic. The boundaries casually mentioned by city officials included most of Brighton's fashionable new neighborhoods and a substantial portion of the town's 2,900 citizens.

Other parcels which had been included in the discussion of annexation, city officials said, included two separate sections of the Town of Irondequoit. Each was a roughly rectangular area of more than 300 acres--one north of the 1914 "Holland Settlement" annexation and the other north of Norton Street between Joseph and Portland Avenues. Both Irondequoit parcels contained residential subdivisions in which construction was proceeding rapidly; connection with the city sewer system seemed like a logical step in the near future.

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Reaction to the city's latest annexation proposals, and rumors of proposals, followed a familiar pattern. A week after discussion of

annexation by city officials had been publicized, Brighton Town Supervisor Bion H. Howard led 50 of his taxpayers for a visit with Mayor Van Zandt at city hall. Edwin C. Smith, the Brighton town counsel, presented a petition signed by property owners opposed to annexation. Representatives of the Highland Avenue section who were present at the Wednesday morning meeting said they were opposed to having the two-lane Avenue widened, for fear of the cost and because widening would "spoil their property." Townspeople from sections of the town outside the parts where annexation was contemplated complained of losing part of the town's tax base to the city. For his part, Van Zandt, along with Poole and Fisher who were also present, seemed unprepared for the Brighton residents' vigorous demonstration. According to one (anonymous) city official, the administration might actually be reluctant to take the "Clover Street section" because the area was "bonded."* On the other hand, the city men pointed out, residents of the Brighton section adjacent to the proposed university site had expressed some eagerness for connection with sewer lines and possible extension of trolley service. 13

A similar protest was mounted by Town of Irondequoit officials, including the supervisor, two board members, and the town counsel, Arthur T. Pammenter. Pammenter acted as the spokesman for the delegation which visited city hall.

*That is, bonds had been issued on the credit of the town to pay for erection of a water district mentioned earlier (p. 163, supra). In such cases, annexation meant that the city had to assume the indebtedness and finish collecting the special assessments from benefitting property owners. The bonded indebtedness of an area was not an insurmountable obstacle to annexation, and the procedure outlined had been resorted to on several occasions, but bonded indebtedness did make a suburban section less attractive--as we will shortly see.

Although he admitted that it [annexation] must come sometime, he believed that the time was not at hand. The large properties, running from thirty to forty or more acres, all market-garden land, would suffer by the introduction of sewers, necessary excavation work and the like. The small property owners would not suffer much, if any, from the change.¹⁴

It was to the owner of the small farm which was not quite ready to be subdivided that Pammenter ascribed the greatest potential hardship. But overall he felt that 90 per cent of the town's [5,100] residents opposed annexation.

Earlier, the Democrat and Chronicle said that Poole and Fisher and other city department heads had arrived at the position of favoring wholesale annexation. "How long will it be," speculated the newspaper, "before the growing needs of the City of Rochester require the annexation of the Towns of Brighton and Irondequoit?" The trend over the years had been for the city to take pieces of territory here and there and as a result the two east side towns had grown smaller with some of their most highly valued neighborhoods taken. This tended to increase the tax burdens for the residents left in the remainder of the town. According to Poole, Fisher, and the newspaper's analyst, "it is only a question of time before these towns will be taken into the city." Thus, thought the city's officials, it might be fair to press for that goal immediately. But such a program was not practical for 1922; instead, it would have to wait until the next year after the situation was given a more careful
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review.

Meanwhile, residents in particular suburban areas were given free rein to speculate over the advantages and disadvantages of annexation. In the south-central section of Irondequoit, north of Norton Street

and between Joseph and Portland Avenues, many lot owners who planned to build houses in the coming year thought annexation was a good idea, since it would enable them to connect with city sewers. On the other hand, several owners of houses in the Fairview Subdivision in Irondequoit--north of the old Holland Settlement--were content with things as they were. Irondequoit Justice of the Peace G.H. Pardee spoke for many of them when he said, "cesspools have been eminently satisfactory." ¹⁶ Investors in cesspools in the Fairview Subdivision represented on a small scale the major obstacle which city officials faced in trying to implement annexation plans.

Sewage was much the topic of conversation at a meeting between City Engineer Poole, Planning Superintendent Fisher, and a select committee from the Town of Brighton. The committee of Brighton residents, led by Supervisor Howard and former Supervisor A. Emerson Babcock, had been deputized at a meeting of 125 Brightonians in a school house on Landing Road located in the path of city annexation plans. The committee handed Poole and Fisher a petition signed by at least 100 Brighton residents opposing annexation. Poole and Fisher wanted to expedite drainage plans beneficial to property owners in the easternmost sections of the city, plans that were potentially beneficial to many Brighton property owners. The two engineers projected a new sewer line needed to connect parts of the city's southeastern section with the "Brighton" Sewage Treatment Plant, which was owned by the city.*

*The Brighton Treatment Plant was located in a corner of the territory annexed in 1914, adjacent to Irondequoit Bay. Much smaller than the main treatment plant on Lake Ontario, the Brighton Plant had been put in operation in March 1916.¹⁷

The needed sewer line recalled the episode seventeen years before when Brighton Village was annexed. Then, the village board had hastily assembled a plan for an independent sewer system designed to drain north and eastward toward Irondequoit Bay. The city's eastern sewer system followed the same general scheme. Brighton Village, now the Twenty-first Ward, and some sections adjacent to it were served by the Brighton Plant which discharged in the Bay. Residential development in Rochester's southeastern section--particularly in the neighborhoods south of the former village--now suggested the need for an additional connection with the plant.

Poole and Fisher explained to the Brighton men that the new sewer line was planned to run through territory in their town, a section beyond the eastern city limits. If town residents would not agree to annexation now, the engineers proposed, suppose the city took a strip 600-700 feet wide and 3,000 feet long as a right-of-way for the sewer. The city would even agree to permit connections to the sewer by Brighton property owners along its path and would hold up assessments for the improvement for four or five years or until the territory entered the city. Fisher added that a special law would be required to make this possible.

The city's compromise offer seemed reasonable to at least some members of the committee from Brighton. Former Supervisor Babcock conceded that "Brightonians realized the city would acquire the territory some time, but that they didn't believe the time was ripe now." He felt that the compromise was fair. Two other committee members were less sanguine, and for the next day or two confusion reigned over whether

Brighton had agreed to the city's proposal. Apparently some noncommittal remarks from the Brightonians led Fisher to believe they agreed to give up the right-of-way. The planning superintendent announced that he was satisfied with the compromise and was going ahead with plans. Some of the committee members, with apparent embarrassment, scrambled to "get out from under" by writing letters to city officials opposing the compromise.²⁰ In the wake of the debacle an editorialist for the Herald impatiently observed,

The city does not require consent of Brighton or of residents in the territory it is proposed to take in, for annexation. In case Brighton agitation is of extraordinarily acute form, the city may proceed with its original plan to annex the whole tract.²¹

City officials, however, were not prepared to press the issue in 1922. A group called the Brighton-Penfield Civic Association, composed largely of homeowners in eastern Brighton, met ten days later to denounce annexation of any part of what its members called the "Clover Street territory." Despite the need for drainage in the area and in nearby city property, speakers felt that "the time was not right" for even a compromise annexation. Officers of the association called on Mayor Van Zandt and received assurances that the city would postpone annexation of any part of the area under discussion.²² According to the Democrat and Chronicle, "Intimations that by next year the city would be allowed to go ahead with its original plans and annex fully three or four times as much Brighton territory in the vicinity of the Clover Street section as intended this year influenced the action of city officials in forbearing to press this annexation plan."

Representatives of the town board and the civic association informally agreed to meet with city officials during the year "with a view to ironing out all difficulties and controversies." A large scale annexation, "perhaps even [of] the entire remainder of the town," said the newspaper, could be planned for 1923.²³

While the successful resistance by the residents of eastern Brighton was in many respects unfortunate, the diversion the controversy provided helped the city to annex a sizeable piece from the western end of the town. This was the section adjacent to the proposed university medical center site. In mid-February an annexation bill was rushed through the legislature.²⁴ In addition to the territory in western Brighton, the bill provided for annexation of the south-central portion of Irondequoit where several lot owners had expressed desire for city sewer service. The total amount of land involved amounted to some 779 acres (Table IV-1, p. 176 supra).

A formal hearing on the bill scheduled for mid-March in Van Zandt's office provided a chance for some residents near the proposed hospital site to mount an eleventh hour protest. Apparently, however, the neighborhood was divided against itself, since the hearing "soon developed into a controversy between those property owners who desired to receive the benefits of city improvements and those who were adverse in paying additional taxes."²⁵ In some respects the residents of the western end of the town seemed like orphans. The water service provided by a special district which the town board had set up for the wealthier and

more populous east end had not been extended westward. Homeowners still dependent on well water were understandably eager to know when they could connect to the Rochester water works. Alderman Abram De Potter, President of the Common Council and presiding officer at the hearing, assured them that they would get water as soon as city mains ran by the section. He also pointed out that under terms of the annexation bill the city was assuming the outstanding bonds of the local school district; following earlier precedents, children in the abolished district outside the annexed section were invited to attend city schools for free.²⁶ The west end oppositionists secured no help from Brighton town officials, and on April 7 the city's latest annexation bill since 1918 was signed by Republican Governor Nathan Miller.

If the early and mid-1920s formed the closing years of the era of Rochester's municipal expansion, they were significant for changes in the demographic pattern of urban life as well. In 1916, the eve of United States intervention in the European war, there was only one registered automobile for every thirty-five Rochesterians. By the end of 1924 the ratio of persons to automobiles was less than five to one. The total automobile registration in the latter year, 82,472, exceeded the number of dwelling units in Monroe County.²⁷

The dramatic transformation of the automobile from a plaything of the rich into Everyman's transportation system had an explosive effect on the pattern of suburbanization, in Rochester as elsewhere. Where urban growth had formerly been accretive, characterized by development of

outer wards, it was now avulsive, and marked by sudden shifts of population into the suburban towns. Naturally, some suburban development had always taken place outside the city's political jurisdiction, but such development was similar in kind to that taking place within the outer wards; it was similarly dependent on access to the street railway system. Now families able to afford an automobile, building or choosing homes away from the old inner wards, were free to locate away from the car lines.* In the decade between 1920 and 1930 the populations of Brighton and Irondequoit more than tripled, from 2,911 to 9,065 in Brighton, and from 5,123 to 18,024 in Irondequoit.

Such gains reflected the beginning of the end of the city's near-monopoly of metropolitan residents. From a high point in 1920 when the city's share of county residents stood at 84%, the proportion fell steadily off: in 1925 it was 80.8%, and 1930, 77.4% (Table II-2, pp. 51-52, supra).

Part of the reason the city's dominance in population did not decrease even faster was the continued addition of population in the city limits. While the two east side suburban towns added 19,055 people for a greater than 300% increase, the five outer wards of the city adjacent to them increased 27,210 in population--31% of their 1920 total.²⁹ Only a small part of the population increase in the outer wards is attributable to the 1922 annexation. Thus, it is possible to exaggerate the degree

*While the "automobile revolution" was clearly the major reason for change in the suburban pattern, other technological change played a supportive role. The related introduction of busses was certainly a factor, as were septic systems for the individual home, power lawnmowers, and a host of labor-saving and home entertainment devices which altered familiar patterns of family life.

of change in the urban growth pattern during the 1920s. While it is true that the "automobile suburbanization" considered characteristic of the period after World War II began during the 1920s, it was accompanied at that time by a significant amount of the older, more deliberate type of urban growth.

Perhaps the mixed nature of suburban growth during the decade contributed to the lack of awareness on the part of city officials and others that anything was changing. The prevalent mode of thought was still in terms of streetcar suburbanization, despite the fact that the Rochester Railway Company had halted extension of its trolley lines and was beginning to supplement them with motor busses. The abandonment of the Erie Canal through the center of Rochester in 1920 provided city officials with what they felt was an unusual opportunity to begin developing a municipally-owned rapid transit system. Actual construction of the Rochester "subway"* had not yet begun when Mayor Van Zandt assumed Office in 1922, and he supported the project vigorously and authorized bond issues totalling more than \$10,000,000 to pay for it.

Despite its rather staggering cost--pushed relentlessly upward by construction difficulties and revised estimates--Van Zandt was proud of the subway and considered it the major accomplishment of his administration. In February 1923, in the midst of another annexation struggle with Brighton residents, the Post Express issued the bold headline, "Mayor Speeds Car Plans For Greater City." The newspaper said that

*The Rochester Rapid Transit and Industrial Railroad was a "subway" in name only for most of its length. The canal bed in which the tracks were laid was decked over only in the downtown section. The canal right-of-way ran from the city's southeast quadrant through downtown and then turned to the northwest.

progress on the west side section of the subway "marks another advance in Mayor Van Zandt's plans for a greater Rochester." Paraphrasing Van Zandt's remarks on the subject, the Post Express observed that,

[At the western terminus] suburban homes for workers and their families having adequate transportation facilities will attract thousands from the congested population districts of the city. The same holds true respecting the eastern end of the road where, however, there has been a consistent and steady growth for several years.³¹

According to the city administration, among the positive benefits of the single long subway line--projected to extend into Greece on the northwest and Brighton on the southeast--was the fact that the area available for residence "increases as the square of the radius of the transportation zone."³² Thus, a railway eight miles long from the center of the city could be expected to tap sixty-four times the area that a one-mile railway would. The reason all of this was important, in the minds of Van Zandt and others, was a fundamental belief that outward dispersion of the city's population was a good thing. Such notions were not unusual; in fact, they were a standard feature of the anti-urban tradition.³³ In Rochester, Health Officer George W. Goler had been an early, and vocal, advocate of rapid, cheap transit as a means of dispersing population and improving the quality of urban life.³⁴

Construction of the subway was one way in which the city administration encouraged or at least reacted to the new suburban growth. Another was sponsorship, in 1922, of state legislation enabling suburban towns adjacent to cities of the first class to set up and enforce building codes similar to those in the cities. The bill authorizing suburban building codes was introduced by Rochester Senator James L.

Whitley, who explained that "under the existing statutes the town boards of Brighton and Irondequoit had no control over the character of building that was done. As a consequence a number of small shacks are erected and when annexations are made to the city they fall far short of the requirements of the city."³⁵

Soon after the bill's approval Edwin A. Fisher persuaded the Brighton Town Board to adopt an ordinance comparable to the city's own building codes. Fisher acted quickly in response to rumors that developers of land near the new hospital site were planning to lay out subdivisions not conforming to city rules before annexation could take effect on January 1, 1923. The key provision of the new Brighton ordinance which Fisher wanted required subdividers to submit plans in advance. A new subdivision was to have graded streets at least fifty feet wide, no dead-end streets, and no blocks longer than one thousand feet. In addition, the street plan had to be approved by the County Superintendent of Highways. The town board could require a topographical map, and the tentative street names submitted by developers had to be new ones not conflicting with those already in use.³⁶ Within a short time, Fisher established a similar working relationship with officials in Irondequoit-- to insure that neighborhoods annexed by the city in the future conformed to Rochester planning requirements.³⁷

In late 1922, while city officials dallied over annexation plans which they had earlier indicated they would be working on, a Brighton resident named Henry Marsh met with his neighbors over plans for a

Brighton sewer system. Marsh, a wholesale grocer whose place of business was located on Front Street in the heart of Rochester, was President of the Brighton-Penfield Civic Association. On January 4, Marsh and a committee of association members met with Mayor Van Zandt. The purpose of the meeting, as Marsh perhaps disingenuously put it, was to have the city sanction the tentative sewer plan "so that it would not be necessary to rebuild the sewer system at some future date after adjoining towns have been annexed to the city." ³⁸ Van Zandt was non-committal.

Much like Brighton Village almost twenty years before, residents of the eastern part of the Town of Brighton now faced a choice between seeking annexation by the city or building an independent sewer system. The suburbanized or soon-to-be-developed portion of east Brighton amounted to about one thousand acres, containing perhaps 1,500 residents. As was previously indicated, the area lay to the east and south of the city's southeastern corner, and in the path of logical extensions of the city's sewer system. Topographically, and in terms of the character of its residential development--which was generally upper-income--this "Clover Street section" of Brighton closely resembled the "Highland Avenue section" inside the city's southeastern boundaries.

Confident of success, Marsh and the other civic association leaders presented their sewer plan to a meeting of residents on February 2. They pointed out that sewer construction was inevitable, whether done by the city or the town, and argued that a system independent of the city sewers might be built at a lower price. Most of the people at the meeting, said a reporter for the Times Union, seemed favorably disposed

toward a separate sewer system. Civic association leaders estimated the total cost at about one and a quarter million dollars. This, they added, was not entirely disadvantageous. If the property to be served by a Brighton sewer system were encumbered by the assessments needed for that level of indebtedness, the city might not want to annex it. Only a minority of those attending the meeting seemed opposed to the plan; they argued that present sewage facilities* were adequate, or that the tax burden of erecting a sewer district would be too heavy. A few thought that new bonded indebtedness would not, in the end, stop annexation by the city.

However, the possibility that Brighton would go ahead with independent sewers was enough to prod the city into action. Officials announced that a hearing would be held on February 8, with Van Zandt and Fisher presiding, to discuss large-scale annexation of the developed parts of Brighton. The hearing, which lasted an hour, was attended by about fifty suburban residents said to oppose annexation ten to one. Fisher and Van Zandt adopted a hard line, saying that two courses were open: either the city would annex all the Clover Street section in the path of its proposed sewer extensions--about one thousand acres, or else the whole Town of Brighton. Van Zandt added that, "we cannot consider petitions including property owners outside the territory under consideration." Harry Sessions, a Brighton attorney, challenged the mayor to annex "all of Brighton or none. You have been clipping off parts of

*The present facilities for most residents of Brighton were cesspools and septic tanks, except in the Home Acres Tract where there was a neighborhood sewage plant (pp. 160-162, supra).

Brighton for years. This year, we stand firm against biting any more from us." Henry Marsh, who was present at the hearing, observed that the civic association's plans for a sewer district were well under way. William Lozier, the civic association's consulting engineer, said that the plan he had drawn up was designed to drain all the territory the city was interested in annexing, and that the Brighton system could care for undrained parts of the city as well--if the legal problems could be⁴² straightened out.

At this juncture two men spoke up in favor of annexation and the extension of city sewers. Charles Brown and Henry Peck, representing the Brown Brothers and Chase Brothers Nurseries, said they were not interested in waiting for a Brighton sewer system. Together, the two nurserymen represented about half the territory under discussion--much of it still under cultivation. But the time had come for the nursery acres to converted into residential developments, and the big landholders wanted city sewers. Harry Sessions, in reply, charged that the city's⁴³ schemes were "encouraged by real estate operators."

The meeting broke up indecisively, and city officials scheduled a second hearing for February 21. In the intervening days one newspaper headlined Van Zandt's assertion that he was "firm for annexation." The sensationalist Journal loudly announced that Van Zandt "Declares Activities Of Town Officials Won't Prevent Additions To City." As the mayor explained it,

When we had the hearing on the proposed annexation of part of Irondequoit men and women with their children in arms came, and they were largely individual home owners just across the city line who were anxious for the city's benefits.⁴⁴

Indeed, a hearing less publicized than that concerning Brighton annexation had attracted fifty persons to discuss annexation of the Clifford Avenue section of Irondequoit. This was a section of several hundred acres adjacent to Irondequoit Bay forming a broad salient into the city's northeastern border; its annexation had been discussed the previous year, partly because it could be easily connected to the city's Brighton Sewage Treatment Plant. Only one of the fifty persons--Arthur T. Pammenter, a representative of the town board--opposed annexation of the Clifford Avenue section. ⁴⁵ But within a few days attorney Pammenter and members of the town board had gathered sixty to seventy signatures of Irondequoit residents on a petition opposing loss of any town territory. ⁴⁶

Deputy Corporation Counsel C.B. Forsyth opened the second hearing on Brighton annexation with the observation that he, a Brighton homeowner himself,* couldn't understand why anyone would object to the city's plans. According to Forsyth, the "territory in question is built up to a large extent and actually a part of the city." His conclusion was that "property owners within that territory should be willing to bear their share of the city's burdens." Henry Marsh's response was, "The only thing to consider today is whether the majority of people in the tract wish to come into the city." He produced a petition which he said represented \$750,000 worth of assessed valuation in Brighton--all opposed to joining the city. Marsh said he found only four homeowners in favor of annexation. ⁴⁸

*The state legislature was only presently debating legislation which would have required city officers to reside in the municipality which paid them--a measure which eventually was adopted. Some opponents of the "Dick Bill" denounced the measure as "socialistic."

There was only one significant industrial installation in the area, an enormous gasometer built by the Rochester Gas and Electric Corporation a few years before on Blossom Road. Construction of the gas company's gray monster was accompanied by much gnashing of teeth on the part of Brightonians, and represented the civic association's one major defeat. Marsh approached the utility with his anti-annexation petition but company officials wouldn't commit themselves either way. "They don't care if they pay \$8 or \$30 per \$1,000 on assessed valuation," said Marsh. "They get it back from the people anyway."⁴⁹

Aside from the gas and electric company (and the Country Club of Rochester), the large landowners in eastern Brighton were the nursery firms and other holders of vacant property who planned to subdivide it into residential developments--or had already done so. An attorney representing the Hooker estate, owners of 178 acres of as-yet undeveloped residential property just over the city line, presented a petition favoring annexation. The favorable petition, he said, represented at least as many acres as Marsh's objecting petition. Attorney Smith also maintained that the civic association's sewer plan was inadequate, that it only called for sanitary sewers when storm sewers were needed as well. The Hooker property was directly on the natural line of drainage to the city's Brighton sewage plant and its owners were eager to expedite sewer construction--by the city.

Marsh replied that the land developers' petition might represent as many acres as his, but that he had more people representing a greater assessed valuation on his side. C.B. Forsyth retorted that Marsh had

obtained his signatures by solicitation. In fact, thought Forsyth,
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"the people were not much interested."

Things became more complicated when several members of the Acres Community Club, representing the well-established Home Acres Tract, spoke up. The sewer plan which the Brighton-Penfield Civic Association had circulated called for a hook-up with the Home Acres sewer. The Acres Community Club already had a miniature sewage plant in operation (and their example was being imitated by the adjacent Roselawn Subdivision). Residents of the Home Acres Tract were worried that if an independent Brighton system was constructed and they were connected to it, they would wind up being taxed a second time for an improvement they had already paid for.

Perhaps it was the rather mind-boggling demonstration of the potential consequences of localism carried too far that influenced several speakers to call for wholesale annexation of the town, rather than any portion of it. Speakers stated that annexing small portions each year was like building additional rooms on a house. "It will come eventually, why not
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now?" was asked.

In the aftermath of the second inconclusive hearing officers of the Brighton-Penfield Civic Association conferred with the Brighton Town Board to agree on a course of action. It was decided that any annexation move would be resisted by sending lobbyists to Albany or even by taking the matter to court. A legal case, in the opinion of the Brighton leaders, could be based on the possible depreciation of

three and a half million dollars in outstanding bonds,* or on the fact that the town would lose up to ninety thousand dollars in yearly revenue if the city took the contemplated one thousand acres of east Brighton. The Brightonians perhaps were engaging in wishful thinking if they believed the city's assumption of their local improvement bonds would endanger the bondholders' security. There was nothing wrong with the city's credit, despite the fact that it was nearing its constitutional debt limit. The other problem, that of depriving the remainder of the town of revenue, could be obviated if the city annexed all of Brighton. But the Brighton leaders believed that eventuality was not likely, at least for the present. Supervisor Bion Howard declared, "Brighton, nor any part of it, won't be annexed for fifteen years."⁵²

After a long conference with his cabinet, Van Zandt announced that the city would take a neutral position with reference to the large annexation proposed for Irondequoit and Brighton. The mayor said,

In Brighton there are land owners who desire water and sewers. The same applies to Irondequoit. They petitioned the city to be annexed. If they can get at Albany permission for their annexation we shall welcome them into the city. It is strictly up to them, however, to determine their own fate.⁵³

But at the same time the mayor indicated that planning for the city's sewer extensions would go forward, with no actual construction begun until the annexation issue is settled. This slight ambiguity was enough for one newspaper to announce, "City Plans To Proceed with Annexation Program."⁵⁴

*It is not clear whether the three and a half million total mentioned by the Brightonians included the million and a quarter Henry Marsh wanted to borrow for a sewer district. The rest represented previous bonding for the water and school districts and perhaps sidewalk and lighting districts as well.

Reacting against that headline, Henry Marsh declared the next day that Brighton would fight "to the last ditch." He characterized the mayor's latest statement as "camouflage" and seemed quite annoyed by the mayor's remarks on affected persons determining annexation for themselves. Marsh now claimed that his opposition petition contained the names of ninety per cent of the residents in east Brighton.

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In Irondequoit, attorney Pammenter was deputized by the town board to seek an alliance with the Brighton town attorney and map out a joint strategy against possible annexation attempts. Members of the Irondequoit Town Board felt that the city dissembled in talking about sewer extensions. The city was too close to its debt limit to undertake new improvements and would remain that way for some time, they said. They neglected to mention that Rochester's constitutional debt limit was tied to its total assessed valuation, and that any annexation would add ten per cent of the value of the annexed territory to the debt limit. On the other hand, explained the Irondequoit leaders, the residential parts of the town could have improvements without annexation; Irondequoit was now cooperating with the city Planning Superintendent and Fire Marshall to oversee orderly growth. In other words, Irondequoit was now using the machinery designed to facilitate annexation as an argument against annexation! The town board voted to fight "the proposition to annex this territory whether or not the city is actively or passively interested in it."

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In the face of such opposition the city administration backed down and announced it was preparing a severely limited annexation bill. It

contemplated annexing several parcels of land held by developers in both towns (such as the Brown Nursery parcel in Brighton) where property owners had asked for annexation; a strip 1200 feet long in Irondequoit to accomodate home owners who wanted sewers; and a long, very narrow subway right-of-way which extended southward into Brighton. The right-of-way, formerly the route of the Erie Canal, had been purchased by the city from the state. ⁵⁷ As an editorialist for the Herald put it, the "City's fantastic annexation plans dwindle to a mere shadow when wires ⁵⁸ are pulled by suburban objection."

In the end, all the city was able to annex was the mile long subway route, about fifty feet wide, and a little parkland--and that at the end of a three year struggle.

The Brighton Town Board, emboldened by their success in defeating the one thousand acre annexation, thought they could block the pared-down proposition also. The board was not so much disturbed at proposed annexation of the Brown tract, which Mr. Brown wanted, as they were by the appearance on the map of the city's subway right-of-way, a knife-like ⁵⁹ projection plunged into the heart of Brighton which was nearly cut in two.

Feelings on the annexation issue had now reached small crisis proportions, indicated by a statement from the County Republican Chairman, James L. Hotchkiss. This was the first occasion Hotchkiss or his formidable predecessor, Aldridge, issued a public statement in relation to an annexation controversy. If Brighton officials were to oppose annexation of land to which the city had acquired title, then, the Boss darkly said, he would "wash his hands of the whole business."

Van Zandt was less obscure:

Of course we shall annex the canal lands. They belong to the city. Why should the city consent to sit by and pay taxes to Brighton on city property? We were generous to Brighton and it would do well to appreciate it. It is not too late to recall the measures proposed at Albany and go through with our original one thousand acre program.⁶⁰

On March 19, Hotchkiss issued a second statement: "If they the Brightonians intend to fight, I think the city is well able to defend itself." Henry Marsh's pledge that Brighton would fight "to the last ditch" was now matched by Mayor Van Zandt's "We'll fight you to a finish." An anonymous Brighton official, angry at the inclusion of the canal lands in the annexation bill, said, "We aren't going to sit down and let them tell us more than four hundred contradictory things. If we can't do anything at Albany, we will go to the courts."⁶¹

While officials on both sides issued press statements in Rochester, a party of lobbyists in Albany who included Edwin Fisher, Brighton Supervisor Howard, members of the Rochester Corporation Counsel staff, and the Brighton town attorney, worked out a compromise. The key provisions of the compromise included a \$12,000 cash settlement for the value of Brighton territory taken out of existing water and school districts and the granting of road easements across the subway right-of-way.⁶²

But soon after the compromise was achieved disturbing news began to filter back from Albany. Democratic Governor Alfred Smith had been returned to office in the elections of 1922, and his party held a majority in the State Senate. Republicans, however, controlled the Assembly. Part of Governor Smith's far-reaching reform program,

incorporated in the party platform the previous fall, was a call for bipartisan election commissions. This particular reform was a favorite of Harlan W. Rippey, the Monroe County Democratic Chairman. Now it was learned that James Hotchkiss, acting through Majority Leader Simon Adler from Rochester, was pressuring Republicans in the Assembly to block legislation which would implement the election reform. Rippey retaliated by promising to block all state legislation desired by Rochester's city administration.
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Mayor Van Zandt was infuriated. He aimed his criticism where it was probably most deserved, against Chairman Hotchkiss. Van Zandt accused Hotchkiss of "playing politics" at Albany and told him to quit blocking Democratic measures so that bills for the good of Rochester could get through. In addition to the compromise annexation, the city had a bill before the legislature which would have raised its constitutional debt limit. "There should be a give and take policy at Albany," said the mayor. "All of the bills which we have sent to Albany are essential to the city's progress."
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The mayor's appeal fell on deaf ears. Hotchkiss and Adler announced no "deals" on the bipartisan election commissions. Rippey replied that all local bills were "virtually dead." The Democratic leader was not convinced of the merits of the debt limit measure in any case. He said that its chief purpose was to enable financing of subway construction. As for that project, Rippey called it a "gift to the railroads" which were likely to operate the cars on the municipally-owned rails.
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In the closing days of the legislative session friendly Republicans in the Senate managed to sneak the local measures for Rochester through

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during the rush of business, but the subterfuge was of no avail. Governor Smith relied on the advice of Harlan Rippey, who in turn was pressured by Brighton residents who challenged him to "make good" on his opposition to the subway.⁶⁷ Rippey needed little urging. On June 3, 1923, Governor Smith vetoed all the local laws for Rochester⁶⁸ without comment.

Events followed a similar pattern for the next two years. In 1925 Governor Smith again vetoed a bill for the annexation of the subway right-of-way. Meanwhile, in 1924, large scale construction began on a sewer system for east Brighton, under the auspices of a new sewer district. The sewer district was managed by a three-man board of commissioners, on which Henry L. Marsh was comfortably ensconced as chairman. In four years Marsh could proudly report that the system had grown to serve an area of over 4,000 acres and a population greater than 10,000 persons-- including a section in the southeast corner of the City of Rochester,⁶⁹ which paid an annual fee to the sewer district for the service.

In 1926 Rochester finally managed to annex its own subway lands, but not without some cranky comments by Brighton Town Board members who wanted the city to continue making tax payments.* They explained that Brighton was setting no precedent in sending tax bills for the subway; the city had always paid taxes to rural towns for its aqueducts⁷⁰ from Hemlock Lake.

*The canal right-of-way which the city purchased included a neck of land in the Town of Greece on the northwest. The Greece portion was also annexed in 1926, though the city never got around to extending the subway that far. No objections were heard from Greece over the annexation.

The city smoothed the way for acceptance of the 1926 bill by Brighton residents with an arrangement with the Rochester Railway Company. A number of Brighton residents, it seemed, commuted to the city via the (interurban) cars of the Rochester and Eastern Railway. With the subway nearing completion, it was planned that the R&E cars would be diverted from Monroe Avenue, which ran through the most populous part of Brighton, to the subway rails. City officials persuaded the trolley company to extend its Monroe Avenue route, so that regular streetcars would pick up the commuters who now rode the interurbans. Many Brighton residents, including Henry Marsh, expressed pleasure over the city's solicitude.⁷¹ Harlan Rippey, whose earlier quarrels with Hotchkiss had abated, said he was "not interested in one way or the other."⁷² Even the Brighton-Penfield Civic Association took positive action, wiring the governor that it had dropped its earlier opposition and favored this annexation.⁷³ A few Brightonians still feared the canal lands annexation, according to a Times Union editorialist: "It would be natural, they say, for the city soon to absorb the territory lying between the city limits and the annexed canal lands." The newspaper felt that "the time must come when the city will want to extend its boundaries in that direction," but that Brighton residents afraid of such a move were protected for the time being by the town's heavy sewer indebtedness.⁷⁴

Governor Smith signed the bill for Rochester' annexation of its canal lands on May 5, 1926. Included in the measure was a provision for extending the municipal boundaries around a newly acquired addition to the municipal golf course at Genesee Valley Park and a tiny addition

to Durand-Eastman Park. The parkland additions brought the total area of the final expansion during the era of annexations to just under 186 acres.

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Chapter VI

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Epilogue

In 1927, the same year that Rochesterians elected their first city council under the new city manager charter, Governor Alfred Smith toured the state in an effort to convince voters to approve a series of reform measures on the ballot for their consideration. The proposed reforms were contained in nine amendments to the state constitution. The most controversial of the amendments would have increased the governor's term of office from two years to four; this was a reform which Smith had desired, but he had also wanted the gubernatorial election scheduled in a different year than the presidential election. Republican opponents in the legislature succeeded in writing the amendment so that New York's governor would be elected in presidential years, and Smith counseled against its ratification. The popular governor threw the full weight of his support behind the other eight amendments, which included measures designed to give vastly increased fiscal powers to the state executive. Henceforth the governor would submit an annual budget to the legislature, in a fashion similar to that already adopted by the federal government and some other states. Governor Smith's ability as an "educator" of public opinion was proven by the results of the election in November. All eight amendments the governor desired were carried by comfortable majorities, while the one he opposed was defeated.

Swept along in the whirlwind of reform was a little-noted "popular sovereignty" amendment, the ninth in the series on the ballot. It had been submitted in the legislature by State Senator W.W. Westfall of Westchester County. As Article 12, Section 8, it amended a series of

constitutional provisions most of which related to the "home rule" powers of municipalities. As adopted on November 8, 1927, the Section stated,

No territory shall be annexed to any city until the people of the territory proposed to be annexed shall have consented to such annexation by a majority vote on a referendum called for that purpose.²

The measure provoked little comment, either before or after the election. A letter from a Westchester resident which was published in the New York Times a month before the amendment won approval from the voters articulated the point of view of many citizens of that county. The Westchesterian pointed out that the assessed valuation of the county was greater than \$1,250,000,000, or more than that of nineteen (specified) states. He added,

Today Westchester County comprises 448 square miles of territory. It is made up of numerous small communities, excepting Yonkers. The vast majority of the people own their own homes and there are many beautiful estates in this charming rural division of the state. In most of the communities industries are not welcomed, for the Westchester people wish to preserve the county as a district of homes.

What the county asks is to be secure from further raids on its territory.³

Curiously enough, there were no serious proposals at the time for any "raids" on Westchester territory. Westchester, it is true, lost several towns to New York City by annexations in 1874 and 1895. The sections taken from Westchester were subsequently organized as the Borough of the Bronx by the Greater New York Charter of 1898.⁴ Since that time, the idea that Westchester would lose further territory through an expansion of the Bronx seemed to be mainly the product of overactive imaginations. A proposed new charter for the County of Westchester

(establishing a county executive), which was defeated in 1925, generated the anguished charge that the reform would be the "first step" toward annexation of the county by New York City. A letterwriter in the New York Times the following year similarly predicted the inevitable creation of a "Borough of Westchester." Whatever the validity of these fears was, it was apparently enough to convince the powerful Westchester boss, William L. Ward, to inspire the proposed constitutional amendment as a precautionary measure.

Thorough consideration of the implications of the popular sovereignty amendment was prevented, in part, by the more pressing concern over the other eight amendments on the ballot. During the week before election day Governor Smith made a final speech at Tammany Hall in which he outlined his arguments on behalf of the eight amendments he supported. Taking each in turn, he left the ninth till last and made a few remarks about it which were little more than a postscript:

I don't think you need dwell very much on that, in the big democratic City of New York, because in itself it is so fundamentally democratic, that it ought to make a strong appeal to any man that believes in the great principles of home rule.

The Woman's Democratic News, an official party organ edited by Eleanor Roosevelt, told voters that the popular sovereignty amendment was of minor importance, but advised good Democrats to vote for it. Thus a measure which originated in the Republican stronghold of Westchester received the endorsement of the Democratic governor and his party!

Indeed, the measure seemed so democratic in principle that it was carried statewide by better than a two-to-one margin. Many of the favorable votes, however, must be attributed to the support of the governor.

sovereignty
 The popular amendment won its greatest majorities in New York City--
 where the ratio of favorable to unfavorable votes was actually much
 greater than in Westchester--and it was rejected in 43 out of 61 counties. 9
 Among the counties with a preponderance of negative votes was Rochester's
 Monroe County, where the count was 22,126 to 28,518. The city wards and
 16 out of 19 of the Monroe County towns registered majorities against
 the amendment. The three towns which voted not overwhelmingly in favor
 of the measure were Brighton, Gates, and Greece. 10

As was indicated, the popular sovereignty amendment was not considered very important by most voters; if Governor Smith had not made constitutional reforms a party issue in 1927 the measure very likely would have been defeated by the combined weight of apathy and automatic "No" votes which any ballot proposition invites. The Rochester newspapers made no comment on the proposed amendment at all. Probably only a few of those who thought deeply about the issue perceived the argument presented by Eunice Barnard, a feature writer for the New York Times:

It [the amendment] seems fair in principle.... On the other hand it has been suggested that a few people might thus be able to block the will of the majority as expressed by the city, and might ultimately harm their own interests.¹¹

Despite its apparent simplicity, the popular sovereignty amendment raises some perplexing issues in fundamental democratic principles. The effect of the constitutional change was to compromise the state legislature's ability to establish and modify municipal boundaries at will. That power, which might at first glance seem arbitrary and capricious, had provided a useful flexibility.

The establishment of towns, counties, and cities by removing territory from older local units was a regular feature of the state's early period of frontier settlement. Usually such legislative actions aroused little concern, particularly in the case of rural towns, where the object was to create units of manageable size. On occasion, however, the establishment of new local units was resisted by nearby inhabitants and the legislature's function as a broker between competing interests was called into play. This was notably the case in 1821, when the desire of ambitious Rochesterians to erect a new county with Rochester at its center ran counter to the interests of merchants and politicians at two older villages, Batavia and Canandaigua. Legislators from other parts of the state functioned as impartial arbitrators, although of course partisan politics were a factor. After hearing repeated petitions from the owners of the bustling new settlement, the legislature created Monroe County from parts of two older counties and designated Rochester as its county seat.

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In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the legislature again was the "honest broker," this time determining changes in the jurisdictions of cities to keep pace with the realities of urban growth. By and large the process worked. Just as it had mediated among local interests in the earlier period when creating new local governments, the legislature now weighed the conflicting desires of city and suburb as it gradually reduced the size of suburban towns and villages--even, in some instances, permitting their entire absorption by an expanding city.

Like any democratic process in which there is give-and-take among special interests and political parties are given a free hand, the system was far from perfect. The realities of state politics compromised the theoretical image of the legislature as the benign and impartial arbiter of local questions. Political influence permitted the City of Rochester on several occasions to annex sections with disregard for the wishes of residents. In the mid-1920s, on the other hand, political influence enabled a handful of Brighton leaders to block further expansion of the city, although reason and the general consensus said that annexation of Brighton was proper and inevitable. Because of the 1927 amendment the question became academic. It is an interesting but necessarily speculative question whether or not Rochester could have regained its earlier outward momentum at some later time had the constitutional change not taken place.*

The popular sovereignty amendment was partly a product of the movement for municipal "home rule," which began in the late nineteenth century as a reaction against unwarranted state interference in the affairs of cities. Much of the ideological support for the amendment drew on the generalized belief in the merits of local democracy. Such belief typically found expression first in such measures in the 1894 New York State Constitution which "prohibited" special city laws (except with the consent of the concerned municipality), and which explicitly placed the responsibility for spending local tax money on public projects with the local government. Later the concept of home rule was enlarged to permit the electorate in certain municipalities to modify their local

*In some states where constitutional structure and legislation have encouraged the territorial growth of cities, urban growth has not been halted. This is notably true of Texas and Virginia. See Frank S. Sengstock, Annexation: A Solution to the Metropolitan Area Problem (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1960).

system of government through charter amendment, within certain limits. It was simply another step forward, in the minds of those, who, like Governor Smith, upheld the "great principle of home rule," to add a constitutional prohibition against annexation of unwilling suburban residents by the still-growing cities.

But was it? Self-determination may be a principle which invites unlimited abstract support, but which when applied indiscriminately can generate illogical consequences directly opposite to the goal of achieving democratic and equitable local government. The popular sovereignty amendment implies that the wishes of local residents are the paramount consideration for determining municipal boundaries. By a reductio ad absurdum, any single property owner ought to have the right of secession from the municipality he happens to find himself in. The local resident's sovereignty is greater than that of nearby municipalities, greater, in fact, than that of the state legislature which has given over to him the power to determine local boundaries.*

To this writer's knowledge, no property owner has tested this idea in the courts, but some of the consequences of frozen municipal boundaries have seemed almost as counterproductive, in the last thirty years, as an unlimited right of local secession would have been. The full impact of halting the City of Rochester's jurisdictional growth which was dramatized only after the post-World War suburban boom became known as the local "metropolitan area problem." The subject warrants full-scale treatment by itself, but a few observations about it will be offered later in conclusion.

*Of course, the legislators who placed the amendment on the ballot for the voters' approval in 1927 did not mean to carry the principle of self determination that far. Consciously or not, their real motive was to help preserve a status quo. The terms of the amendment do not emphasize what can happen, but what cannot: "No territory shall be annexed to any city until the people ... proposed to be annexed shall have consented...."

In 1936 W. Earl Weller, the Director of the Rochester Bureau of Municipal Research, completed a brief article on "The Expanding Boundaries of Rochester" with the observation,

Since that time /1926/ no annexations have been made, although the steady growth in population and the improved means of transport to the communities on the outskirts of the city point to future expansion.¹³

In making this observation Weller no more than repeated commonplace wisdom, as Edwin Fisher had ten years before. In 1924, even as steam-shovels rattled into position to begin work on the million dollar Brighton sewer system, Fisher said, "it is to be recognized as inevitable that the entire townships of Brighton and Irondequoit, as well as portions at least of that of Greece, are to become part and parcel of the legal municipality of Rochester."¹⁴

Weller wrote his article during the Depression, which along with the Second World War formed an interlude of relatively slow suburban growth. In the decade 1920-1930 the Monroe County towns outside of Rochester increased in population 70 per cent. The interval 1930-1940 witnessed a suburban growth rate of only 18 per cent, which slowly recovered to 37 per cent for 1940-1950 and reached nearly 73 per cent between 1950 and 1960. Meanwhile the city's population, which had gained 11 per cent between 1920 and 1930, stayed fairly stable in size for the next 20 years and dropped 4 per cent between 1950 and 1960.¹⁵

The serious consequences of the halt to the city's territorial expansion were therefore delayed some twenty or thirty years until, by the mid-1950s, the issue of further annexation of developed suburbs by the city seemed like a dead letter.

The decades after 1926 were not wholly devoid of annexations by the City of Rochester--but all annexations since the 1920s were of unoccupied land intended for public use. The largest were three adjacent parcels of city-owned property on the southwest side annexed during the 1940s for a municipal airport. The land was promptly turned over to the ownership of Monroe County, which, in the consideration of Republican leaders at both levels of government, was in a better position to afford necessary capital improvements. In 1949 the city annexed a triangular parcel on its southern border, also for county purposes. In 1954 a small addition was made to Genesee Valley Park, and in 1957 a square parcel was added to the city's north side where the Rochester General Hospital planned a new facility.

The last occasion when annexation was proposed as a serious means to obviate the growing fragmentation of government in the Rochester metropolitan area was in 1954. In January of that year the lone Democrat on the Rochester City Council, John G. Bittner, introduced a resolution entitled "Broadening Our Horizons" which would have required the city's Public Information Office to begin a direct mail campaign aimed at residents of adjacent suburban areas. The suburbanites would be invited to become "Rochesterians in every sense of the word." The resolution was not taken seriously by the council majority, one of whom told Bittner that he "apparently speaks for the people outside the city." Some of the Republicans expressed the view that it was not time to begin annexing suburbanites who now faced considerable outlays for public improvements, particularly for schools.

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But in early 1950s government officials in Rochester, as elsewhere,
began taking the problem of fragmented metropolitan government seriously.
The beginnings of the post-World War II suburban building boom had had a dramatic impact on the population figures gathered for the federal census of 1950. The populations of Brighton, Irondequoit, and Greece that year stood at 18,036, 34,417, and 25,508, respectively. The total for those three towns--nearly 78,000--accounted for half the county population outside the city and amounted to almost a quarter of the city's total.

The turning over of the expanding airport to the county in 1947, along with consolidation of city and county public welfare agencies in the same year, suggested themselves as models for further solution to the metropolitan area problem. The immediate dilemma confronting city officials in the early 1950s was the loss, to the suburban towns, of new construction for housing and industry. As a result, the city's tax base remained static or grew far too slowly to pay for the rising costs of municipal services and needed capital improvements. After reaching constitutional limits, the city's property tax rate and municipal debt could rise no higher. A sales tax levied county-wide and divided among the city, county, and towns by a complicated formula which weighed population and assessable property provided relief to the city for a while, but in the long run served mainly the aggrandizement of the county government which controlled it. As early as 1952 the city manager was forced to resort to expediciencies such as a "sewer rental tax" and higher water rates in order to balance his budget. Later the city

administration was compelled to add "garnishments"--charges for street lighting, rubbish collection, and the like, levied under the city's old special assessment authority--to the tax bills of beleaguered property owners. The city's continuing fiscal problem, combined with increased demands for urban services in the metropolitan areas beyond the city limits, led to additional consolidations of services. "Functional consolidation" usually meant the blunt takeover by the county government of service agencies which had long been the province of the city.* Such was the case with county assumption of responsibility of the airport and social welfare, civil defense (1954), mental health services (1956), veterans' services and health services (1958), and the public safety laboratory (1961).

The tortuous course of functional consolidation as a partial solution to the metropolitan problem in Monroe County is a complex story deserving separate treatment. One episode in that story deserves mention here, however, as an illustration of the ^{extraordinary} results of respect for the principle of suburban home rule. Among the public services affected by the metropolitan area problem, one which has most caught the public attention has been the separate law enforcement agencies of city, towns, villages, and county. Not only do their overlapping services waste an

*In the case of one large service agency--the public library--the piecemeal approach to solving the problem of redistributing costs and benefits generated an ingenious solution. The Rochester Public Library with its excellent Central Division and dozen city branches continues to operate under the aegis of the city government and a library board of trustees. Above it was superimposed a Monroe County Library System, with a second set of trustees, which draws on the services of the Public Library Central Division. But administration of both library systems is unified under a single director who answers to both boards.

unmeasured amount of public funds, their Byzantine jurisdictional lines pose a real threat to the public safety. The problem is complicated by the existence of a large professional city police force, smaller and less well-trained forces in some but not all of the towns and villages, and a sizeable sheriff's road patrol whose jurisdiction--and cost--extends throughout the county. Recognizing that many knotty problems would have to be overcome before police consolidation could be implemented, city and county leaders in the mid-1950s sought, as a first step, enabling legislation from the state. A bill was produced in the state legislature which would have permitted establishment of a county-wide police force and was sent back to Monroe County for approval. By March, 1956, the measure had been approved by the city council, the county board of supervisors, the town boards of the nineteen towns, and the village boards of all but two of the county's ten incorporated villages. The village boards of East Rochester and Fairport, who represented a combined population amounting to a little over two per cent of the county's half million people, refused to approve the enabling bill. Under the home rule provisions of the state constitution, the measure could not become effective without the unanimous consent of affected municipalities. 20 Plans for a consolidated police force had to be shelved indefinitely.

One consolidation of services in the metropolitan area which will occur only in the distant future, if ever, is the unification of the city and suburban school districts. The extreme difficulty of tampering with school district lines is illustrated in a tangential way by the survival of the Greece Free School Districts.

As described previously, the city made it a routine practice during the era of annexations to extend the privilege of attending city schools for free to children living in the remainders of school districts which were partly annexed. At the time this was regarded as a simple courtesy, and it was not very costly. When the city annexed the Village of Charlotte and with it the building of old Greece District Number 4, only a few dozen children from the farms outside the village attended the Charlotte School. But Greece District 4, which encompassed territory twice as large as the village, subsequently became the largest of the free school districts. The portion of Greece District 10 outside the Kodak Park area which was annexed in 1918 contained only twelve students at the time, but later became the second largest free district. In 1918 the privilege of attending city schools for free, which had previously been part of an informal arrangement, was made part of the annexation bill which amended the city charter. By 1973, population in the two Greece free school districts had grown sufficiently to send 1,200 students to public schools--at an annual cost of \$1.3 million to the City School District. ²¹

The City School District, unlike the central school districts in the suburban towns which have independent taxing power, depends on revenues raised by the Rochester City Council, which has ultimate fiscal responsibility for the maintenance of the city schools. Despite subsidies from higher levels of government, the City School District has contended with repeated fiscal crises in recent decades due to the shrinking source of local revenue which affects all city departments. Given its hardships, school district leaders and city taxpayers have been understandably disaffected by the burden of providing free educational services for several hundred suburban families.

But repeated attempts to abolish the free school districts have met stubborn resistance. In 1963, Democrats, who had gained a majority on the city council for the first time since the New Deal, made the free schools a party issue. They approved an ordinance directing the City School District to levy tuition charges on students from all areas outside the city. The move was blocked in the courts by the free districts, who won a ruling from the state Court of Appeals in 1965 which annulled the council ordinance as a violation of the city charter. Local legislators sympathetic to the city's case introduced a bill to amend the city charter and abolish the free districts, but a Republican Assembly killed the measure in 1966 at the urging of a legislator whose Assembly district encompassed the free school districts. In 1970 the Superintendent of Greece Central School District #1 entered the controversy. The large Greece Central District serves all parts of Greece outside the free districts. The superintendent charged that the continued existence of the free districts was an injustice to his school system as well as the city's. He pointed out that two of the greatest benefactors of the free districts were the Rochester Gas and Electric Corporation and Eastman Kodak, both of which owned substantial installations not subject to school taxes. The superintendent urged abolition of the free districts and their absorption into Greece Central. Shortly afterward the Greece Town Board took a position on the issue; influenced by the well-organized residents of the populous free districts, the town board opposed abolition. The free school districts remain a politically divisive issue. In 1973 the Republican County Chairman

determined that the districts ought to be abolished. The two Republican state senators from Monroe County remain divided on the issue. The east side senator, who is a former President of the Rochester School Board, has introduced new legislation to abolish the districts, while the west side senator, a former Greece Town Supervisor, has vowed to oppose abolition.

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The survival of the Greece free districts is emblematic of the most serious consequence of Rochester's fissure into city and institutionalized suburb. During the twentieth century education has become the most important, and the most expensive, of public services. By a nearly universal consensus public education is recognized as the key mechanism for providing the necessary access to a individual opportunities which permits a society to call itself democratic and just. And yet, even the most superficial comparison of the city schools in Rochester and their suburban counterparts reveals glaring inequities. The boundaries of the Rochester City School District were frozen along with the city boundaries in 1927. Since that time, the resources of the city schools have been limited by the faltering urban tax base, while the suburban schools have enjoyed more than adequate opportunities to increase taxes. Between 1950 and 1970, total real property valuation in Rochester increased 221 per cent, while valuation of the county outside the city increased 1,133 per cent--over five times as fast.

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During those twenty years, it is true, the suburban school districts faced unusual expenditures for new school buildings, but the City School District was also forced to meet enormous capital expenses to replace worn out

buildings and cope with an increasing school population. In any case throughout the post-World War II era the suburban school districts have been able to budget substantially higher per pupil amounts for instructional purposes.

Children of the upper and middle class families of the metropolitan area receive a more expensive education at the public schools of the suburbs than do children of less well-off families who live inside the city limits. It is not at all surprising, in the light of the overall consequences of halting the city's territorial growth.

Before 1927, Rochester was able to extend its jurisdiction to keep pace with urban growth. During the peak years of its growth through annexation, 1910-1919, the city added territory at an average annual rate of 2.58 square miles. Had it been able to maintain that growth rate until 1973, the city today would comprise 169 square miles. This hypothetical size would take in about one-fourth of Monroe County and would easily account for all the heavily populated territory of the adjacent towns.

However, for a variety of reasons the most important of which was suburban self-interest, Rochester, like other cities in New York State, was locked into its present boundaries. It had grown in the past because added population and industrial expansion had compelled the development of outer wards and sections just beyond the city limits. The residents of the outer areas, primarily the upwardly-mobile able to afford the purchase of new homes, sought a variety of city services which sometimes motivated them to seek annexation; many in Brighton

Village wanted city sewers, as others in Charlotte wanted the protection of city police. The overriding consideration for most, however, was the question of cost of the full range urban services. As the city's tax rate rose during the first three decades of the twentieth century to pay for better services, so fewer and fewer suburban property residents could be easily persuaded to join the city.

One inevitable result was a segregation of socioeconomic classes in separate political jurisdictions. According to the 1970 census, the median family income in Rochester was \$10,002. In Monroe County outside the city median family income was \$14,016. The county outside the city had nearly twice the percentage of persons classified as "professional, technical, administrative, and managerial" as did the city. The city's unemployment rate was more than twice as high as the suburbs.

Such statistics can only partially substitute for a complete sense of what was lost along with the city's hegemony. The city-building process, which at the turn of the century many felt would culminate in a "Greater Rochester," was permanently compromised. In place of the great metropolis which was to be, there is now the metropolitan area, divided by dozens of jurisdictions and continuously rent by the selfish desires of local interests. The question of whether the metropolitan area may find a new form of political integration lies in the future.

NOTES

Epilogue

1. David Ellis et al., A History of New York State (Ithaca, 1957, 1967), p. 402; New York Times, September 1, 1927.
2. Constitution of the State of New York, Article 12, Section 8 (1927).
This Section amended the Constitution of 1894; the Constitutional Convention of 1938 renumbered it as Article 9, Section 14. (footnote #2 cont.) The measure became part "d" of Article IX, Section 1 ("Bill of Rights for Local Governments") in slightly modified form by a referendum in 1963.
3. Adolph Grant to N.Y. Times, October 14, 1927.
4. Walter Hogan, History of Westchester County in William F. Manger, ed., Historical Atlas of New York State (Rochester and Phoenix, N.Y., 1941); James L. Welk et al. (eds.), The Bronx and Its People (New York, 1927), Volume I, pp. 233, 237, 384.
5. H.T. Price to N.Y. Times, October 19, 1925.
6. A.P. French to N.Y. Times, May 16, 1926.
7. N.Y. Times, November 4, 1927.
8. N.Y. Times, September 9, 1927.
9. N.Y. Times, December 13, 1927.
10. Rochester Democrat and Chronicle, November 9, 1927.
11. N.Y. Times, October 30, 1927. The popular sovereignty amendment aroused so little interest that the National Municipal Review mentioned it only in passing /NMEXVI (December, 1927), p. 807/.
12. Blake McKelvey, Rochester, The Water-Power City 1812-1854 (Cambridge, Mass., 1945), pp. 72-74.
13. W. Earl Weller, "The Expanding Boundaries of Rochester," Rochester Historical Society Publication Fund Series, XIV (1936), p. 180.
14. Unidentified newspaper clipping dated March, 1924, Henry T. Noyes City Planning Scrapbook, Volume I, P. 1, Rochester Public Library.
15. U.S. Census.
16. D&C, January 11, 1945, July 24, 1947; Times Union, October 27, 1949.

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17. D&C, April 28, 1954.
18. D&C, January 7, 1953.
19. Times Union, March 18, 1971; newspaper clipping file on "City-County Integration," Rochester Public Library.
20. Times Union, March 5, 1956.
21. Times Union, October 8, 1973.
22. Times Union, March 17, 1970; D&C, March 1, May 6, 1973.
23. Center for Governmental Research, The Governance of Rochester (Rochester, 1973), p. 275.
24. New York State Commission on the Quality, Cost, and Financing of Elementary and Secondary Education [Fleischmann Commission], Commission Report (Albany, 1972), Volume I, chapters 2 and 3.
25. Center for Governmental Research, loc. cit.

Note on Sources

The essential sources for the narrative history of Rochester in the early decades of the twentieth century are the local newspapers. For most of the period local events were covered by five highly competitive daily newspapers all of which displayed a lively interest in the affairs of the City of Rochester. The editorial policy of the popular Democrat and Chronicle was staunchly Republican and supportive of the views of successive city administration, even as the Herald was doggedly anti-administrative and ready to seize on any shortcoming to embarrass what it liked to consider "machine politics." The afternoon newspapers did not divide along such strictly partisan lines, although the Union and Advertiser was generally Democratic. The Post Express tended to cultivate an aristocratic audience, while the Evening Times throughout its erratic course was usually sensationalist. In 1918 the latter newspaper merged with the Union and Advertiser and became the independently-spirited Times Union. Shortly afterward a Hearst newspaper, the Journal, supplanted the Post Express. The Herald folded after the death of its remarkable editor-owner, Louis Antisdale, in the mid-1920s.

The foregoing brief sketch necessarily oversimplifies the editorial policies of the several newspapers, but it at least hints at the diversity of style and viewpoint available to the historian of this period. Such journalistic richness compensates, at least in part, for a scarcity of some other types of primary sources. Except for George Aldridge, whose fragmentary papers consist largely of a few batches of incoming letters, none of the local political leaders left behind collections of correspondence

or memoranda. On the other hand, much useful material can be found among the published Annual Reports and special documents issued by the city's administrative departments. These include annual statistical compilation by the Police, Fire, and Health Bureaus, the City Comptroller, the Fire Marshall (Bureau of Buildings), and the City Engineer.

The numerous citations of published materials on Rochester's history contained in the chapter notes need little explication. Few American cities can point to a body of published local history comparable to Rochester's in quality and quantity. Serial publications include the twenty-four volume Publication Fund Series issued by the Rochester Historical Society between 1922 and 1948 under the editorship of successive full-time City Historians. The many specialized articles contained in these volumes are supplemented by over a hundred and twenty titles in the quarterly Rochester History, which has been published continuously by the Rochester Public Library since 1939. The third volume of Blake McKelvey's four volume history of the city, Rochester, The Quest for Quality 1890-1925, provides a thorough overview of the city during its era of annexations.

The commercial platbooks of the city, published at frequent intervals during the period, proved to be an invaluable source. The platbooks are sets of highly detailed and well drawn maps bound in volumes. Rochester's first platbook was issued in 1875; new ones were issued in 1888, 1900, 1910, 1918, and 1926, in response to the city's growth. Besides yielding important data for a given year, e.g., the ratio of empty lots to houses in a section, the platbooks taken sequentially

provide a picture of the development of streets, neighborhoods and wards. Two platbooks for Monroe County outside the city, published in 1902 and 1924, were also useful.

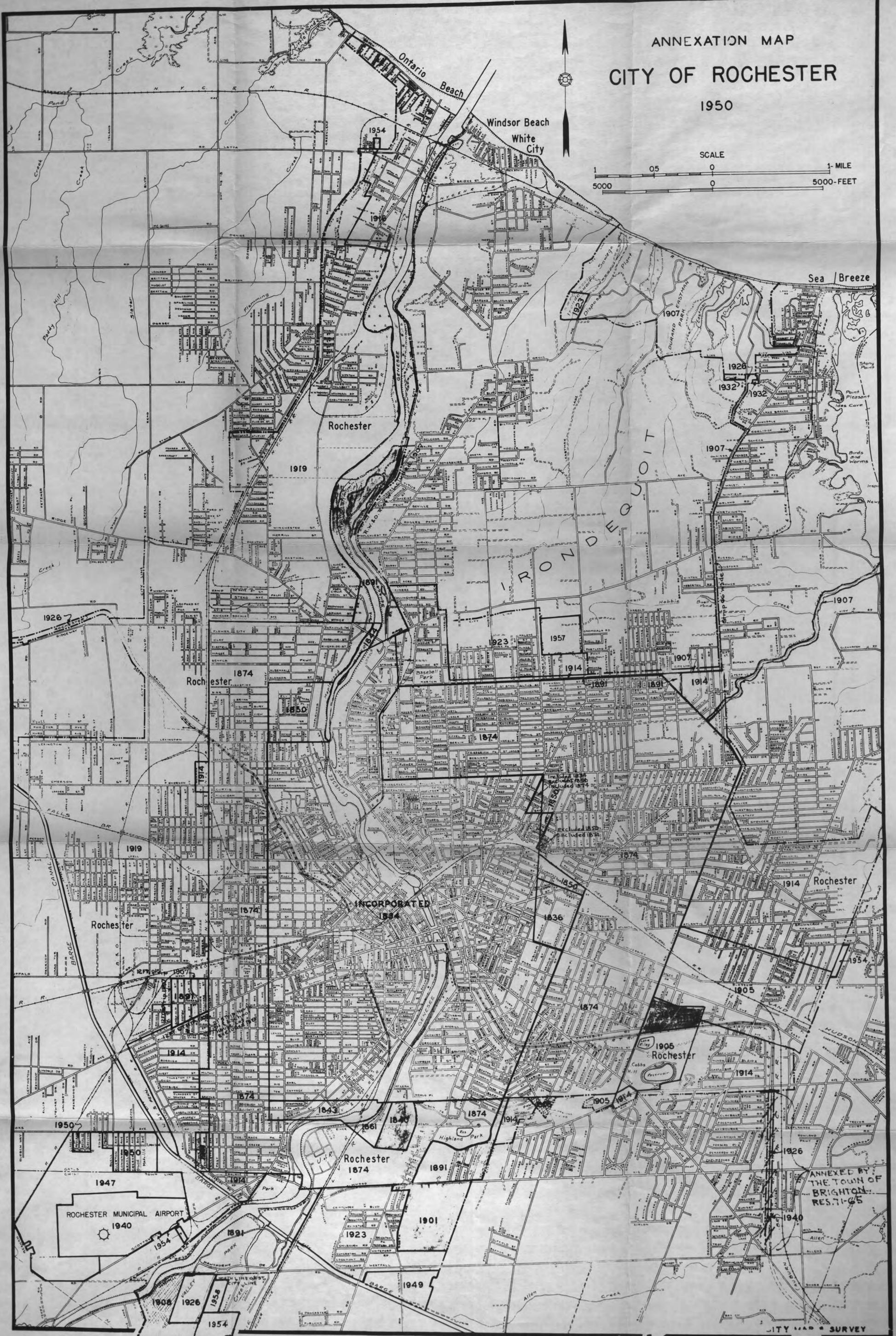
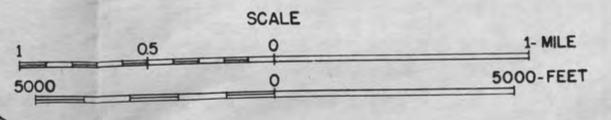
A more precise measurement of urban growth is theoretically possible with the use of City Directories. In addition to the annual alphabetical Directory of persons, Rochester was provided with House Directories published biannually from 1900 to 1920. After 1920, the House Directory became a "Street Directory" bound together with the alphabetical Directory. Using a sampling technique, it was possible to demonstrate at least in a suggestive way the degree of migration from the city to one of the territories it annexed, Brighton Village. But in the case of the other annexed village, Charlotte, a more ambitious sampling project yielded excessively ambiguous data. It should be pointed out the City Directories are useful sources for identifying individuals--at least by location and occupation, which often constitutes the only biographical data available.

Another source of quantitative data fashionable among modern social scientists is tax assessment rolls, but for Rochester most of the general tax rolls are as yet inaccessibly stored in a jumbled and filthy condition. This state of affairs may be corrected during the next few years, given the continued interest of local officials in establishing a public archives.

All of the sources thus far mentioned, except the tax rolls, are contained in the Rochester Public Library. The Local History Division of the library serves as the depository for most of the print and manuscript holdings of the Rochester Historical Society. The Division

contains numerous sources not readily classified, such as works by local historians in typed or pamphlet forms, vertical files on industries and organizations, and local government publications irregularly issued. There is also an extensive newspaper clipping file, organized by subject, which covers most years from 1936 to the present. Several scrapbooks of newspaper clippings--notably those maintained by the secretaries of Mayors Edgerton and Van Zandt--provide partial coverage for the decades treated in this monograph. One other important depository of materials on Rochester history is the Rare Books and Archives Division of Rush Rhees Library, the University of Rochester. While much of its local history collection duplicates the sources in the Rochester Public Library, its strength lies in several important manuscript collections.

ANNEXATION MAP CITY OF ROCHESTER 1950



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