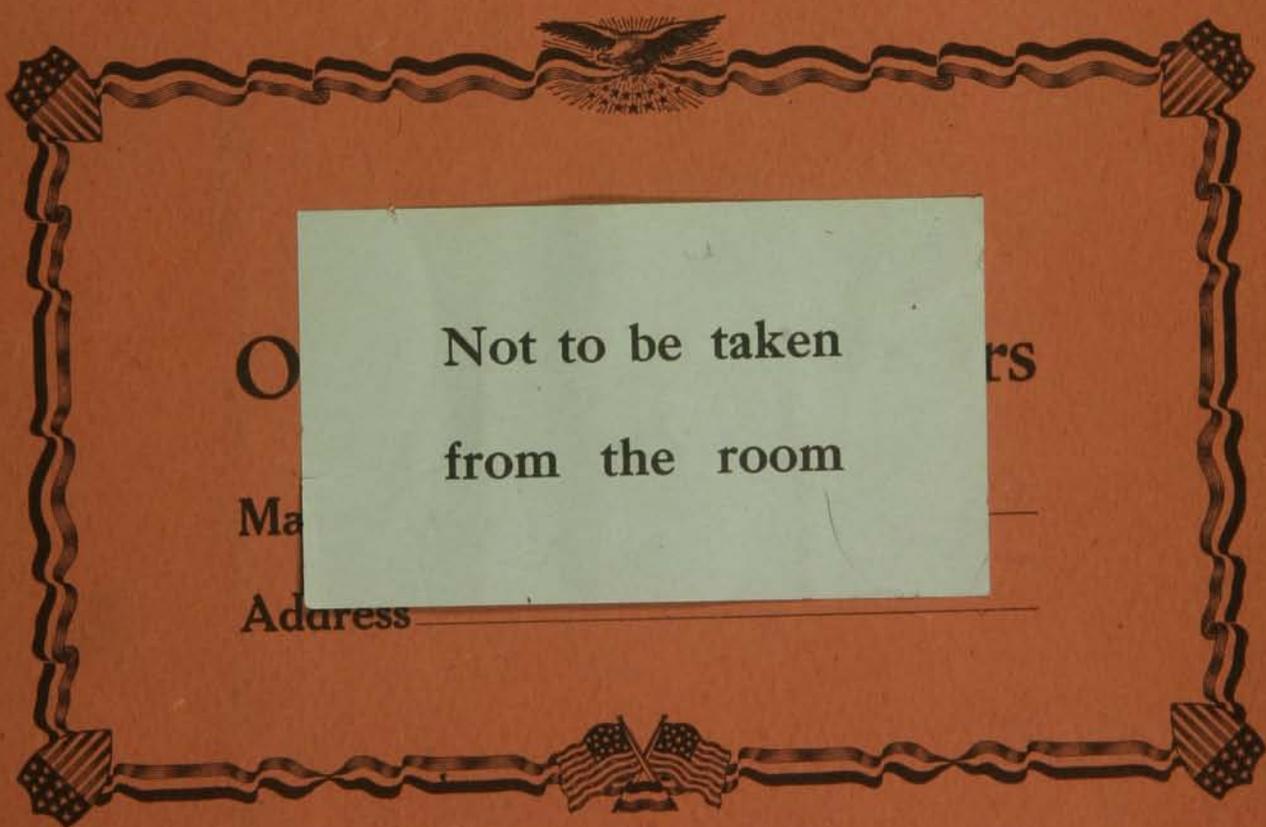


Rochester Public Library - History

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115 South Avenue

~~Branch  
Public Library  
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**Rochester**

A city of parks, of homes, of thriving industries.

**The only city of its size in the United States without a Central Library.**

*A Central Library is the University of the People.*

The Central Library

*Where Should It Be  
Located?*

BY  
WILLIAM F. YUST  
*Librarian*

ROCHESTER, N. Y.  
1923

U-FILE-M EINDER MFG. CO., Inc., SYRACUSE, N.Y.

Central Library of Rochester and Monroe County - Historic Scrapbooks Collection

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## *A Central Library in 1925!*

### **Rochester**

A city of parks, of homes, of thriving industries.

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### **The Central Library Location**

The attention which the Central library is at present receiving prompts me to state a few principles which should guide in the selection of a site. In the first place due consideration should be given to the strong influence which the architecture of public buildings has on the ideas and ideals of the people. This applies especially to a library on account of the nature of its contents. We call it the dwelling place of books, the products of the master minds of the ages, and we refer to the public library as the people's university.

The library building therefore should be an object lesson in architecture, beautiful, dignified, impressive, permanent. It should give the impression that it is an educational institution, not only identified with the instruction and development of the people and giving daily assistance to those who use it, but also standing for all that is noblest and best in the life of the community.

It should be located where it will best fulfill its purposes. In locating it the following points should be considered:

1. Accessibility. It should be near the center of the population to be served. It should be remembered also that this center of population may shift in the course of time. It should be on or near the great thoroughfare or thoroughfares of the city. Nearness to intersecting street car lines is desirable, though if they are too near, the noise will interfere.

2. Approach. Sufficient ground on all sides is desirable but especially in front to provide a dignified setting and approach. There are library buildings, however, which adjoin the sidewalk. This has the advantage of greater convenience to passers-by and affords better advertising possibilities, but it detracts from the architectural effect. Distance is necessary to the appreciation of a monumental building such as the library should be.

3. Light and air. The location should be high and dry with ample space around it to admit an abundance of natural light and fresh air. This forbids the nearness of high buildings or large chimneys emitting heavy smoke or gasses.

4. Growth. There should be room for addition to the building without marring its architectural appearance or impairing its administration.

5. Residence section or business. It may be either section or on the boundary line between the two. Most of the large cities of the country have chosen the residence portion probably because there a suitable site was more easily available or they have compromised on an intermediate location. But the idea is gaining ground that the library is most useful close to the street in the very heart of the retail business section, because there it makes a stronger appeal to the man in the street than it does in a residence section at a secluded distance from the passing throng. This is one way of bringing the library to the attention of the people and projecting it into their daily thought. This principle has had much weight in locating some of our present branch library quarters.

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6. Relation to other buildings. It is desirable for it to stand on its own ground, to be independent of other buildings and institutions, such as the city hall, a school, a business house, etc. This adds to its appearance, ease of administration and safety from fire. It may well be one of a group of public buildings, such as a school, a church, an art gallery, as in the modern civic center. The position it occupies among such buildings has an important effect on the position it occupies in the minds of the people.

7. Cost of land. In securing a library site the cost of land is an important factor, which may have a modifying influence on any of these points. The opportunity for Rochester to obtain a suitable library site cheap is gone forever. It is still possible to obtain a good site, but it will cost money and a good round sum. It should be the best the city can afford. On the other hand the city can afford the best. It should not be content with anything else.

The city of Rochester does not possess a single building erected for library purposes. In this respect it is behind every other large city in the country and behind many of the small villages in this state. Having waited so long for this important public improvement, it should insist on a building that will be a model from the standpoint of architecture and administration and usefulness. Such a building will be possible only on a site especially selected for that purpose.

# LIBRARY PLAN IS PROPOSED BY VAN ZANDT

Suggests Combining Rundel  
Bequests with Reynolds  
Library Resources.

## CUT IMPROVEMENTS

Urges Sacrifice of All But  
Imperative Works to  
Canal-bed Project.

The delay of all except imperative purely local improvements until the industrial and rapid-transit railroad project is completed and the establishment of a central public library are urged by Mayor Van Zandt in his 1922-1923 message presented to the Common Council last night.

Sufficient money is not available for carrying on the year's program of local improvement work and finishing the canal railroad. The Mayor believes the benefit which will accrue to the city at large from the canal development is sufficient to warrant the sidetracking of all except local improvements absolutely necessary.

### Central Library Needed.

The need of a read central library and the extension of the branch system is emphasized by the Mayor. While he points out that the present condition of the city's finances precludes any immediate construction of such a building, he recommends that a proper site be provided and that a building fund be provided by combining the Rundel fund and the Reynolds library fund, if possible, and that a definite proposal be made to the Reynolds Library to co-operate with the city in the establishment and maintenance of a central library.

The Mayor expresses his deep appreciation for the co-operation and support given him by the aldermen and members of his cabinet. He states that while he is pleased that a real start has been made toward reduction of administrative costs, still further economies must be exercised during the coming year.

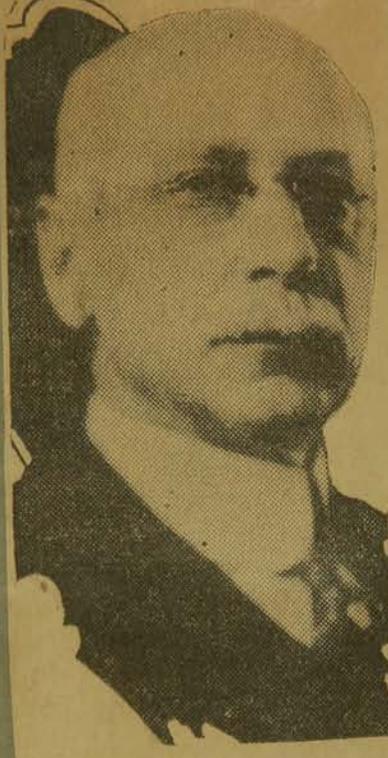
### Chief Sections of Message.

The main portion of the message follows:

Rochester, N. Y.  
To the Honorable, the Common Council of  
the City of Rochester:  
Gentlemen:

In compliance with the provisions of the city charter, I hereby transmit to your honorable body my annual message, embodying the required statement as to city finances and a brief review of the administrative works of the past year with such recommendations for the ensuing year as seem advisable.

In this connection I desire to express my deep appreciation of the support and co-operation that has been given me by your honorable body and the heads of the various departments and bureaus during the past twelve months, at the same time asking a continuance of that co-operation dur-



MAYOR VAN ZANDT.

ing the ensuing year that our city may not be halted in its progress.

### Record Improvement Year.

The year 1922 established a record in the matter of public improvements, a record that not only serves to maintain the high standard set for Rochester in years past but points to even greater advancement in the years to come. Notably is this so in the matter of the commencement upon the plan for the utilization and development of the abandoned Erie canal lands which were acquired by the city early last year. The importance of this improvement, it seems to me, can scarcely be overestimated and we are only beginning to realize its possibilities now that the actual work of construction is under way.

First payment to the state for the lands was made on January 10th and that gave the city the right of entry upon the property. This was followed by the advertising for bids and letting of the contract for the first section of the work, construction of the subway and overhead thoroughfare between South avenue and a point west of Oak street. Actual construction was begun on May 2d and has been carried forward since that time. The contract for this part of the development is scheduled to be completed November 1, 1923, and that the city may begin to realize the benefit of the improvement as soon after that date as possible, I strongly urge early start upon the remaining sections, more especially that to the east of the contract now under way.

### Must Finish East Section.

The completion of the easterly section will be necessary to make really available the use of the section now under construction. Such completion will permit the removal of the interurban trolley cars entering the city from the east and now operating upon the local surface line tracks, and this removal of the larger and heavier cars from the city's streets will mean greater facility in operation for both local and interurban lines.

The financial demands for the carrying on of the canal lands development will necessitate delay in some other projects of more purely local character, and I urge that no local improvement ordinances be adopted by your honorable body except those that are imperative. Ordinances for the development of new subdivisions should be eliminated so far as possible for this year. Such developments should, in my opinion, be financed by the owners of the property to be developed. The benefit which is to accrue to the city at large from the canal lands developments, it seems to me, should mitigate any sense of disappointment resulting from the postponement of more purely local improvements.

### Bonds Sell Well.

Twice during the past fourteen months the financial stability of the city has been borne witness to by extremely advantageous terms obtained for city bonds, issued, in a large measure, to replace short term outstanding obligations.

Further progress has been made during the past year toward the complete motorization of the firefighting force. Through substitutions of motor-driven for horse-drawn apparatus Rochester's firefighting equipment is about 75% motorized. It is hoped that within a short time motorization may be completed with marked increase both in efficiency and economy of maintenance.

### Central Library Needed.

Elsewhere in this message I call your attention to the great increase in the demands made upon the branch libraries, and it is pertinent at this time to stress the growing need for a real central library and an extension of the branch system. It is unfortunate that the present condition of the city's finances precludes immediate building of a proper central library, but it is possible at this time to begin to plan toward that end and as preliminary these suggestions are made:

That the city provide a site for a central library.

That a building fund be provided by combining the Rundel fund and the Reynolds library fund, if such a plan be feasible.

That a definite proposal be made to the Reynolds library to co-operate with the city in the establishment and maintenance of a central library, co-operation along similar lines having worked out satisfactorily in various other cities.

### More Economy Urged.

In my first message to your honorable body I called attention to my pledges of economy in the administration of the city's affairs made by me when I was a candidate for mayor, and stressed the need for the fulfillment of these pledges to the greatest limit consistent with efficient functioning of the various departments and bureaus. At the same time attention was called to the fact that constitutional provisions had made impossible the raising by taxation of all the moneys required for the proper administration of all city departments. That condition made necessary the borrowing of money upon short-term notes, and I would call your attention to the fact that during the year just ended the amount that had to be raised by that means was some \$400,000 less than required the preceding year.

This indicates a real start toward reduction of administrative costs, but I am again directing the attention of departmental heads to the need for the exercise of further economies, an injunction in which I appeal for your support.

### Nearing Debt Limit.

The financial statement attached to the message shows that the city lacks \$3,838,547.58 of the debt limit which is 10 per cent. of the assessed valuation of the city for taxes of 1922. The valuation was \$359,075,168, 10 per cent. of which is \$35,907,516.80. The city's debt at present amounts to \$32,068,969.22.

The message then sums up the work of municipal departments, detailing the work accomplished. The public market is shown to have received total revenues of \$32,215.30, while expenses were but \$9,974.53, and the Mayor remarks that the market continues to be "a lucrative, as well as popular, adjunct of the Public Works Department." The income from the market he states, has paid in full the bonds issued for its construction, and future incomes will be applied to the reduction of the tax levy.

### Water Revenues Large.

Water revenues for the past year approximated one million dollars, the Mayor says, a larger amount than turned in any previous year. This amount was for the water actually sold, through meters, and not revenue from any other sources.

During the year claims filed against the city amounted to \$120,627.66. Settlements made required a total payment of \$30,795.14.

One hundred and thirty compensation cases came up during the year. Eighty-three claimants in these cases were continued on the payroll and forty-seven given awards. The city is a self-insurer and paid during the fiscal year \$11,772.64.

# MAYOR URGES NEW CENTRAL LIBRARY SITE

## Makes Definite Proposal for New Building in His Annual Message.

## ASKS OFFICIALS FOR FURTHER ECONOMIES

## Wants No Local Improvement Ordinances Adopted, Except Those That Are Necessary.

Mayor Van Zandt last night submitted his annual message to the Common Council, in which he reviews the work of the various departments for the past year and suggests that the city provide a site for a central library. Of the library proposition, the Mayor says:

"Elsewhere in this message, I call your attention to the great increase in the demands made upon the branch libraries, and it is pertinent at this time to stress the growing need for a real central library and an extension of the branch system. It is unfortunate that the present condition of the city's finances precludes immediate building of a proper central library but it is possible at this time to begin to plan toward that end and as preliminary, these suggestions are made:

"That the city provide a site for a central library.

"That a building fund be provided by combining the Rundel fund and the Reynolds Library fund, if such a plan is feasible.

"That a definite proposal be made to the Reynolds Library to co-operate with the city in the establishment and maintenance of a central library, co-operation along similar lines having worked out satisfactorily in various other cities.

"The subject of a central library will be discussed at greater length in a subsequent communication."

The financial statement contained in the report shows the city is at the present time \$3,838,547 under the debt limit of \$5,007,516.80, and may have bonds in the amount it is under the limit. The total of bonds and notes outstanding is \$41,644,795 but authorized exemptions total \$9,575,826, bringing the total to which the Constitutional limit on debt applies to \$32,068,969.

The message says the Fire Department is now 75 per cent motorized. It points out the financial stability of the city as shown by the two last bond sales.

"In my first message to your honorable body," says Mayor Van Zandt. "I called attention to the pledges of economy in the administration of the city's affairs, made by me when I was a candidate for Mayor, and stressed the need for the fulfillment of these pledges to the greatest limit consistent with efficient functioning of the various departments and bureaus. At the same time, attention was called to the fact that constitutional provisions had made impossible the raising by taxation of all the moneys required by the proper administration of all city departments. That condition made necessary the borrowing of money on short time notes, and I would call your attention to the fact that during the year just ended, the amount that had to be raised by that means was some \$400,000 less than required for the preceding year.

"This indicates a real start toward reduction of administrative costs but I am again directing the attention of departmental heads to the need for the exercise of further economies, an injunction in which I appeal for your support."

Mayor Van Zandt reviews the progress made on the subway and points out the financial demands for carrying on the project necessitate delay in other projects of local character. He says:

"I urge that no local improvement ordinances be adopted by your honorable body except those that are imperative. Ordinances for the development of new subdivisions should be eliminated so far as possible for this year. Such development should, in my opinion, be financed by the owners of the property to be developed. The benefit which is to accrue to the city at large from the canal lands development, it seems to me, should mitigate any sense of disappointment resulting from the postponement of more purely local improvements."

### Reports of Departments.

Reports of departments review the work of the past year. The report of the waterworks bureau shows fifteen miles of mains added last year, making about 470 in all, in addition to the three conduit lines totaling more than eighty miles. Sources of waste were checked so that in the face of 1,200 more water services in use, the city consumed some 3,000,000 gallons less per day on an average than in the previous year.

The Police Court section shows \$7,719 collected in fines and forfeitures of \$10,059. For violations of the motor vehicle law, \$610 was collected.

# Mayor And City Librarian Favor Spring Street Site For Central Library Building

## Say Site Fronting on New Boulevard Would Be Ideal for Library and Art Gallery Building Which Would Be Combined Memorial to Reynolds Family and Morton W. Rundel—Convenient for Public.

The plot of ground between Spring street and the new boulevard which is being built over the bed of the Erie canal, now occupied by the Reynolds Library, would be an ideal site for the Rochester Central Library building if an agreement can be reached by the trustees of the Reynolds and City libraries and the city of Rochester, it was said, this morning by Mayor C. D. Van Zandt and by City Librarian William F. Yust.

"A Reynolds Memorial Library and a Rundel Memorial Art Gallery erected on this site with the combined funds of the Reynolds and Rundel memorials would be of sufficient size to serve the city for years to come and would be in an ideal position to serve the community," said Mayor Van Zandt, this morning. "I sincerely hope that the necessary steps for co-operation between the two boards can be taken."

In his message to the Common Council, last night, Mayor Van Zandt said that while the erection of a central library building could not be undertaken immediately owing to the city's finances, it was not too soon to begin to plan toward that end and that he would suggest that a site be looked for and that a definite proposal be made to the Reynolds Library to co-operate with the city in the establishment of a central library along lines such as have worked out satisfactorily in other cities.

The Rundel Memorial Fund now amounts to \$407,803 while the Reynolds property includes the site and buildings on Spring street and the valuable Reynolds Arcade property on Main street east. Certain restrictions exist upon the Reynolds Fund, but it is believed by those who favor co-operation in the administration of the

two funds that these could be overcome. Similar situations have existed with regard to separate memorial funds in New York and other cities and the problem has been worked out to the satisfaction of all concerned and to the great benefit of the public.

Librarian Yust said this morning that he believed the present Reynolds site in Spring street to be ideal for a central library building.

"I believe the opening of the new boulevard will shift the 'Four Corners' two blocks farther west so that the Reynolds site will be practically in the center of the city. It would be available to the public and yet would not be in a position to be annoyed by the din of surface cars. I wish that some plan for the combination of the Rundel and Reynolds funds could be worked out.

Dr. Max Landsberg, president of the Reynolds Library Board, and Dr. Charles A. Dewey, trustee and chairman of the Reynolds Library committee, said this morning that the proposal to combine the two funds and to place the central library building on the Spring street site had never been officially presented to the Reynolds trustees and therefore could not be discussed by them.

The board of trustees of Reynolds Library is composed of Dr. Max Landsberg, Julius M. Wile, Rufus A. Sibley, Dr. W. R. Taylor, Dr. Rush Rhees, Dr. C. A. Dewey, E. G. Miner, George A. Carnahan, Granger A. Hollister, John R. Slater, Edward Harris, C. Schuyler Davis and Mortimer R. Anstice.

Dr. Rush Rhees and Edward G. Miner are also trustees of the Rochester Public Library Board. Mayor Van Zandt is president of this board and the other members, besides Dr. Rhees and Mr. Miner are Charles H. Wiltzie, Mrs. Constance Hickey, Dr. Clarence A. Barbour and Charles F. Wray.

R. T. U. Mar 14, '23

R-T-4 - Mar. 30 '23.  
**Central Library Project  
Discussed At Round-Table**

**Women's City Club Adopts Resolutions, Offering Co-operation—Dr. John R. Slater Says Some of Proposals Are Impractical—Leroy Snyder Declares Picking of Right Site Is Important.**

Through the efforts of the Women's City Club, a group of prominent citizens of Rochester were secured as speakers last evening at the round-table discussion of the central library project, held in the clubrooms in Chestnut street.

In addition to the talks, members of the club moved to adopt the following two resolutions: "1.—Resolved, that it is desirable to bring into conference on the central library project representatives of all interested groups, including the Rochester Public Library, Reynolds' Library and those charged with the administration of the Rundell fund, and that the chairman of this meeting be empowered to appoint a committee to further such a conference and advance Resolved, that this group congratulates the Mayor of the City of Rochester upon his public stand on behalf of a central library, and that we offer our co-operation in furthering the project."

The discussion was opened by Dr. John R. Slater, head of the English department of the University of Rochester, who said, in part:

Does Rochester need a central public library? Yes; but not for the reasons usually advanced, nor in the degree usually represented, nor on the basis some times proposed.

The question whether the city of Rochester should at this time take steps leading toward the erection of a central library in or near the business district has been complicated by unsound advocacy and impracticable proposals.

Among the reasons advanced for such a plan is the claim that there is in Rochester no collection of reference books adequate for study and research. It is alleged that persons desiring information on such subjects as chemistry, electrical engineering, soap-making, architecture, cannot find what they want in Rochester, because there is no central public library. Such a statement shows an ignorance of the contents of the Reynolds and University libraries which should not exist among librarians or students. There are fields in which neither the Reynolds nor the University library is adequate for advanced or technical research; but they are not fields likely to be more extensively covered at an early date by a central public library.

All such departments as general literature, biography, travel, history, memoirs, the more expensive and less popular books which the Public Library branches cannot afford to supply are already available to the public in the Reynolds Library, for both references and circulation use. In the University Library such scientific material, and large special collections in history and some other fields, are open to the public at any time for reference, though circulation privileges are for the most part necessarily limited to members of the university.

These two libraries together, with those of the Rochester Theological Seminary and the Eastman School of Music, contain nearly 250,000 volumes. With reference collections of this size available to students and serious readers, supplementing the admirable work of the Public Library branches and stations in the larger fields, it would not seem that there is really a book famine in Rochester.

On the other hand, a central public library is nevertheless desirable. Books alone do not make a library. Service, the kind of service that goes out into the community and interests the public in good reading, is indispensable. The Reynolds Library and the University Library, for different reasons, cannot perform this kind of advertising and publicity service as effectively as could a central public library.

One reason why the Reynolds Library is not today filling the position in the community to which its fine collection of books should entitle it is that during the past 26 years it has had to pay over to the city, in taxes on the Reynolds Arcade, \$145,431.20, with county taxes to the additional amount of \$31,249.45. If this sum of \$176,680.65 could have been expended on books and library service, there would now be little need to talk about the lack of a central library. Inasmuch as the Arcade is not rented for private profit but solely for the support of the Reynolds Library, the wisdom and expediency of such a tax on education may well be questioned. It is true that the taxation of the Arcade (less an exemption for the reading room maintained there) is based on a state law forbidding the exemption of any income-producing properties, even though owned by educational or benevolent corporations; but the passage of that state law is said to have been due to the shortsightedness of certain owners of Rochester office-buildings a generation ago.

Because of limited funds, therefore, the Reynolds Library has not been able to carry on a propaganda for good reading. It has simply said to the public, "The books are here, if you are willing to walk a couple of blocks from Main street." The modern idea is that if Main street will not come to the books, the books must be carried to Main street. Since most people will not go out of their way to get a new idea, the Public Library under modern conditions must do more than merely private books. It must create both supply and demand. And this is why Rochester needs a central library—for a publicity service, a propaganda, centering in a handsome building in a commanding geographical position, which cannot be expected from the existing reference libraries of the city.

Yet the need is not so pressing that the city, which is rapidly approaching its debt limit and limit of taxation, should undertake so expensive a project at this time. So long as we cannot afford to make more than two of our streets passable for wheeled vehicles for two months of the winter, so long as hundreds of school children are housed in portable frame huts, it is premature to talk of a central library as an undertaking for the immediate future.

But there are some who see an easy way out of this financial difficulty. They propose combining the Rundell bequest with the Reynolds Library funds for the erection, either on the present Reynolds site or elsewhere, of a city library building. So stated, the

proposal is apparently incompatible with the terms of the Reynolds will, though not of Rundell's. Mr. Reynolds provided with great care against the possibility of having his library become at any future time the football of city politics. He wished it to be a public institution in the sense of being open safeguards of its control. To combine his estate with the Rundell fund in the erection of a building to which the name "Rundell Memorial building" must be attached, and to turn over this building to the control of city administration, would seem to be a clear violation of trust for which the Reynolds Library trustees are not likely to become responsible.

A solution of the problem will have to be reached, as always in such cases, by a process of conservative compromise. At some time in the future, when the city of Rochester, with the Rundell fund supplemented by a bond issue of another million, is able to purchase a suitable site and erect a central library worthy of the city, it is entirely possible that the Reynolds Library funds, or a part of them, might be devoted, under the permanent supervision of the Reynolds trustees, to the maintenance of a Reynolds Reference Library closely co-ordinated with the public library system. It is true that similar legal difficulties have been surmounted in library mergers in New York and elsewhere. Some arrangement will undoubtedly be reached here when the times comes. The time has not yet arrived, because the city has not the money to spend.

Meanwhile it is the privilege, perhaps the duty of public library employees to direct their patrons to existing reference libraries for books not in their own branches. And it is the privilege and pleasure of all good citizens to recognize and applaud the excellent work of the public library branches in carrying on during the past eleven years an efficient circulation service and laying the foundations for a comprehensive public library system for the future. In order that this future may not be too distant, it is well that the present discussion should be continued.

The related question of a suitable site for a central library has immediate present importance, in view of the changes brought about by the approaching completion of the subway and the advancing cost of land near the center of the city. A site should be secured without delay; and before it can be selected somebody must answer the baffling question, "Where is to be the future center of the city?"

Whether the Rundell bequest could properly be used for a public library building in view of the apparent intent of the testator to found an institution for the fine arts is a question that has been by no means settled. It is true that the phrase in his will is "for the purpose of a library and fine arts building for the use of all of the people of Rochester." On the other hand, Mr. Rundell was interested in pictures and local artists, not in books. Those who knew him say that what he probably had in mind was a building where Rochester artists might have studios, a gallery for the exhibition of their best pictures, a library perhaps chiefly devoted to art, an assembly hall for their meetings, and so on. Now, since the erection of the Memorial Art Gallery, Rochester does not need another gallery for the display of loan exhibitions or for the housing of a permanent gift collection of pictures. But Rochester does need a home for artists, a place where they can paint and model and show their work to the public, a center for the more advanced teaching of painting and sculpture such as goes on in the studios of the larger cities. This encouragement for the artistic life of the city cannot be permanently centered either at the Mechanics Institute or at the Memorial Art Gallery, for various reasons which it is not necessary to elaborate.

The suggestion has been made that the most fitting use of Mr. Rundell's gift would be to purchase with part of it a building suitable for such an art center—for example, the Kimball place in Troup street, which is now available—and to provide a generous endowment for the upkeep of the institution under the joint control of the Rundell trustees and the artists of Rochester. Mrs. Kimball's beautiful house, with its art gallery, its conservatories and fine grounds, its costly interior decorations, would make such a home for the fine arts as would soon rank Rochester among the art centers of the country. There is no reason why, with such an equipment, painters and sculptors of national reputation might not come here to work and to teach advanced pupils; no reason why such artistic activity as now exists in cities like Pittsburgh and Cleveland might not naturally gravitate to Rochester. Then, with such a Rundell Memorial and with the Eastman School of Music, we should have a well-rounded provision for the higher life of the city, co-ordinated with the central library which is sure to come, sooner or later, chiefly from the pockets of the taxpayers. To advocate such a plan is not to deny the need of a central library; it is only to encourage the mature consideration of the city's future from all angles before steps of far-reaching importance are taken.

Leroy Snyder, in answering the assertion made by Dr. Slater that Rochester has reached its debt limit, declared that all growing cities are at their debt limit, and if they were not they would be backward and unprogressive. "Every city," said Mr. Snyder, "that wants something very badly goes after it, and if the people of Rochester want a central library the way to get it can be found." Mr. Snyder then discussed the site of such a library and, disagreeing with Edward Hungerford, who suggested a makeshift until the financial condition of the city justified the erection of a central library worthy of the city, he declared that it would be better to pay a half a million for the right site than to get the university site for nothing, as suggested by Mr. Hungerford, if it were not the right site.

Others who entered into the discussion were: Algernon Crapsey, City Librarian William F. Yust, Clinton Wunder and Edward Hungerford.

# Gives Principles To Guide Choice Of New Library Site

R-T-U Mar 22, '23

## Librarian Yust Says Building Should Be Object Lesson in Architecture—Should Be Accessible, Should Have Dig- nified Setting and Approach—Rochester Is Behind Every Large City in Country in This Respect.

City Librarian Charles F. Yust, in the following letter to The Times-Union, sets forth some pertinent facts to be considered in connection with the proposed new central library:

"The attention which the central library is at present receiving prompts me to state a few principles which should guide in the selection of a site. In the first place due consideration should be given to the strong influence which the architecture of public buildings has on the ideas and ideals of the people. This applies especially to a library on account of the nature of its contents. We call it the dwelling place of books, the products of the master minds of the ages, and we refer to the public library as the people's university.

"The library building therefore should be an object lesson in architecture, beautiful, dignified, impressive, permanent. It should give the impression that it is an educational institution, not only identified with the instruction and development of the people and giving daily assistance to those who use it but also standing for all that is noblest and best in the life of the community.

"It should be located where it will best fulfill its purposes. In locating it the following points should be considered:

"1. Accessibility. It should be near the center of the population to be served. It should be remembered also that this center of population may

shift in the course of time. It should be on or near the great thoroughfare or thoroughfares of the city. Nearness

to intersecting street car lines is desirable, though if they are too near, the noise will interfere.

"2. Approach. Sufficient ground on all sides is desirable, but especially in front to provide a dignified setting and approach. There are library buildings, however, which adjoin the sidewalk. This has the advantage of greater convenience to passers-by and affords better advertising possibilities, but it detracts from the architectural effect. Distance is necessary to the appreciation of a monumental building such as the library should be.

"3. Light and air. The location should be high and dry with ample space around it to admit an abundance of natural light and fresh air. This forbids the nearness of high buildings or large chimneys emitting heavy smoke or gasses.

"4. Growth. There should be room for addition to the building without marring its architectural appearance or impairing its administration.

"5. Residence section or business. It may be in either section or on the boundary line between the two. Most of the large cities of the country have chosen the residence portion probably because there is a suitable site was more easily available or they have compromised on an intermediate location. But the idea is gaining ground that the library is most useful close to the street in the very heart of the retail business section, because there it makes a stronger appeal to the man in the street than it does in a residence section at a secluded distance from the passing throng. This is one way of bringing the library to the attention of the people and projecting it into their daily thought. This principle has had much weight in locating some of our present branch library quarters.

"6. Relation to other buildings. It is desirable for it to stand on its own ground, to be independent of other buildings and institutions, such as the city hall, a school, a business house etc. This adds to its appearance, ease of administration and safety from fire. It may well be one of a group of public buildings, such as a school, a church, an art gallery, as in the modern civic center. The position it occupies among such buildings has an important effect on the position it occupies in the minds of the people.

"7. Cost of land. In securing a library site the cost of land is an important factor, which may have a modifying influence on any of these points. The opportunity for Rochester to obtain a suitable library site cheap is gone forever. It is still possible to obtain a good site, but it will cost money and a good round sum. It should be the best the city can afford. On the other hand the city can afford the best. It should not be content with anything else.

"The city of Rochester does not possess a single building erected for library purposes. In this respect it is behind every other large city in the

country, and behind many of the small villages in this state. Having waited so long for this important public improvement, it should insist on a building that will be a model from the standpoint of architecture and administration and usefulness. Such a building will be possible only on a site especially selected for that purpose."

## R-T-U Mar 14, '23 Central Library Needed.

In his annual message to the Common Council Mayor Van Zandt calls attention to the need of a Central Library. While stating that the city lacks the funds to proceed at once toward building and equipping such a library he makes the following concrete suggestions:

That the city provide a site for a central library.

That a building fund be provided by combining the Rundel fund and the Reynolds library fund, if such a plan be feasible.

That a definite proposal be made to the Reynolds library to co-operate with the city in the establishment and maintenance of a central library, co-operation along similar lines having worked out satisfactorily in other cities.

In making these suggestions Mayor Van Zandt gives official recognition to one of the city's great needs. A central library is the crown and capstone of a city's educational system.

Branch libraries are useful, convenient and have been well patronized. They cannot, however, furnish the books and trained staff to serve the needs of the student or reader who wishes to get to the bottom of a given subject or range widely over the field of literature.

Yet it is just this intensive study or wide culture that it is most to the interest of the city to make available to its residents.

That the co-operation of existing foundations should be sought is plain common sense. In New York the Astor and Lenox libraries added their collections and resources to the creation of the great central public library. The same plan has been worked out in other cities.

Education does not end with formal schooling. A library is one of the best means of enabling the ambitious to repair the defects in their early training.

Thomas Edison, the great inventor, stands out in most people's minds as a type of man capable of original thought, with wonderful natural ability to see what others have overlooked. Yet his biographers tell us that before Edison begins independent research he invariably reads everything bearing upon the matter in hand.

The pace of modern progress is largely due to the fact that through preserving a printed record knowledge once gained is retained and serves as a foundation for further advance.

A city which fails to provide a central reservoir of books is denying its ablest minds the tools with which to work.

Rochester should and must have a central library.

## Lions' Club Endorses Site For Central Library After Suggestion Of Assemblyman

R-T-U Je 20, '23

Following a talk on the Rochester Central Library project, given by Assemblyman Simon L. Adler before the Lions' Club at the Hotel Rochester yesterday noon, that organization heartily endorsed the site suggested by Mr. Adler, and adopted the slogan "A Central Library in 1925."

Mr. Adler, who had been the first to suggest the river site for the proposed structure, explained the history of the project, and pointed out the advantages of the suggested location for Rochester's central library.

After the address, the members of the Lions' Club unanimously passed the following resolution:

"Resolved; That the Lions' Club give cordial approval to the site suggested by the Board of Trustees of the Rochester Public Library for a central library building at the corner of Court street and South avenue and expresses confident opinion to the mayor of the city and to the board of trustees that such site will fully meet the highest and best requirements for the location of a central and reference library so greatly needed by our city of quality and that we endorse for co-operation in every proper manner the slogan, "A Central

Library in 1925."

This resolution was amplified by an explanatory statement advancing four principal reasons for favoring the proposed site, between South avenue, Court street the "new" street, and the east bank of the river:

1—It obviates the investment of from \$500,000 to \$750,000 for a site.

2—It is as centrally located as could be for all interests; the east side, the west side, the business center, the retail district; it is near the center of population; it is situated upon what will be Rochester's main artery of traffic, namely the subway and the new boulevard.

3—In addition to the now existing arteries of traffic approaching this site and those under construction, another wonderful development is bound to come. With the city purchasing the land between the subway and South avenue and the already existing barge canal harbor approaches between Court and Clarissa street, there only remains the construction of the proposed boulevard approach to the new University site along the river from Clarissa street to Elmwood avenue.

4—A central library on the river site could naturally develop into a civic center because of the natural river surroundings. What wonderful possibilities this opens for the future civic development of our city.

# URGES PUBLIC TO BACK EFFORT FOR CENTRAL LIBRARY

Rev. Clinton Wunder Says  
It Is 'Missing Link' in  
Educational System.

BRANCHES NEEDED ALSO  
Per Capita Circulation Is  
Said to Exceed That of  
Many Large Cities.

"The missing link of Rochester's educational system is a central library," said Rev. Clinton Wunder in his address last night at the Baptist Temple on "One of Rochester's Greatest Needs."

The sermon followed a musical program by the Temple Chorus, an orchestra made up of high school students, trombone solos by Jay W. Fay, and a song service by the audience. Special guests were librarians and teachers of the city.

The speaker pointed out the importance attached to public school education, in that it is compulsory for children up to 14 years old, and \$5,500,000 is expended each year to operate fifty-four school buildings here and employ 1,800 teachers. He emphasized the importance of Rochester as an educational center with the University of Rochester, the Rochester Theological Seminary, Mechanics Institute, the School of Optometry, Rochester Business Institute, City Normal School and the Eastman School of Music.

### Support of Public Needed.

"Yet, of the thirty-four cities in the United States of more than 200,000 population, Rochester is the only one without a central library," he said. The branch libraries are inadequate and fail to serve the purpose of inspiration and breadth of information in keeping with the needs of the students of the city and those who have completed school training, yet need all the more the training for leadership to be found in good books.

With public sentiment behind the proposition, a way would be found to build a central library. The city might well give the land and I am told that money is now available to start a drive for a million dollars to build the building. What we need is the support of our citizens for the creation of the institution.

"For those who have missed the opportunity of higher education via high school and college there is but one route and that is private study through books. Where are the books to be found? What a host of subjects come to mind and what cost involved far beyond the income of the average young man and women struggling to rise. America has found an answer in the form of the public library. The education that comes from long hours digging out the gold in books is the education that lingers. Adaptability and the mental resources of the pupil are more and more honored in modern education. The public school and university start something. The library is the place where that something may be perfected.

### Eight More Branches Required.

There are sixty-nine cities in the country of over 100,000 population. Rochester, Albany and Richmond alone are without central libraries and in both Albany and Richmond are located great state libraries as these cities are state capitals. Until 1912 Rochester had no library at all. Just ten years ago, think of it. To a stranger it seems an almost unbelievable statement. Why was Rochester so late? We are told a library appears when a community begins to assert its claims to education and culture. Then like other civic institutions it grows with the expansion of the city. Thus in most large cities the public library has a history extending over twenty-five to fifty years. How strange that Rochester with her commercial, civic and educational growth should so long omit a library.

"To former Mayor Edgerton is given the credit for the beginning of our library system which has been so ably managed by William Yust, assisted by an excellent staff of workers. In 1921 the work had grown to seven branches and nine sub-branches. These and subordinate stations distributed 1,228,252 volumes for home use in that year. A per capita circulation of about four volumes which record is exceeded by but nine of the first thirty-four cities in the United States. Eight additional branches are needed now. This will be done probably at the rate of one a year.

### Helps Develop Community Life.

"But these branches do not take the place of a great downtown central library. Central and downtown for the same reason that the great stores, the great theaters, the Court House, Post Office, City Hall are downtown because convenient at most times to most people. I have been privileged to live for some time in the cities of Cincinnati, Baltimore and New York, where there are large central libraries. I found that business men, lawyers, teachers, preachers, students, working men of all trades have learned to lean on the central branch for answers to innumerable questions and for desired information on every conceivable theme. Astronomy, science, engineering, invention, debating, economics and government are the subjects sought for among thousands of others. No single branch can economically carry all this material. It belongs in the central library and the branches must refer such requests to that central library where mighty stacks of books cover every subject that might be called for.

"Many valuable sets of books have been lost to our Rochester library forever because they had no place to properly keep the books. This is also true of bound copies of magazines so valuable to reference work. There are certain expensive books that cannot be duplicated in the branches. Such belong to a central building. A central library is not a dream not a theory. It is a fact in all cities of 200,000 population in America except Rochester. These cities count a central library a necessity to the well rounded life of the community. It makes for business success and for character."

# LIBRARY BOARD IS COMMENDED FOR RIVER SITE

First Reports of Sentiment  
Show Recommendations  
in High Favor.

IDEA IMPORTANT STEP  
Officials See Impulse for  
Achievement Given by  
Definite Plan.

Many favorable comments and messages of appreciation were received yesterday by members of the City Library Board for their selection of the river site as that best suited for a great central library in Rochester. All agreed that their action, if the site meets with general public approval, will pave the way for financing and erecting in the not distant future a building which not only will add greatly to the architectural beauty of the city, but also will fulfill to the best advantage the long-felt need of an adequate central library building.

The accessibility of the location with the large number of traffic lines passing near, especially was praised, many declaring they had not thought of it built in fact partly over the river. With the plan of erecting buttresses affording a space of 200 feet by 320 feet declared feasible by eminent engineers, belief is generally expressed that no better site could be found in the city, regardless of cost, and the fact that this already belongs to the city is considered to give added impetus to the entire project.

### Drawings Picture Site.

A suggested ground plan and surroundings of the central library and a cross-section showing the position of the race and spillway and the subway, as drawn by Gordon & Kaelber, architects, is of special interest in its manner of picturing what might be achieved in beauty and picturesqueness at the river site.

According to these plans, the building would go out over the river a hundred feet from the present west wall of the Johnson-Seymore race. This would help to give ample room for excellent light and air, and in the angle of the building would give large space for parking automobiles as well as room for shrubbery and flowers.

### Power Tunnel Planned.

The Rochester Gas and Electric Corporation plans to replace the race with a tunnel and the overflow from this and flood waters would go out over the spillway, thus obviating danger from this source. The corporation would grant such rights as are necessary for the erection of the building in return for the spillway and other necessary privileges which would in no way interfere with the building.

City Librarian William F. Yust says that in his opinion the selection of the river site and the proposed library structure is the most important step taken in library matters since he assumed office eleven years ago. The establishing and development of branch libraries bringing books as close as possible to the homes, and other advances in library management during this time, are generally agreed to be of no small moment in this field, yet Mr. Yust places the selection of this site above all these.

Charles H. Wiltsie, president of the Library Board, is enthusiastic over the possibilities of the location and he has high hopes of seeing erected here a building which in dramatic quality, rising as it is proposed in straight lines from the river itself, and in usefulness will stand as a striking monument to the ideals and progress of Rochester.

Other members of the Library Board, Mayor Van Zandt, Edward G. Miner, Mrs. Constance Hickey, Dr. Clarence A. Barbour and Charles F. Wray, president of the Board of Education, too, are enthusiastic over the proposition and are ready to advance it to the limit if they are given the support of public sentiment whole heartedly in favor of this site. It is pointed out that the Rundel fund amounting to about \$400,000 is available for the building and it is believed that with a definite site in view more money will be forthcoming and greater impetus given to the central library idea.

# LIBRARY WORKER POINTS TO NEED OF LIBRARY NOW

J. C. 4.6 '23

## Many Books Now Cannot Be Obtained; Urges Union of Various Funds.

### REPLIES TO MR. YUST

#### Art Club Member Insists Rundell Had Building for Art in Mind.

Contributions to the central-library discussion were made yesterday by Miss Bernice E. Hodges, of the Rochester Public Library, and John J. Inglis, of the Rochester Art Club. Miss Hodges urged the construction of a central library building as soon as practicable, pointing out needs for it that she has observed in her library work, and added the hope that duplication of effort might be prevented by effecting some sort of combination with the Reynolds Library and the Rundell funds. Mr. Inglis reiterated his assertion that the late Morton W. Rundell had chiefly in mind an art building. Miss Hodges expressed her views in an address at the Y. M. C. A. Mr. Inglis presented his views in a signed statement.

#### Why Should City Follow?

"Is there any satisfactory reason why Rochester should willingly take her place at the bottom of the educational scale when it comes to libraries and acknowledge that we cannot do what every other city, from a third of Rochester's size up, has done or is doing?" asked Miss Hodges in her address yesterday afternoon before the Women's auxiliary of the Young Men's Christian Association in the auditorium of the central association building.

"If it were necessary for Rochester to pay half a million dollars for a site and then several million more for a building and books, I would still have confidence enough in Rochester to believe that what other cities have done, Rochester can do," she continued. "Practically everyone admits that the city needs a central library. It is only when questions of when and how are asked that differences appear.

#### Library Needed Now.

"We need a central library right now. In fact, we have needed one for years. Rochester is behind every other city in the United States of more than 100,000 population in central-library facilities. It is the only one of the first sixty-nine cities of the country with neither a central library nor one in process.

"Probably the two groups of people who realize the need most keenly are visitors to the city or those new residents who have been used to central-library service in other cities, and the librarians in the branches of the Public Library who are restricted in their work because there is no central library.

"In the former group are many young men who stay here at the Y. M. C. A. Mr. Lansdale says that he is constantly being embarrassed by young men from other cities who inquire for Rochester's central library and can hardly believe that we haven't one.

#### Books Not Available New.

"In the branch libraries there are constant calls for books that the Rochester Public Library cannot supply. Sometimes we can refer the library patron to the book he desires at the University library, the Reynolds library, the Engineering society library or some of the other special libraries of the city, but very frequently it is impossible to do even this and it is necessary to send out of the city for a book or to express regret that we cannot supply the need because we have no central library.

"Dr. John R. Slater, of the Reynolds Library Board, has expressed another service to be expected from a central library, and I am therefore going to quote him.

"Books alone do not make a library. Service, the kind of service that goes out into the community and interests the public in good reading is indispensable. The Reynolds library and the University library, for different reasons, cannot perform this kind of advertising and publicity service as effectively as could a central public library."

#### Location is Important.

"Whenever the central-library topic is mentioned, one of the first questions to be asked is, 'Where would it be located?'"

"Mr. Yust in a recent article has treated this subject very fully. The site should be accessible, near the center of the population to be served. It should be on or near the great thoroughfare or thoroughfares of the city. There should be sufficient ground on all sides to provide a dignified setting and approach. The site should admit of an abundance of natural light and fresh air, and there should be room for growth, for adding to the building without marring its architectural appearance or impairing its administration. The library building should be an object lesson in architecture, beautiful, dignified, impressive, permanent."

"This question of permanence is a very important one. When we do build our central library it must be for the future. It must be a building and a location that Rochester can be proud of to-day and twenty-five years from now."

#### Funds Now Available.

"We already have the Rundell fund that has been willed to the city to be used alone or in connection with other gifts to erect a building for the purpose of a library and a fine arts building. This fund is deposited in Rochester banks and now amounts to over \$400,000, and is later to be increased by \$100,000.

"Another of the city's library resources should be considered in this connection—the Reynolds Library. The Reynolds Library book collection would make a splendid nucleus for a great reference library. The Reynolds Library also owns the Reynolds Arcade which could probably be made to yield \$600,000.

"So far as I know, no definite proposal has been made to Reynolds Library trustees and quite naturally, in the absence of such a proposal, they are not making any final statements in regard to union with the Public Library and the Rundell fund."

#### Union Would Be Desirable.

"It is not too much to hope that some union of the Reynolds Library, the Rundell fund and the Rochester Public Li-

brary may be effected. Such a union would make unnecessary the duplication by the city of many of the books now in the Reynolds Library and would be much more economical in every way.

"Even if this union is consummated, additional funds will have to be furnished by the city. The Library Committee of the Women's City Club, which has been studying this problem, believes that these funds should be raised by bond issue, feeling as it does that the public library is as much a part of the educational system as the public schools and has as just a claim to public funds as the schools."

#### Replies to Mr. Yust.

The statement of Mr. Inglis, made in reply to a statement of City Librarian William F. Yust, which appeared in this paper last Wednesday morning, is as follows:

In propounding his case Mr. Yust very naturally quotes those phrases in the will that seem to justify his view, while ignoring those that are not so apparently favorable. He lays much stress on the phrase, 'for the use of all the people of Rochester,' assuming evidently that a library would comply with that proviso, but that an art building—such as many people construe the term to mean—would not. He ignores the fact that even the constituency of a centrally located library is always a somewhat limited one, and that a library can in no sense be said to be used by all the people of the city in which it is located. But, and this is the real meaning of the phrase, it is there for the use of all the people, just as an art gallery or any other public foundation is. If the people do not make use of it as they might, that only goes to prove the need for such an institution to educate the people to want to use it.

The whole controversy that has arisen What did Mr. Rundell have in mind when interpretation of the term 'art building.' What did Mr. Rundell have in mind when he used those words?

#### Chiefly an Art Gallery.

The most one-idea advocate of the library point of view cannot get around the fact that the money was left for an art building to contain a library and art gallery. It is an axiom of Euclid that the whole is greater than any of its parts, the whole in this case being the art building of which the library is a part. Therefore, the intent of the donor cannot be honestly compelled with, as Rev. Clinton Wunder suggests, by a library in which a few good pictures are hung upon the walls and some statuary placed in the halls. This would be a mere trick to evade the purpose of the donor, who clearly stated that it was because of his interest in works of art that he bequeathed this money to be invested in an art building to house a library and art gallery.

Mr. Yust's and Mr. Wunder's contention seems to be that because Mr. Rundell was interested in works of art, he therefore wished to provide a library, a conclusion that does not seem to the writer to be a logical one, and he is quite willing to leave it to the intelligence of the people of Rochester to judge between the relative reasonableness of the two conclusions.

## CITY LIBRARIAN CITES TEXT OF RUNDELL WILL

### Says It Expressly Stipulates That Fund Be Used for "All the People" and Makes Provision for Un- ion With Other Funds.

City Librarian William F. Yust cites extracts from the will of the late Morton W. Rundell to controvert statements made by friends of Mr. Rundell that he intended his bequest to be used to provide a studio and exhibition building for Rochester artists.

Mr. Rundell expressly states in his will that he wishes the building to be erected with his money to be "for all the people." Mr. Yust said.

"'For all of the people,' is a phrase which needs emphasis in the discussion now current in regard to the Central Library," Mr. Yust says. "It has its application to the various libraries which are suggested as substitutes for a Central Library. Most of these actually serve only a small group. They are not in a position and do not claim to serve all the people. Rochester needs a library of all the people, by all the people, and for all the people."

"The phrase 'for all the people' occurs in Mr. Rundell's will not only once but twice. That these words should be stated and reiterated in one short paragraph is significant and should be a sufficient answer to those who would use the Rundell fund to build a home for the Rochester Art Club. In fact it seems as if these words were used to head off any such restricted use of his bequest.

"Individuals who enjoyed his intimate friendship and who claim to know what was in his mind assure us that it was his intention to provide a place where artists could gather, paint pictures and exhibit and sell them. That would have been a fine thing to do, and no doubt it was suggested to him by his intimate friends. He may even have yielded to their importunities sufficiently to give the impression of an affirmative answer. If such was the case, he must have had a change of heart when he wrote his will. In that instrument, which clearly defines the purpose and scope of his memorial, he not only omits any reference to the clubhouse or studio feature, but he even guards against that narrower interpretation of his purposes and adopts the noble and all-embracing phrase 'for the use and enjoyment of all of the people of Rochester.'"

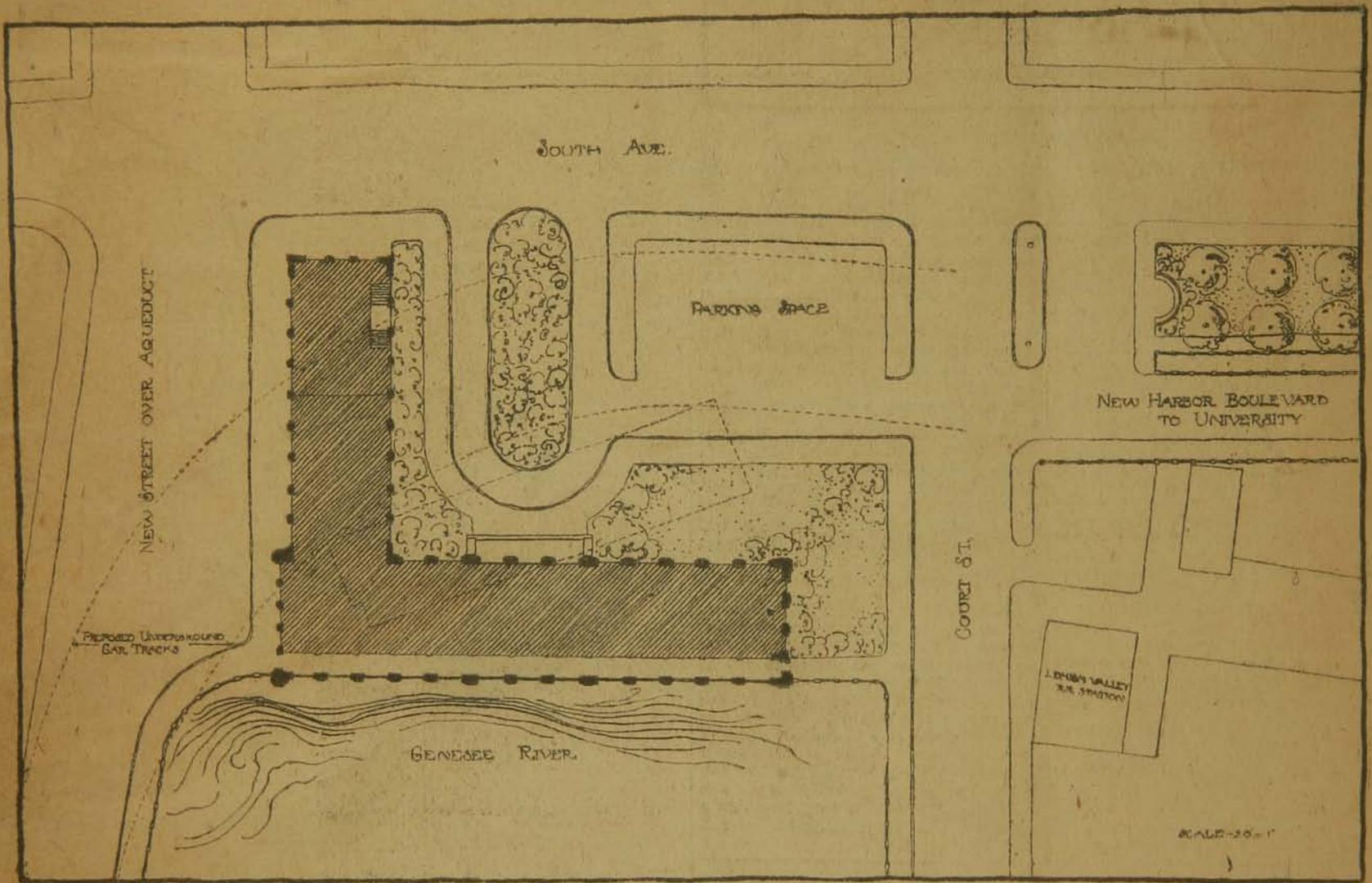
"Mr. Rundell's will aims to accomplish a double object, to provide a memorial to himself and to make sure that his memorial shall be of use and enjoyment to all the people. He does stipulate that it shall be known as the 'Rundell Memorial Building.' But his last sentence seems to anticipate just such a contingency as now exists. Foreseeing that it might be desirable to combine his bequest with others, he expressly gives his consent to such a combination and insists that the name Rundell need be attached to only a part of such building. This provision of his will now proves to be a real pre-vision, a prophetic discernment of the present situation.

"Following are the exact words of Mr. Rundell's will. Read and interpret them for yourself:

"Having been interested in works of art and wishing to provide a memorial that shall be a pleasure and use to all of the people of the city of Rochester, where I have so long made my home, I hereby give devise and bequeath all of the rest, residue and remainder of my property, both real and personal and whatever situate, to the city of Rochester, to be used either alone or in connection with other funds in erecting, equipping and maintaining a structure to be known as 'The Rundell Memorial Building' for the purpose of a library and fine arts building for the use of all of the people of Rochester.

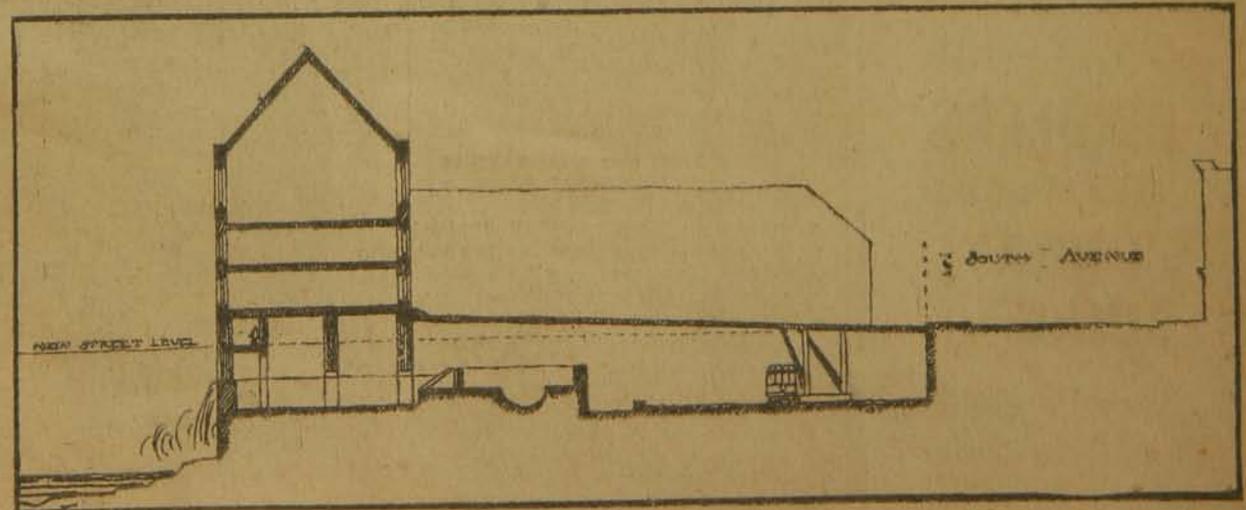
"And I hereby consent that said city unite the above bequest and devise with one or more similar bequests, foundations or organizations for the purpose above specified, but this consent is given only upon condition that any such building, the result of such uniting, shall be forever known and designated in whole or in part by the name 'Rundell.'"

# ARCHITECTS' PLAN OF NEW CENTRAL LIBRARY UPON RIVER SITE



Ground plan and surroundings of the proposed central library on the river site recommended by the Library Board, as pictured by Gordon & Kaelber, architects. This shows the main library building projecting over the river and the wing extending along the aqueduct to be used as the library subway station.

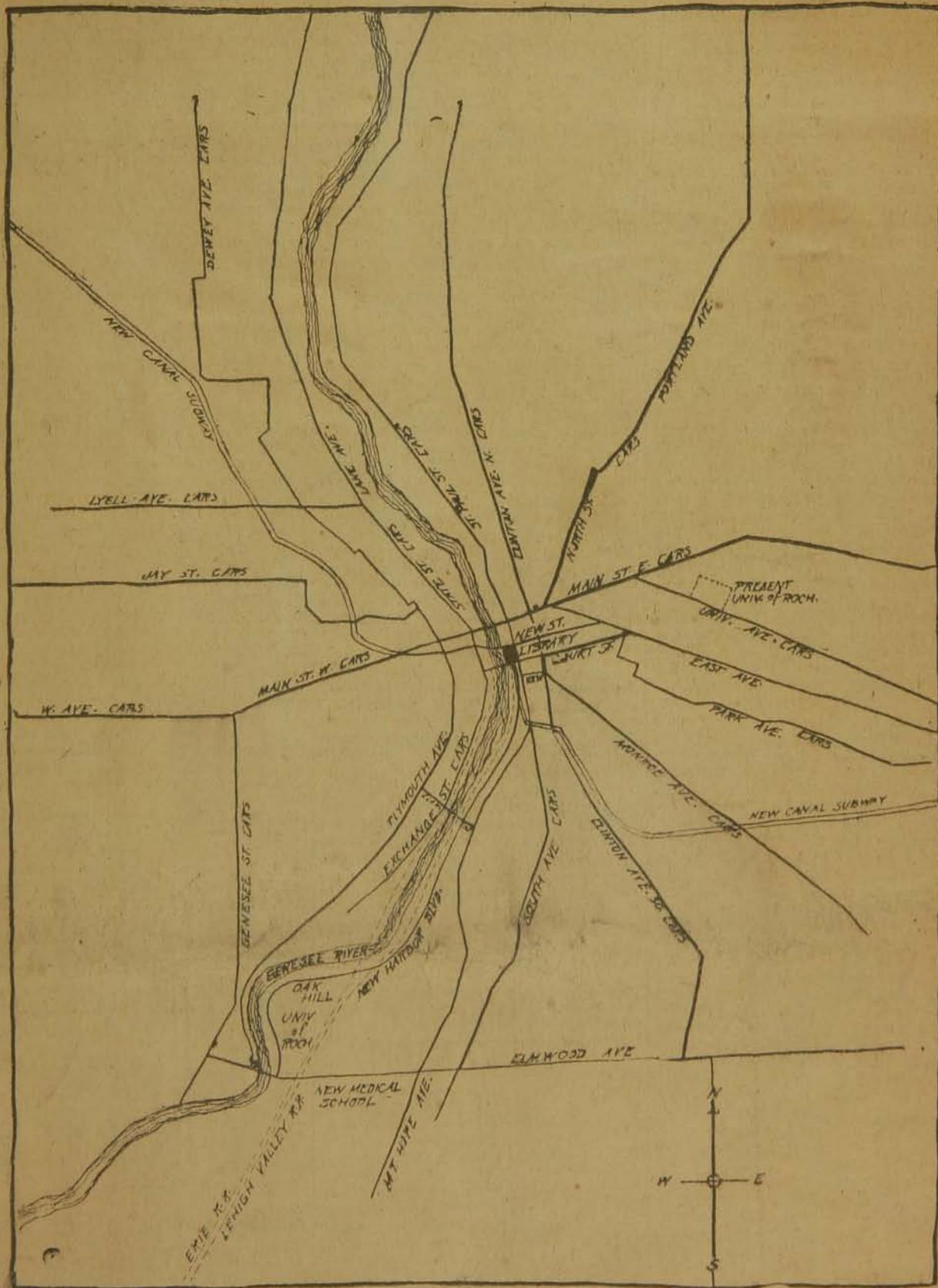
## CROSS-SECTION OF PROPOSED PUBLIC LIBRARY



Gordon & Kaelber, Architects.

Cross-sectional view of the proposed central library building showing race and spillway, and connection of the wing with the subway and South Avenue.

# CONVENIENCE OF LIBRARY SITE VISUALIZED



The diagram shows how the proposed site, at the South avenue subway station, would serve all sections of the city equally. Almost in the heart of the retail business section, yet at the principal future car-traffic center of the city and directly connected by a boulevard with the new University and Medical School, the site has roused much enthusiasm in official circles since it was suggested.

# City Library Board

## Recommends Site at Aqueduct

### CITY-OWNED PROPERTY EAST OF RIVER URGED AS WISEST CHOICE FOR GREAT BUILDING

#### Idea Meets Approval of Mayor and Other City Officials---Offers Architectural Opportunity and Convenience.

Plans that would give Rochester one of the most beautiful and picturesque central library buildings in the country on a site unexcelled for accessibility, dignity and other practical advantages in the opinion of library experts, was revealed yesterday at the regular meeting of the Library Board, when request was made to the Common Council to reserve tentatively as a possible Central Library site the location bounded by South avenue, Court street bridge, the Genesee river, and the new Aqueduct

boulevard over the subway. This land is owned by the city and so would cost nothing. It is valued at \$500,000 and as large a site in the downtown section of Main street it is said would cost \$3,000,000. As the city is not in a position to finance such an expenditure at the present time, the river site is thought to solve one of the greatest problems in connection with a Central Library. If this site meets with wholehearted public approval, it is believed that money will not be lacking to erect here a building by far the most beautiful in the city and one that will give Rochester remarkable distinction as a library center.

#### Officials Enthusiastic.

The river site was suggested first by Assemblyman Simon L. Adler. Charles H. Wiltzie, president of the Library Board, quickly saw the possibilities of the idea and enthusiastically carried it forward by consultation with experts and others directly interested. A composite study of the practicability of the site was made by Edwin A. Fisher, superintendent of the City Planning Bureau and consulting engineer, and Edwin S. Gordon, architect, and they heartily approved the idea from the architectural and engineering standpoints. Mayor Clarence D. Van Zandt is highly in favor of the suggestion. William F. Yust, City Librarian, declares that the site could not be improved upon to fulfill the requirements of a great library.

Others who have considered the river site

so far agree that it outclasses all previously suggested sites. It entirely obviates any controversy between the east and west sides of the city because it unifies the city from the library point of view. It is pointed out that the site is at the very center of what will always be the great traffic transfer points, regardless of the direction of growth of population. According to the plan suggested, this point will be the Library station on the subway and a wing of the library structure will be a station waiting room with stairs leading to the subway.

It is proposed that the Central Library building shall be a beautiful scholastic Gothic structure of blue stone rising directly from the bed of the river, trimmed with Norristone, its vertical lines and rising tower of such dramatic quality as to seem to have risen by magic from the river itself. Given a platform over an enlarged spillway on buttresses built in the river, it is proposed that the best architects in the country be given opportunity to create the most picturesque and suitable building for this particular site. An arcade through the structure from the Aqueduct boulevard to Court street would look out upon the river and afford an added point of beauty and delight.

In the changes in this part of the city now under way, it is declared that the Central Library would have unsurpassed approaches and surroundings. The grounds would be large enough to allow

for flower beds and grassy plots. On one side would be the beautiful Genesee, on others the new Boulevard, Court street bridge, the New Harbor Boulevard to the University, and a fine large parking space for automobiles at the north side of the structure skirting the Aqueduct boulevard. In time, too, the Aqueduct boulevard will cut through some of the buildings on the opposite side of South avenue to Chestnut street, affording an added approach to the Central Library.

#### Build It All at Once.

It is proposed that the entire Central Library structure should be erected at once, although all the room providing for the future growth of the library would not be needed for some years. In the meantime, the part of the building not in use for the Department of Education, affording facilities in keeping with the high place that Rochester's educational system holds in the country. By the time that the library needed all the room, other suitable quarters doubtless will have been provided for the Department of Education. These suggestions are typical of the sensible and business-like ideas which the Library officials have sought to plan the proposed building as well as making it an ornament to the city.

The resolutions adopted by the Library Board at its meeting yesterday were as follows:

**WHEREAS:** The City of Rochester owns the property bounded by South Avenue, Court Street, the new Aqueduct boulevard and the Genesee River; and, Whereas extensive improvements are being planned or made upon such property in the construction of the new subway, with a station platform, stairways and waiting room; and, Whereas, the Rochester Public Library will, in the near future, require a suitable site for a central library building.

**RESOLVED,** That the Common Council of the City of Rochester be requested tentatively to reserve said property, as above described, for a central library site, and that the city engineer be requested in all plans and arrangements for subway construction, as far as practicable, to make the same with view to possible ultimate central library use of the property as above described.

#### Mr. Yust Points Advantages.

City Librarian William F. Yust describes the river site for the Rochester Public Library in this manner.

It is on South avenue between Court street and the new boulevard which is being built over the old Erie canal aqueduct. It is opposite the Osburn House between South avenue and the river. It is only two minutes' walk from Main street, the present greatest thoroughfare of the city. It is right on the new subway and boulevard, the future great thoroughfare of the city. It is on South avenue, the leading north and south street east of the river. It is only four minutes' walk from State and Exchange, the leading north and south streets west of the river.

Where the above mentioned streets intersect will be the great transfer points of transportation. This will remain true, no matter where the center of population may go. The proposed site adjoins this transfer area. Therefore it could hardly be better located with reference to accessibility.

#### Meets Sectional Arguments.

Rochester has an east side and a west side and will always have them as long as the Genesee river flows through the city. In years past scores of people have asked me where in my judgment the Central Library should be located. My answer has been that it should be either on the east side or on the west side of the river. That answer was always accepted with a laugh except once, when someone said,

"Why not put it on top of the river. It is a perfect solution of the problem of east and west side so far as it applies to the Central Library."

There is no place anywhere near the center of the city which offers such splendid possibilities for a beautiful, stately building, the finest and most impressive specimen of architecture in the city. There is a space there 320 feet long and 200 feet wide with streets on three sides and the river on the fourth side. This gives sufficient space on all sides for a dignified setting and approach. In order to appreciate the full sweep of the approach from the south, for example, it is necessary to imagine that all existing buildings have been removed between South avenue and the river south of Court street. These buildings are all owned by the city and will shortly be removed. This will further increase the appropriateness of this river site for a monumental building.

#### Plenty of Light and Air.

Light and air are of fundamental importance. The open space around the building will be ample to admit an abundance of natural light and fresh air. There will even be room for some lawn and shrubbery and at least from one side there will be no dust unless the river runs dry.

Growth. Another established principle is that there should be room for addition to the building without marring its architectural appearance or impairing its administration. There is sufficient area here for several buildings which would be large enough for a hundred years. A type of building could be adopted consisting of a number of units. These units could be erected one at a time as they are needed. This method however, would be less likely to produce the best results for the time being and ultimately than to erect a finished structure at once, complete and final. The second alternative would yield more room than is at once needed for library purposes. It has been suggested therefore that any surplus room could be temporarily utilized for other city departments with the understanding that the space so occupied is to be vacated as the library grows and has need for additional room.

#### Land Cost Small.

Cost of land. The high cost of land is generally the chief obstacle in securing an ideal site for a central library. The larger the city, the more difficult this problem becomes. To buy a site on Main street similar in size and location to the proposed river site would cost three million dollars. The City of Rochester is not in position at present to pay such a sum for this purpose, at least that is the opinion of those who are in charge of its financial affairs. The river site has an estimated real estate value of a half million dollars, and it will not cost a cent, because the city already owns it. The cost of constructing piers, walls, arches, etc., over the subway and the edge of the river will not be greater than the cost of excavating would be on another site. The City Engineer has made a study of the various construction problems involved, and he states that there are no engineering difficulties in the way.

#### Business Site Preferable.

Residence or business section. Two distinct and opposing ideas exist with regard to the proper location of a library. The one selects a retired, secluded spot, preferably in a grove which the Goddess of Wisdom is supposed to favor for her habitation. Such spots naturally are to be found only in the residential districts. Some of the large public libraries of the country have been located with a tendency in this direction. The most recent and notable example of this kind is the Detroit Public Library opened last year.

The other idea, and this is gaining ground, is that the library is most useful close to the street in the very heart of the business section, because there it makes a stronger appeal to all the people than it does in a residence section apart from the passing throng. A great, impressive building on this river site will be a powerful means of bringing the library to the attention of the people and projecting it into their daily thought.

# Project For City Central Library Furthered At Meeting Of Trustees

R-T-U Dec 14, '23

## BUILDING WOULD OVERLOOK RIVER AND BOULEVARD

Common Council Petitioned  
To Set Aside Site Sug-  
gested by Simon Adler,  
Who Also Recommends  
Type of Architecture.

The project of erecting a municipal Central Library at Court street and South avenue received great impetus when the Public Library Board petitioned the Common Council last night to set aside the proposed location which is owned by the city for library purposes.

The proposed site is bounded by Court street, South avenue and the new boulevard over the old Erie canal and the Genesee river. It is proposed to build the library over the Johnson-Seymour race. The site, which is worth half a million, will cost nothing.

The type of building which the trustees of the Public Library have in mind, would cost about \$1,000,000, of which the city already has about \$400,000 left to the municipality by the Rundel estate.

Assemblyman Simon L. Adler, whose original idea it was to build a Central Library on the site recommended by the Library Board, was delighted by the action taken by the trustees. Mr. Adler's idea was published exclusively in The Times-Union some time ago. Mr. Adler suggested that the architecture be of the Collegiate or Tudor Gothic, modeled somewhat on the famous Delaware and Hudson Railroad office building in Albany, and architects are preparing sketches of a proposed building along these lines.

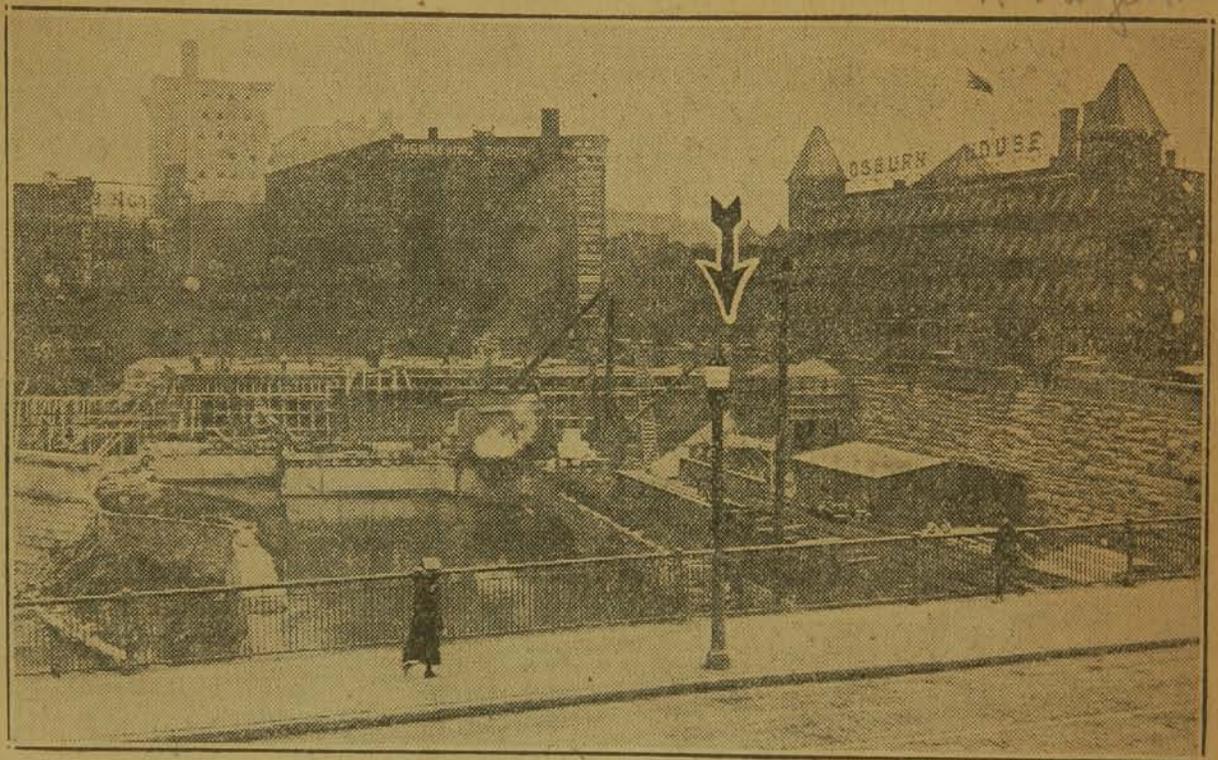
It is not likely, however, that plans or even the style of architecture for the building will be agreed upon at this time. City Librarian William F. Yust said this morning that invitations would probably be sent out to architects all over the country asking them to submit sketches for a building that would best suit the unusual site.

The Public Library Board of Trustees which petitioned the Common Council to set aside the site for library purposes is composed of Charles H. Wiltzie, president; Mayor Van Zandt, ex-officio; Dr. Rush Rhees, Edward G. Miner, Mrs. Constance Hickey, Dr. Clarence A. Barbour, Charles F. Wray and William F. Yust, secretary and city librarian.

Mr. Yust has described the site as follows:

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—Photo by Times-Union Photographer.

Proposed site of municipal Central Library at Court street and South avenue.

It is only four minutes' walk from State and Exchange, the leading north and south streets west of the river.

Where the above mentioned streets intersect will be the great transfer points of transportation. This will remain true, no matter where the center of population may go. The proposed site adjoins this transfer area. Therefore it could hardly be better located with reference to accessibility.

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Light and air are of fundamental importance. The open space around the building will be ample to admit an abundance of natural light and fresh air. There will even be room for some lawn and shrubbery and at least from one side there will be no dust unless the river runs dry.

Growth. Another established principle is that there should be room for addition to the building without marring its architectural appearance or impairing its administration. There is sufficient area here for several buildings which would be large enough for a hundred years. A type of building could be adopted consisting of a number of units. These units could be erected one at a time as they are needed. This method however, would be less likely to produce the best results for the time being and ultimately than to erect a finished structure at once, complete and final. The second alternative

would yield more room than is at once needed for library purposes. It has been suggested therefore that any surplus room could be temporarily utilized for other city departments with the understanding that the space so occupied is to be vacated as the library grows and has need for additional room.

Cost of land. The high cost of land is generally the chief obstacle in securing an ideal site for a central library. The larger the city, the more difficult this problem becomes. To buy a site on Main street similar in size and location to the proposed river site would cost \$3,000,000. The City of Rochester is not in position at present to pay such a sum for this purpose, at least that is the opinion of those who are in charge of its financial affairs. The river site has an estimated real estate value of \$500,000, and it will not cost a cent, because the city already owns it. The cost of constructing piers, walls, arches, etc., over the subway and the edge of the river will not be greater than the cost of excavating would be on another site. The city engineer has made a study of the various construction problems involved, and he states that there are no engineering difficulties in the way.

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## Letters From Readers Opposes River Site For Central Library

R-T-U Dec 20, '23

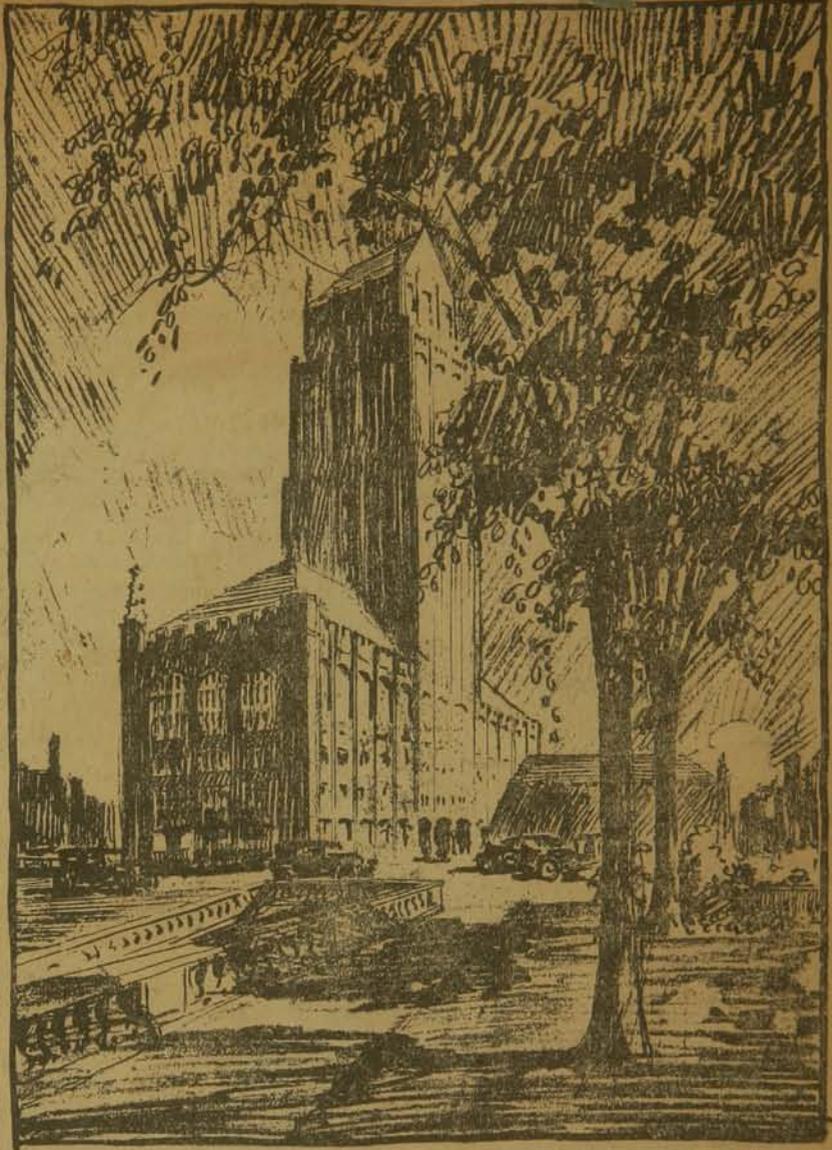
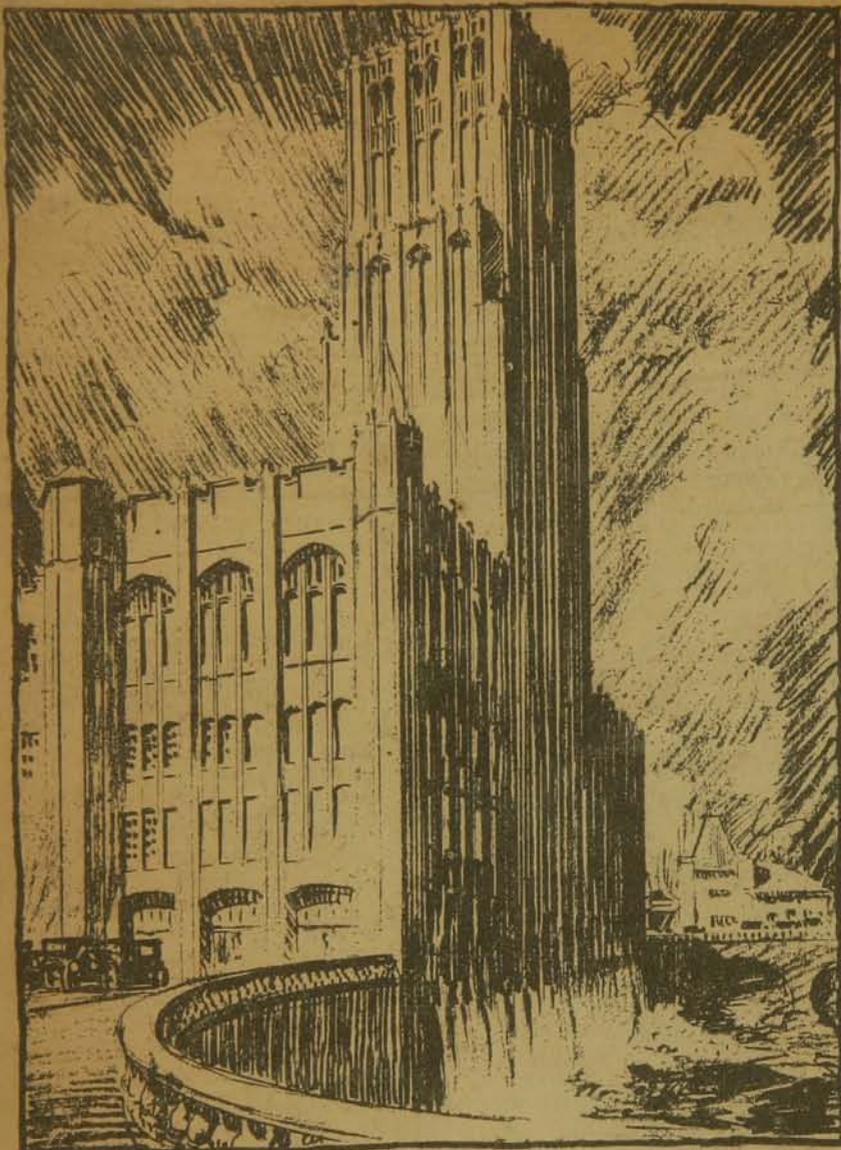
Editor, Times-Union:  
Before the location for the new library building is decided, I would like to make my protest against the proposed river site. The only recommendation the site has, is, it is owned by the city.

It would be noisy, being near the subway, damp, and there would be all the odors from the river. The view from all directions (except, perhaps, the South) would be anything but picturesque, the building would be hidden out of sight—strangers would have to inquire for it. It should be located in the most beautiful and traveled street in the city, which is East avenue, opposite Gibbs street. This site would be convenient to the Eastman School of Music, the Y. M. C. A., the Women's College and a rapidly growing business center. The architecture should approach the style of the Memorial Art Gallery.

If the city is saddled with a monstrosity, such as was depicted in a late morning paper, and on the contemplated site the people of Rochester will always regret that they did not rise up in protest before it was too late. I think the question is too important to be decided hastily. I think the people of Rochester—not a few men—should have a voice in the decision, either by some kind of popular vote or public mass meeting. There are any number of sites preferable to the one chosen.

Never mind the cost—have a building the city will always be proud of and on the most conspicuous site.

C. G. Huntington.



Gordon & Kaehler, Archts.

The Library Board's recommendation for a central library on the east bank of the Genesee river at the east end of the historic Aqueduct mentioned the possibility that the structure would be built in the Gothic type of architecture. The architects who have submitted the drawings reproduced above have taken that recommendation to mean the American adaptation of skyscraper architecture of the Flamboyant Gothic type that was developed in Northern France and Belgium. The large drawing at the top is a full view from the river side of a building in this tower topped by a lantern design. Many persons who have seen the designs have expressed a preference for the tower design at the lower left which presents almost unbroken vertical lines from the river bed to its top. The drawing at the lower right shows another type of tower in this sort of Gothic.

### A Central Library Site.

Suggestion of the site between Court street bridge and the new Aqueduct boulevard for location of a central library brings proper realization of this important civic project decidedly nearer.

R-T-4 Dec 14, '23

That the land already is owned by the city is the first and most obvious advantage. Purchase of a site having anything like the same advantages with reference to location near the center of population and important transfer points would involve great expense.

Rochester needs a central library which will serve as a storehouse for a much larger collection of books than can be housed in any branch library. Such a library, by affording means for acquiring information along different lines and covering the field of good literature in a reasonably adequate fashion is the crown and capstone of the educational system of a large city.

Nearly every other city approaching the size of Rochester has such a library. Here such books as we have are scattered, with many duplications in lines where proper service would mean concentration of purchases and a more extensive and down-to-date collection.

If the city can take the initiative by providing a proper site it is to be hoped that some such combination of existing funds and foundations as has been worked out successfully in other cities can be effected here. The Rundel fund and the Reynolds library foundation come to mind at once in this connection.

Ultimate test of the value of a library is the number of readers and the extent to which they are benefited.

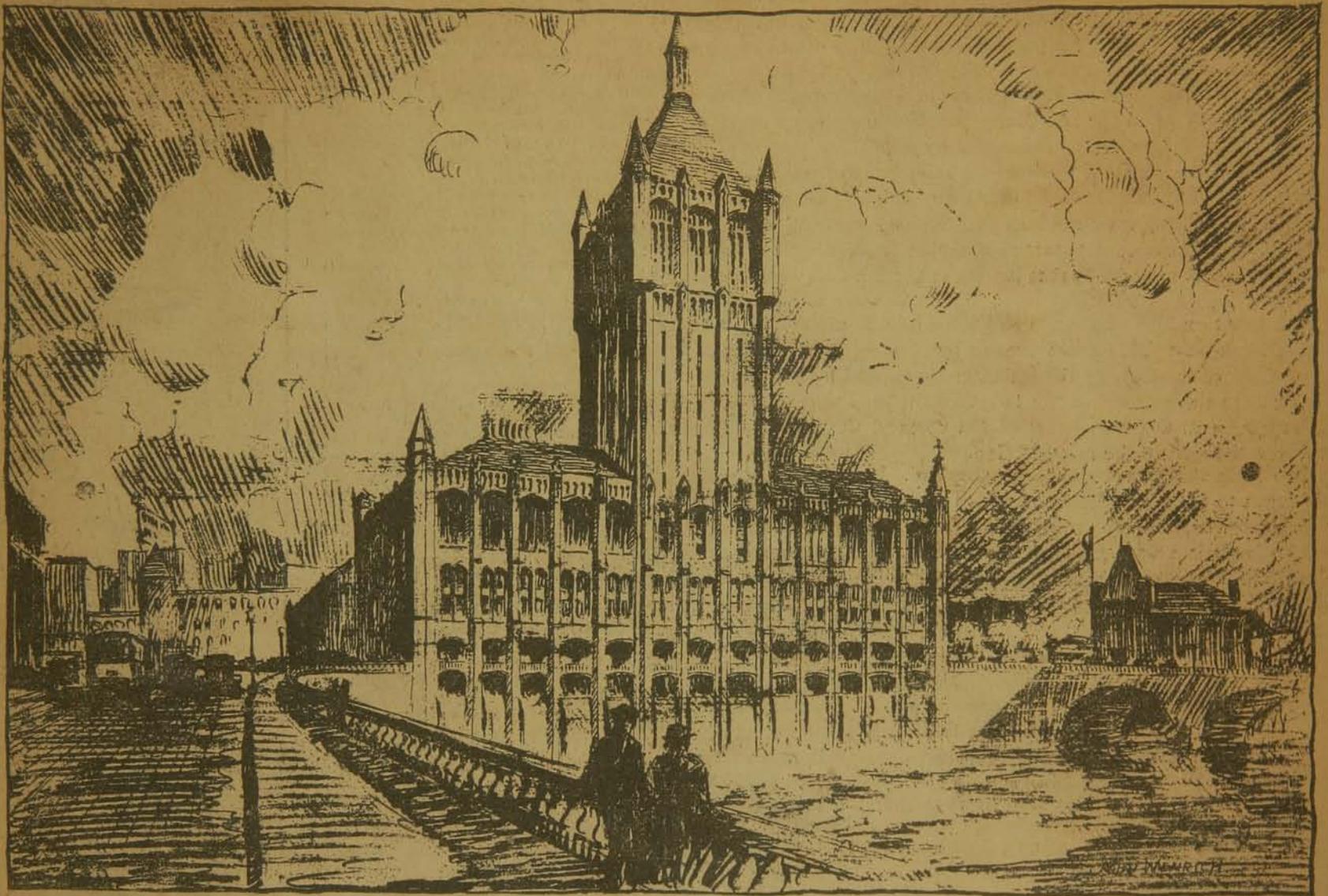
So far as the number of readers is concerned the argument for a location as central and as easily accessible as possible is conclusive.

Quality of service is the main argument for a large library. Only by the aid of such a collection, properly housed, can those who wish to "dig into" a subject and make extensive use of books for cultural, scientific and business purposes properly be served.

In addition to the advantages of present city possession and central location this site will give plenty of light and air on all sides. Its area of 320 by 200 feet is ample. There are said to be no engineering difficulties.

Let us hope the proposal to reserve this plot will mark real progress toward a central library worthy of Rochester.

# ARCHITECTS' CONCEPTION OF LIBRARY AS GOTHIC STRUCTURE



## LIBRARY SITE AT AQUEDUCT WINS INTEREST

Architectural Possibility Un-  
rivalled, Particularly for  
Gothic Building.

## OWNERSHIP, FACTOR

Fact It Is Held by City  
Means Fund Is Needed  
Only for Building.

Keen interest has been aroused throughout the city in the proposed new central library in South avenue, between Court street and the Aqueduct since the recommendation of this site last week by the Library Board at its monthly meeting. Many people have visited the site and in so doing have tried to picture in their imagination what would be the type of architecture and the general appearance of the building in this particular setting.

starting work within a year. If the trustees of this fund agree that setting aside a room in the library building for art purposes will fulfill the terms of the bequest in this respect, this sum can be used to start work on the structure and it is practically certain that the city will then appropriate the remainder required.

The city's great need of a central public library has been recognized for a long time by those in close touch with the situation in Rochester. The Reynolds Library has done splendid work in its field as has the University Library, both affording exceptional facilities for reference purposes, but the fact that they are private institutions prevents them from educating the public upon the pleasure and profit to be gained from reading good books. It is believed that this can be done adequately only through the organization and facilities afforded by a central public library.

### Action Well Considered.

During the latter part of the winter, widespread agitation for a central library by churches, clubs and individuals brought forth considerable controversy as to the best site for the building. A large number of locations were suggested, but little in the way of a conclusion or manner of raising the money was reached.

The Library Board, however, went quietly at work taking all suggested sites under advisement. The aid of engineers, city officials and architects was solicited and after prolonged deliberation, the river site was selected as the one best suited for the purpose from every practical standpoint. Thereupon the City Council was asked to reserve this location for a library site to see if it would meet with general public approval, which seems to have been the case.

At the suggestion of Charles H. Wiltse, president of the Board of Library Trustees, the firm of Gordon and Kaelber, architects, made a number of studies of a library building for this location, and some of these are reproduced here as giving several possible types for the consideration of the public. While the final plans would be chosen as those deemed best suited for the needs, it is believed that these studies are of particular interest at this time as showing some of the possibilities of an exceptionally beautiful and picturesque structure at this site.

### Advantages of Gothic.

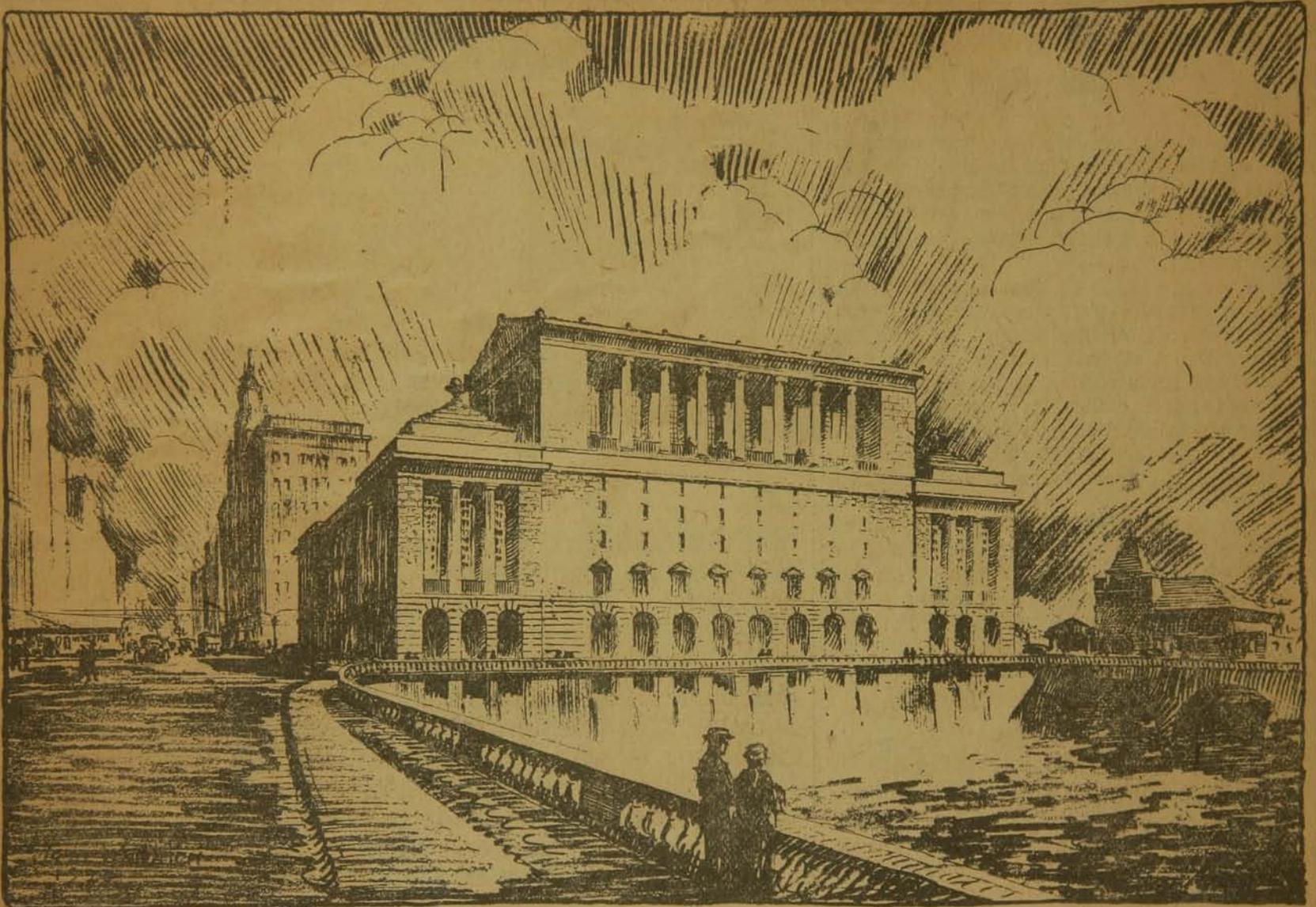
Several Gothic types are shown here. A Gothic structure, which is the peculiarly American development of the European original, seems to be the one generally favored so far in the discussion. This type is virile and alive and with the rising tower it is believed would be particularly suited to the location recommended. The straight lines built of blue rock from the bed of the river it is said would give the appearance of the building having risen in all its beauty from the river itself.

A building which would fulfill the future needs of the city for central library facilities and embrace the beauty of architecture in keeping with the ideals of the city and the dramatic possibilities of the river site, would cost not less than a million dollars, members of the Library Board say, adding that a structure costing less should not be erected in this location.

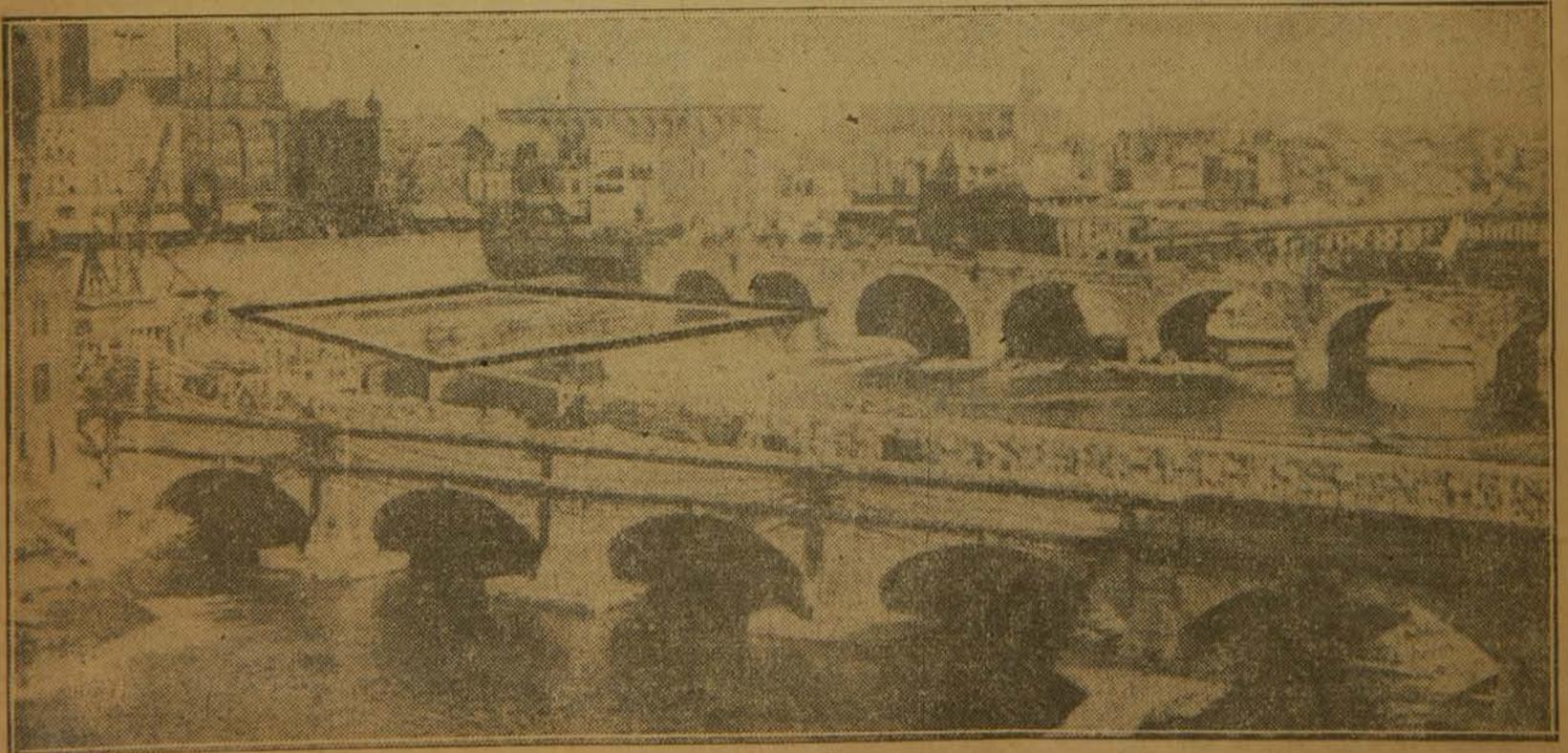
### Sit Owned by City.

As the site already is owned by the city, the entire appropriation could be expended in the building itself, but even at that, it is said the use of the Rundel fund of \$400,000 is the only hope of

CLASSIC DESIGN FOR LIBRARY AND VIEW OF PROPOSED SITE



Gordon & Kaelber



The Democrat and Chronicle on Sunday presented three designs for the proposed central library on the Aqueduct site in the Gothic type of architecture. Herewith is presented an alternate design in the classic manner.  
The lower picture is a view of the proposed site taken from the south end of the Democrat and Chronicle building. The library site proposed has been marked out with the heavy black line.

# Rochester Library Project Described By Simon L. Adler In Talk Before Lions Club

Site on River Front, on Property Acquired by City as Result of Erie Canal Purchase—Location Ideal for Erection of Great Central Library With Opportunity for Expansion if Found Necessary.

The Rochester Public Library project, its history and present status, were described by Assemblyman Simon L. Adler of 17 Argyle street, in an address before the Lions Club at the Hotel Rochester this noon. Mr. Adler has been closely connected with the plans of the library committee for the erection of a central library to serve the entire city, and made clear just how far preparations for such a building have progressed.

Actual plans for erecting the library have not as yet been started, but the site of the building has been selected, and as soon as funds for construction are obtained, work on the proposed building will commence. Mr. Adler's remarks, briefly, were as follows:

"A city library has two principal purposes; the first is adequately to provide for the current reading of the community, and the second is to serve as a reservoir for the knowledge of the ages. In Rochester, the development of the public library system in establishing branch libraries throughout the city has been calculated to fill the first function. The other, and perhaps more important function can be fulfilled only by the establishment of a large, central library.

"Probably no other city of this size in the country is without a great central library. Rochester has a great many books available for reference, but these are to be found principally in the libraries of the University of Rochester and the Theological Seminary, and in the Reynolds Library; these are open to the general public, but are not easily available.

"For some time past, it has been a subject for the thoughtful consideration of many persons, to determine when and where a central library should be erected. A number of sites were proposed. Finally, after the city acquired from the State of New York the abandoned Erie Canal, and when this property was utilized for the new subway which is now in course of construction, and for a new street paralleling Main street to the south, and crossing the river over the old aqueduct, it was found that the city owned a comparatively large area situated directly in the center of the business district, an area available for the erection of a building or buildings of large size.

"Measurements made by the city engineer showed that in the area between South avenue Court street the 'new' street and the east bank of the river there was a space 200 feet wide, and 320 feet long which could be utilized for a great public building. It was then suggested to Charles H.



ASSEMBLYMAN SIMON L. ADLER.

Wiltse chairman of the library board, that this would be an ideal site for the great central library for which the city had been waiting. Mr. Wiltse immediately saw the advantages of the location and made a study of the problem with the result that the library board has requested the city to set aside this site for the purpose.

"The space set aside is large enough for a building even of great size, which can be erected along the river bank, leaving sufficient space for a plaza between the building and South avenue. It is also large enough to provide space for any expansion of the building which may later be required.

"The location is ideal in that it is practically in the center of the city. It is so situated as to make it easy to reach in two or three minutes from any part of the business or financial section; it will also be at one of the main stations of the subway which is soon to become an important part of the city's transportation facilities.

"It will be a structure of such artistic merits and intrinsic beauty as persons unfamiliar with the plans have no conception of. The location will assist in beautifying the river front, an opportunity which should eagerly be taken advantage of, as similar opportunities have been in the past.

"On the whole, the location of a great public library on this site will be a tremendous advantage to Rochester, both as an artistic and as an educational feature of the city's facilities."

## Would Put Central Library At South Ave. And Court St.; Scholastic Gothic In Style

Assemblyman Adler Suggests Tall, Rather Narrow Building Like the D. & H. Building in Albany—Would Have Light From All Sides and Make Unnecessary Purchase of Land by City.

Everyone is talking Central Library nowadays and the latest and one of the best suggestions on the subject came today from Simon L. Adler, Republican leader in the Assembly, who is back in the city from Albany for a flying week-end trip.

Should Mr. Adler's suggestions materialize the Central Library will be situated at Court street and South avenue and will be a tall, rather narrow building in the scholastic Gothic style of architecture, of which the D. & H. building in Albany is one of the finest examples in the country.

"I can see many advantages in this plan," said Mr. Adler discussing the matter with a reporter for The Times-Union this morning. "There is first and foremost the fact that such a site would be central, probably as central as any site which could be picked in the city. It would face directly on the new street and the people of this city don't yet realize what a wonderful thoroughfare that new street is going to be.

"Facing on the river across the new boulevard the building would have a splendid outlook and plenty of light, all the more as the city's present plans of course include the widening of South avenue.

"There is no doubt that a beautiful building, a building which would be a credit to the city and to the citizens and a structure of architectural significance, could be put up on this site.

The scholastic Gothic style lends itself admirably to the tall narrow building which is becoming more and more essential in our crowded cities where there is not sufficient room for the Greek and Roman classical styles which demand great space for proper appreciation.

"I can see a great library building in this style, surmounted perhaps by a tower, the whole blending harmoniously to beautify one of the spots in the city which now is sadly in need of some beautification. It would be an ornament to what will probably become the city's finest down town street, and will have on one side at least, absolute freedom from the enforcement of other buildings. All this on a site which now belongs to the city.

"I put forward the idea for what it is worth and to stimulate general discussion of the subject among the people. The more they talk over the different plans which may be advanced the more interest they will take in seeing that the best possible plan is agreed upon eventually."

Mr. Adler declined to be quoted regarding his plan until the consent of Mayor Van Zandt had been obtained and when this was asked, Mr. Van Zandt said:

"Go ahead, go ahead, the more there is in the papers and in the conversation of the people about the central library, wherever it is situated, the better off we shall all be."



Gaylord Bros.  
Makers  
Syracuse, N. Y.

