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A City Historian's Holiday

BY BLAKE MCKELVEY

A sight-seeing tour of a dozen western cities may seem an unlikely source for illumination on Rochester's history, yet, as painters and photographers know, a relevant and interesting background often adds emphasis and significance to the foreground subject. Certainly an awareness of the contrasts and similarities among growing cities can give perspective and meaning to the study of any one community; and now that we are preparing to explore the details and probe the secrets of Rochester's recent history, it is time to take a look at some other towns that have had a striking growth during these decades.

With ample time and funds a more representative selection of cities could have been made, but this month-long holiday jaunt had to reach into new territory and be tied to a convenient railroad circuit. Thus, after brief stops at Cincinnati and St. Louis, both previously visited, we really began our exploratory tour at Kansas City, Missouri. Two or three days there, and again at Denver, and Los Angeles, with briefer stops en route at Colorado Springs, Canon City and of course the Grand Canyon, brought us on July the Fourth to San Francisco, which deserved more than the six days we could spare for that matchless metropolitan community. We couldn't reach all we had hoped to see in any one of these places, but Portland and Seattle also beckoned, and after two days in each and a hasty look at Victoria we entered Vancouver by boat for another two-day visit. Of course the travel agent had insisted on a pause at Lake Louise and Banff, which do qualify as superb resorts for tired urbanites, but we hastened on to Minneapolis the last major stop on our journey.

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I had a special reason for including Minneapolis in the trip. Those who have read my recent book, *Rochester, The Quest for Quality, 1890–1925* will recall that it was after a visit to this city in 1913 that Rowland B. Woodward, secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, warned his fellow townsmen on the Genesee to be more cautious in their claims of superior quality, for Rochester had a long way to go before it could match that model city. A few hours in Minneapolis quickly revealed much that could have impressed Woodward forty-odd years ago, and two days proved sufficient to discover that while it is today by no means an unscarred model, this twin-city's vitality and its community spirit are still vibrantly evident.

After devoting two decades to the study of Rochester's history, I could scarcely hope to master in two days the secrets of any of the cities we visited. I am not too confident of quick impressions or of bird's-eye views—too much depends on the condition of the weather, which fortunately was remarkably fair throughout our trip. But as a handshake and an informal chat provide a more intimate introduction than most letters of recommendation, so a visit, even if brief, has its advantage as a supplement to, though not as a substitute for, published records.

Further documentation is needed, however, for a reliable judgment, and in each town we made a deliberate effort not only to accumulate descriptive brochures, guides and maps, and to read the local journals and daily papers, but also to identify and secure the reports of civic research bureaus and institutes or societies engaged in community analysis. Perhaps the most illuminating discovery of our hasty survey was that while each city maintains its publicity bureau it also nurtures a band of trouble shooters. The latter have diverse names, practice varying techniques, and exert uneven influence, as we shall see, yet their character as well as their publications help both to differentiate the cities and to reveal their similarities.

We ended our journey with three major conclusions—first that there is little justification for the oft-heard complaint that all American cities, with one or two exceptions, are alike. We saw many striking contrasts, many marks of individuality and a wholesome spirit of rivalry, but we could not escape a second conclusion, that basically their problems are the same and that much can be learned for Rochester or for any other town by a pooling of the experiences of many cities in deal-

ing with such matters as internal and external traffic, civic finances, water and sewage, police and crime, public and private recreation, planning and housing, smoke and other causes of blight and decay. Finally we became convinced that a fuller appreciation of the achievements of other cities in educational and cultural fields would quicken the interest of all citizens in the work of their schools, libraries, orchestras, galleries and museums, and help to safeguard these and other urban temples from the current perils of inflation and popular indifference. Certainly the response we received from the many officials, research experts, resident friends and public guides interviewed in the course of our journey demonstrated a widespread agreement with these conclusions.

Sightseeing

Many spectacular or unusual sights will astound and delight an easterner on his first tour of the Far West. Most of the cities we visited are a size or two larger than Rochester, but it was nevertheless surprising to discover how systematically they have prepared to entertain strangers. Convenient city maps can be bought at every railroad station and airport, and most of the cities have busy tourist information centers. There or at our hotel we picked up free leaflets on the town and its environs and purchased at modest rates one or more historical and descriptive booklets featuring local highlights. Hotel porters and attendants at information booths in the depots and other public buildings seemed eager to answer questions and to help strangers enjoy their stay to the full.

The most dramatic and efficient information bureau we visited was the Hospitality Center at Denver. Located in an attractive ultramodern building, situated conveniently at a major intersection and overlooking the Civic Center, this headquarters of the Denver Convention and Visitors Bureau answered, according to its latest report, the questions of 417,000 persons during 1955, distributed over a million leaflets, and helped to make arrangements for 263 conventions which brought nearly 100,000 delegates to the "mile-high city." These and other aspects of its program required an outlay of $143,000 that year, but the community's appreciation apparently justified a budget of $170,000 for 1956.

Denver, like each of the cities visited, has its schedule of daily sight-seeing tours. We could not find time to take them all, and in several places old or new friends generously volunteered to show us the sights and to arrange trips of special interest. Where we did board the Gray Line buses or join an independent tour, we found the drivers, who doubled as guides, so well stocked with the details of local history and community lore that they generally welcomed inquiries even outside the scope of their scripts. As one driver in Portland remarked, they had to know the city from stem to stern in order to answer the barrage of questions thrown at them by a rushing flood of tourists in summer and by school children throughout the winter season.

These city tours provided a fairly good introduction to each community. Of course they highlighted its more attractive features, but that service itself helped to identify the town's peculiar characteristics. Thus, none of the western city tours showed us anything to compare with the charming Lytle Park district in Cincinnati which reminded one of Beacon Hill in Boston and more distantly of Rochester's own Third Ward now sadly despoiled by progress. None of the western cities is old enough to have nurtured such a mellow Georgian and Classical-revival district, and while San Francisco and Los Angeles can show some aging Spanish missions, they are generally isolated structures far from the busy core of the modern city. Equally unique was the boat tour of Seattle's salt and fresh water harbors and their linking canal; so also the walking tour of San Francisco's Chinatown, and the very dissimilar park tours in Vancouver and Minneapolis.

Oriented by such city tours, we found it relatively easy to strike out with the aid of a map or an interested friend on explorations of our own. Of course we quickly became conscious of new methods of handling traffic. One-way streets predominated in the downtown districts of all these cities, 62 miles of them in Kansas City. Pedestrian light signals, sometimes equipped with a bell gong, regulated the stream of shoppers who in many places were confined to narrower sidewalks than Rochester's Main Street affords.

In Denver we first encountered the scramble system which holds all foot crossings until the motor traffic is stopped, permitting pedestrians to cross a busy corner in any and all directions. The procedure seemed to work best at one-way street intersections, where the stream of cars enjoyed free turning opportunities that speeded their flow,

while pedestrians making diagonal crossings also gained a bonus. It worked best at complicated crossings, where several streets intersected, and might merit a tryout at the Twelve Corners. We don't presume to possess expert judgment on such technical matters, but as walkers in strange cities we were agreeably impressed to see how the right of way of the pedestrian was respected in Los Angeles whenever he stepped out within the white lines to cross a major boulevard. A visitor of several years ago reported a different situation, but apparently a reform has been effected. There, and in San Francisco, and at one or two of the other cities, the down town shopper seemed to enjoy a measure of prestige and respect long since lost in Rochester. Was it, we wondered, due to the fact that as tourist centers they have adopted company manners which proved so agreeable that they have become permanent!

A consciousness of the presence of visitors and arrangements for their convenience appeared on every side, often in novel forms. Perhaps the most amusing illustration was the "sidewalk superintendent's office," equipped with a long bench and protected by a heavy screen as well as a secure roof, which overlooked a vast pit where a new skyscraper is about to arise in the heart of downtown Denver. That title over the door invited investigation, and we found a score of elderly men and boys comfortably supervising the work of several cranes while one young man inspected the architect's drawing of the projected structure tacked on the wall. That accommodation was unique, though numerous screened windows or peep holes appeared in the high wooden fences built around the many similar construction projects we saw in the downtown districts of these cities.

Possibly the fact that several of these towns are tourist centers also helps to explain the number and variety of their hotels, motels and inns, and the new ones everywhere under construction. That the service of travelers was big business became evident as we stepped down from our train in any of their stations. Not only were vast depots, large enough to dwarf the oversize Rochester station, thronging with passengers in Kansas City and at several of the other cities, but their quick lunch and sumptuous dining rooms and their commercial stands enjoyed a thriving trade, proving perhaps that the railroads are still in business in the Great West.

It soon became evident, as we tramped or taxied about, that these western cities present a sharp contrast to Rochester in several important

respects. Each of them is twenty-five, fifty or more years younger than Rochester, and yet all are larger both in area and in population, and several have attained major metropolitan status. Their youth is revealed in the absence of ancient districts comparable to our Front Street, finished almost as it stands today before the first crude huts arose in most of these towns. Their vigorous growth during the last half century is manifest by the towering hotels and stores that crowd their downtown sections. The business district in every instance is much larger than that of Rochester, and disproportionately so, for each serves as the commercial center of a vast hinterland many times the size of the Genesee country.

These, in other words, are metropolitan centers where, in contrast with Rochester, commerce overshadows industry. Three of them, San Francisco, Minneapolis and Kansas City, have Federal Reserve Banks, and all the others serve as district headquarters and enjoy financial hegemony over vast areas. Only Denver ranks as a state capital, but most of the others also have impressive state and federal buildings in their midst, and five of these cities encompass expansive state universities. Numerous insurance headquarters, mercantile exchanges and, on the coast, maritime districts help to fill huge business areas that spread over a grid of parallel and intersecting streets which actively vie for preference.

The number of their competing arteries no doubt helps to explain the readiness with which these cities have introduced one-way traffic and thus speeded the flow of cars. Curb parking, at least on one side, is still evident on many of their downtown blocks, but each city has two or more modern ramp garages. Several of their downtown squares, now packed solidly with cars, are scheduled for redevelopment with above- or under-ground ramp garages, and at least three of the latter are now in service, notably Union Square in San Francisco.

These are problems no city can escape, and judging from the heated discussions of traffic, of parking and business-district planning, of freeway routes and priorities, in their daily papers, no one of these cities has yet found a solution. None has evolved as predominent a Main Street as Rochester, or as concentrated a retail district, but all are apparently concerned over the centrifugal movement of trade to outlying shopping centers. Campaigns for the redevelopment of the central business district are currently under discussion in Portland and

Los Angeles as well as in Rochester, and such work is actively in progress at Denver, Vancouver and Minneapolis. Indeed the window of our hotel room in Vancouver commanded a view of the steel frame structures of five huge new business blocks and the enclosed pit for a modern new library. That city, incidentally, is speeding forward with the development of a spacious business district several blocks distant from its older and more congested center—a movement similar to, if more dramatic than, that which occurred in Rochester some decades ago when the retail center shifted eastward on Main Street.

Many new shopping centers have sprung up on the outskirts of each of these cities. One of the most successful, the Country Club Plaza in Kansas City, said ot be the first of its kind, was erected in a modified Spanish design as the hub of a high class residential promotion which has achieved unusual distinction and become an integral part of the expanding city. Though less closely controlled, several of the suburban shopping centers we saw south of San Francisco have an architectural unity and grace that fits agreeably into the surrounding tract developments. The generous use of dwarf trees, shrubs, and flower gardens to screen off and divide up the parking lots at some of the West Coast shopping centers avoids the effect so often apparent in the East of a string of five-and-dime resort counters bordering a sea of cars. Perhaps town boards in Monroe County should determine whether the plans of proposed new shopping centers meet the standards of a desirable community hub before granting their approval.

The explosive growth of several of these western cities reminds one more of Einstein's expanding universe than of any earlier urban trend. The suburbs seem to be moving out almost as rapidly as the cars racing on the new freeways. Los Angeles is of course exceptional and encompasses within its municipal bounds more than two thirds the acreage of Monroe County; but even that is not sufficient, and its adjoining suburbs string out as far as Mount Morris and beyond. We got a graphic version of its distances when we hired a taxi from our outer city hotel to the station and paid a bill steep enough to ride in to Rochester from Brockport. Just as you *hear* the throbbing growth in the downtown districts, where riveters and compressed air drills maintain a deafening barrage, so in the suburbs you *see* the expansion as bulldozers scoop out a row of trees in a citrus orchard to make way for the trucks hauling in lumber for the one story tract houses that

quickly arise amidst the ripening oranges along this newly opened suburban lane. The orchard you drive by one day appears a few days later to have sprouted telephone poles and bristles a few weeks later with television antenna.

It soon became apparent, even from a car window, that many of these tracts have been more carefully planned than back home. We were, however, pleased to learn that the American Institute of Architects, meeting in Los Angeles a few weeks before our arrival there, had awarded its 1956 Gold Medal to Rochester-born Clarence Stein for his outstanding contributions to neighborhood planning, citing specifically one of his tracts in Southern California. On inquiring further into the matter we were excited to learn that Mr. Stein gives large credit for his principles, as applied at Radburn, New Jersey, and elsewhere, to Clarence A. Perry, father of the neighborhood-unit plan, who in turn gave as his inspiration the social centers he visited at Rochester forty-odd years ago! Perhaps the Rochester Home Builders Association should look more deeply into local history for their inspiration.*

It is impossible, without an invitation indoors, to get a very clear idea of the suburban dwellings hidden amidst California's fruit trees. Even where the tracts have been erected on cleared land, the high, red-cedar stake or corral fences that enclose each yard screen their patios and swimming pools from view. Fortunately several resident friends gave us a warm introduction to the agreeable domesticity enjoyed within these blossom-draped enclosures. We sensed an isolation from neighborhood associations that contrasted sharply with the older San Francisco whose more closely packed houses, generally unshaded by trees, provided a gleaming white covering for its rugged hills.

Both of these residential patterns disappeared as we traveled north to find the dwellings in Portland and at each subsequent stop more reminiscent of comparable districts in Rochester, with open yards, shade trees, and two-story houses predominating. Modern and split-level styles outnumbered both the Spanish and the Federal and cottage types in their newer subdivisions, but the preference for single free-standing houses was evident everywhere on our trip. Even in metropolitan Los Angeles the apartment houses that lined Rochester Street (!) were two-

*Two books of interest in this connection are Clarence S. Stein, *Toward New Towns for America* (Liverpool, 1951), and Clarence A. Perry, *Housing for the Machine Age* (N. Y., 1939), especially pp. 205–208.

story row houses so artfully laid out that each had a private entrance carefully differentiated and screened from its neighbor.

Clearly the architectural tastes of the new West display more modern trends in both commercial and residential construction than prevail in Rochester. Even the design of the new sales headquarters planned by Eastman Kodak for San Francisco, which was released to the press during our stay there, is more strikingly modern than that of its home-town plants. But if we saw no "ye old New England bankies" west of the Mississippi, we did see a scattering of "ye old Spanish" imitations. Fortunately the vigorous work of the Neutras, Beckets, Alexanders and Luckmans, with varied migrants from the East, has given a fresh new vitality to the urban scene, adding excitement to a drive along some Los Angeles boulevards and to a downtown stroll in Denver, Seattle, Vancouver and Minneapolis. The spacious but formal civic centers, erected some decades ago in San Francisco, Denver and Kansas City, still retain their majesty, but the designs we saw in the other cities for projected or improved civic centers are, like that for Rochester, more modern in treatment, and, if we may judge from the clean bold effect of the recently completed Bureau of Safety Building in Seattle, they will open new vistas on the twentieth century city.

A major tourist interest focuses on the restaurants, and here too we found the facilities both ample and exciting. Although our tastes are not sufficiently cultivated to qualify us as gourmets, we were most grateful to the friends who steered us through San Francisco's Fisherman's Wharf and Chinatown and at Denver into the Buckhorn Lodge where the displays, reminiscent of Buffalo Bill, pleased this Rochesterian as much as its juicy steaks. At these and several other points on our journey we rediscovered the old truth, almost forgotten in Rochester, that an authentic atmosphere can add much to a good meal.

But if we sometimes mused sadly on the old town's limitations, we perked up on other occasions when evidences of its far flung enterprise confronted us. Of course practically everybody was snapping photographs right and left, and Kodak distributors greeted us everywhere. All our hotels had Cutler mail chutes; every scenic promontory was equipped with two or more Bausch and Lomb coin telescopes; and we could often speculate on the extent to which Taylor instruments or some other Rochester products were silently serving our comfort, but imagine our delight on a stroll around Union Square in front of

the St. Francis in San Francisco to see featured in its elegant shop windows the products of Fashion Park, Hickey-Freeman and Michaels, Stern. We could only conclude that, if its Genesee mercantile hinterland is restricted, Rochester's industrial outlets are limited only by its enterprise.

Of course we exclaimed, like most tourists, at the sight of many unusual regional features: the adobe houses our train raced by in the Southwest; the oil derricks scattered profusely through the outskirts and even into residential and business districts of some southern California towns; the lofty palm trees lining the streets of the Southwest where citrus orchards often invaded the back yards and an incredible profusion of semi-tropical flowers held sway; the irrigation system that kept lawns, gardens and vast commercial plantations green by a carefully scheduled operation of sprinklers or ditches; the impressive background of mountains that dominated every urban vista on our trip from Denver to Vancouver. Some of these thrills, like the mountains, are timeless, but others, such as the cable cars of San Francisco, are already threatened, we learned, with extinction. Some features especially exciting to tourists, such as the almost fifty per cent grades in several San Francisco streets, must hold less attraction to residents, and despite the courtesy with which they welcome visitors, it soon became evident that many of the inhabitants jealously regard their communities as residential rather than commercial or tourist centers.

Local Trouble Shooters

Although the prevailing social atmosphere (we encountered no smog) seemed carefree, with manners as casual as the colorful street garb, and the spirit generally hedonistic, the daily press was sufficiently alarmed by pressing urban problems at each successive stop on our journey to prompt us to look behind the normal tourist facade for possible fissures in this vacationer's paradise. Two or three days were never sufficient for such researches, but they did enable us to identify a number of active local groups concerned over community problems and to interview several executives and research directors whose generous donation of published or mimeographed reports of key investigations and hearings has given us a clearer view of the regenerative energies stirring in these communities.

It would have been interesting to probe the sources of economic vitality in these cities, but an attempt to determine why each town has reached its present stature within the brief period of its history would require years of painstaking research, and only in one place, Kansas City, did we find such a project underway. We did soon discover that all have active Chambers of Commerce or Boards of Trade and that some have metropolitan boards earnestly engaged in the promotion of the entire region. We found, in addition, that Kansas City has a Midwest Research Institute devoted to industrial research of interest to area firms. A somewhat similar venture, known as the Economic Research Council of Denver, failed to enlist sufficient support and suspended after two years. We did not attempt to identify or evaluate the several economic and industrial research laboratories maintained by individual firms or associated companies in these cities, though such a survey would prove instructive.

While bypassing a search for the sources of economic and population growth, we could not help observing some of the concomitants of size among these cities. Other factors are no doubt involved, but the largest cities seemed to lack the unity of purpose evident in those of more modest girth. Thus in the journalistic field, the *Kansas City Star* and the *Oregonian* appeared, if we may judge from a brief sample, to be the most alert to community wellbeing. At least one each of the Denver, Vancouver, Seattle and Minneapolis dailies compared more favorably with these two papers than did any we saw in San Francisco or Los Angeles, the two metropolitan giants, where the pressure for sensational copy seemed predominant. Incidentally, both Rochester papers stand up fairly well even to the two leaders mentioned above.

All of these cities have the customary municipal agencies, such as planning boards, housing authorities, redevelopment commissions, welfare departments and the like. Several have special bodies of particular interest, notably the public transit authorities in San Francisco and Seattle. Five of the cities, like Rochester, have recently strengthened their housing codes and are pressing forward with redevelopment operations. Four of them—Kansas City, Denver, Los Angeles and Minneapolis—have commissions on human relations, and at least two have public recreation advisory boards. Each of the West Coast cities has established one or more special metropolitan district authorities to develop its port or bridges, assure adequate water supply or sewage

disposal, or combat air pollution; the Twin Cities also have two such authorities. Kansas City has the only city manager among the major cities, but Minneapolis is debating that form, and several large suburbs already have it, while the San Francisco mayor appoints and shares authority with a Chief Administrator. All the others, except Minneapolis, have the strong mayor-council system, and their charters call for non-partisan elections.

That last provision has helped to foster the growth of more or less influential municipal or citizen's leagues in several of these cities. We could not reach them all but from various sources have gleaned something concerning their activities. Apparently none of them attempts to play the part of a people's party, as in Cincinnati, but all review and publicize the qualifications of candidates indorsed by petition or by other local groups. The two league headquarters we visited are busy hives of civic activity where fulltime staff members conduct a program backed by several thousand dues paying league members.

The Municipal League of Seattle dates from 1910, succeeding an abortive movement in the nineties, but its modern program began with a reorganization in 1938 when a professional staff, now twelve in number, was engaged to launch a vigorous schedule of services. A twelve-year report issued this past June shows a growth to nearly 5000 members and lists thirty-two local accomplishments in addition to fourteen legislative actions which it has successfully backed. During these years its sixteen regular and special committees held over 1900 sessions and adopted 450 recommendations designed to improve public services, or to save public funds, or to promote citizen education on public issues. Two recent reports on "Metropolitan Seattle, The Shape We're In" and "The Shape of Things to Come" probe deeply into the area's problems and come up with the recommendation that a representative metropolitan government be established with responsibility for eight specific functions, such as planning, water supply, sewage and garbage disposal, public health, arterial roads, mass transportation and parks.

The much younger Citizens League in Minneapolis, organized in 1952, has undertaken a similar program of civic study and democratic action. Like the Seattle League, it publishes a weekly *News Bulletin* in which the activities of its twenty committees are reported and the key issues of the day discussed. It, too, distributes their full reports when occasion warrants, such as that issued last January recommending

a more effective organization of the city planning functions now scattered among two or more commissions. Other committee reports during the four years have, as in Seattle, reviewed the candidates, examined budgets, studied highway, park, hospital, police, school and library needs, and recommended metropolitan cooperation in various fields. Special attention has been devoted to taxation and budgetary analysis, but as in the other cities the problem of housing control has commanded a hearing, even in model Minneapolis, and its league has not dodged the responsibility.

Fortunately none of these leagues stands alone in civic study and action; indeed some of the other citizen bodies take an even broader approach to community problems. Active Leagues of Women Voters exist in most of these cities and often seize the lead, we learned, in municipal reform. That has been notably the case in Los Angeles where the ladies, who greatly outnumber the men, have assumed large citizen responsibilities. The Bureau of Municipal Research in that city and the San Francisco Bureau of Government Research conduct civic studies, as do similar bodies associated with the universities of Washington and Oregon, and all of these collaborate in annual institutes conducted by their state leagues and join with the other Pacific Coast leagues in support of the monthly periodical, *Western City*. Of course the civic committees of all chambers of commerce and boards of trade make carefully weighed recommendations on many issues, and the urban labor councils have increasingly taken a stand on broad civic questions in West Coast cities. Councils of Social Agencies or still broader Community Councils endeavor, as in Rochester, to coordinate the welfare services. Numerous specialized groups are interested in specific problems, such as the strong Urban League and N.A.A.C.P. chapters in each city, and those of the National Congress of Christians and Jews. Other public affairs clubs conduct lively programs that often deal with community issues.

The research directors of the two community welfare councils I visited were more than willing to chat with a visitor from Rochester, for its Council of Social Agencies is widely respected. Indeed, as I sat a few moments in the outer offices awaiting my appointments, the buzz of typewriters pounding out reports and the cheery voice of the girl at the switchboard calling busy executives to confirm their reservations for an important board luncheon made me feel quite at home. I still

felt at home after a half hour's discussion of mutual community problems with the welfare council's research director in Portland, and again at Minneapolis. The latter city, like Rochester, is in the process of reevaluating the work of its neighborhood settlements, and the mimeographed reports of three such agencies throw much light on our problems as well as on that community. The internal growth of Minneapolis and its official plans for the future will require the relocation of some of these neighborhood centers, while the city's increased assumption of recreational functions is redirecting the welfare agency's effort. Meanwhile, a three-year study of juvenile delinquency has cleared the air of many snap judgments and strengthened an earlier campaign for the construction of a model Juvenile Center where juvenile court cases may be detained and their families interviewed and counseled free from the police court atmosphere and with psychiatric as well as disciplinary treatment at hand. The will to experiment with new techniques, evident in this institution, appears also in a South Central Youth Project undertaken by detached workers, in a review of the recreational needs of elder citizens, and another of the community's new minority, the American Indian. Rochester can match each of these problems and some of these approaches, and a report on Danforth House might prove of interest in Minneapolis, but both cities will profit by a fuller knowledge of success elsewhere.

The most vigorous and democratic local public affairs group that I encountered was the City Club of Portland. Organized in 1915 on the pattern of the Chicago, Cleveland, and New York city clubs (rather than as a weekly forum similar to that Rochester established a few seasons earlier), the "Rose City" club has continued over the years to probe all the civic questions that have concerned the municipal leagues and many social welfare problems as well. Its weekly forum speakers at Friday lunches have, as in Rochester, followed the broader trends of public affairs into national and international subjects, but the Portland club's major emphasis has continued to focus on the work of its research committees. Relying more completely than the municipal leagues on the citizen members of its committees, the reports have been less numerous but, if we may judge from the half dozen given us, they have been no less thorough and enlightening. Moreover the reports, when adjudged sufficiently exhaustive by the Board of Governors, are printed in the weekly *City Club Bulletin* and submitted to the membership for

its vote of approval or disapproval on the recommendations before the club's stand is announced to the public. This democratic procedure has given additional weight to some probing studies and thoughtful recommendations regarding juvenile delinquency in Portland, the rights and handicaps of the Negro in that city, the town's unenviable divorce record, as well as milk control and other civic questions. It is heartening to learn that a city only slightly larger than Rochester, and in many ways the most comparable to it, has mustered over one thousand men as dues paying members of such a club whose stated purpose is "to inform its members and the community in public matters and to arouse in them a realization of the obligations of citizenship."

The somewhat similar Town Hall in Los Angeles and the older Commonwealth Club in San Francisco devote more attention to state and national questions, but some of their committees concentrate on local urban problems, and their reports, likewise submitted to a vote, help to foster an intelligent policy-making leadership. Indeed, a major service of these metropolitan clubs is to provide "a medium for bringing together the heads and staff members of local college departments and the business, professional, labor and governmental people in the community." The caliber of its committees and their standards of objectivity have enabled Town Hall to produce high level reports on such questions as "The Need for Urban Redevelopment Legislation in California" (1944), "The Traffic and Transit Problem of the Los Angeles Metropolitan Area" (1954). The Commonwealth Club has issued similarly searching reports on smoke control, crime and delinquency, labor relations and the like. Both clubs have attracted well over a thousand dues paying members annually in recent years.

Probing as some of these citizen committee reports are, they do not stand alone, for research bureaus attached to resident universities or operating independently have also studied urban problems in several of these cities. The Bureau of Governmental Research of the University of California in Los Angeles has produced a score of studies on that restless community, while similar governmental research bureaus in Berkeley and at Washington University in Seattle have likewise focused their analytical talents on urban problems. We did not find time to visit all of these bureaus, or their counterparts at the University of Oregon and the University of Minnesota, but we did have a most profitable interview with the director of the School of Social Work at

the University of British Columbia. His first local report, "Rebuilding a Community" (1950), not only subjected Vancouver's principal blighted area to an intensive examination, with a calculation of the social and fiscal costs of inaction and continued decay, but also presented a detailed and inspiring plan for its reconstruction. While the bold proposal was not adopted in its entirety, we found on inspection that a portion of the area had already been redeveloped on a wholesome pattern. It was reassuring to see that a city as delightfully situated, and with as many happy features as Vancouver possesses, was not unmindful of the necessity for structural renewal in its older quarters.

In addition to these various leagues and bureaus, we encountered two foundations interested in local urban questions. The John Randolph Haynes and Dora Haynes Foundation in Los Angeles, established in 1926 to promote research and education "for the well-being of mankind," has financed or supported numerous studies on the local level as well as others of a broader scope. Its publications in pamphlet or book form already exceed three score and include exhaustive studies of "Our Needy Aged," or "Metropolitan Los Angeles: A Study in Integration" in sixteen volumes, one of which tells "How the Cities Grew," a statistical and legislative study of "the etiology of metropolitan government." Independent scholars and others attached to struggling bureaus that lack publication funds often receive Haynes assistance in bringing their researches to a suitable conclusion. Numerous other foundations on the West Coast and elsewhere grant similar aid in the form of scholarships, but none, as far as we have discovered, assumes the responsibility shouldered by the Kansas City Association of Trusts and Foundations founded in January, 1949, by the trustees of four funds dedicated to that community's welfare.

The first important action of the Kansas City Association of Trusts was to create an independent social and cultural research agency known as Community Studies, Inc. Its staff, which soon included sixteen professional workers, has developed numerous cooperative relationships with several universities in the region and with other research and planning agencies. More than one hundred major and minor studies have been completed, some at the request of local officials or welfare groups, others through the initiative of the staff. The list of its mimeographed and published reports provides an illuminating commentary on the mid-

twentieth century city. Under "public health and hospitals" appear studies of alcoholism, the chronically ill, the rehabilitation of the handicapped, the uses of psychiatric treatment, and similar titles; under "welfare agencies" appear numerous evaluation studies of specific agencies and of child welfare programs. Investigations of the economic and civic aspects of various trends or proposals, of the usefulness and the shortcomings of existing recreational and cultural facilities, as well as opinion surveys and analyses of population trends, reveal the breadth of its researches. But the trustees of this unique institute, recognizing that present day urban problems do not float nebulously over a static three-dimensional city, have also joined with the Committee on Human Development of the University of Chicago to launch a study of the social and cultural history of Kansas City with the hope that an exploration in depth may uncover the roots of contemporary difficulties or at least afford perspective for social planners. If their work maintains the standards set in the first report on "The Politics of Reform: Kansas City's Municipal Government: 1925–1950" by A. T. Brown, it will make a notable contribution to the understanding of city growth. It was of course gratifying to discover that the historical staff looked to Rochester as one of the very few cities that have undertaken a scholarly study of their history.

Cultural Comparisons

If youth has its advantages in some fields, presenting a smaller heritage of antiquated traditions and blighted districts, it suffers deficiencies elsewhere, since time is required to develop community support for many cultural institutions. Thus the youthful cities visited on our western tour, despite their larger size, sometimes fell short of Rochester's provisions in the latter field. We made no effort to appraise the relative merits of the various institutions—that was far beyond our competence—but we did note their dates and observe evidence of local pride in or dissatisfaction with their cultural facilities, and we can report several promising efforts at local improvement.

Of course San Francisco, the "Athens of the West," long ago attained an enviable leadership in cultural fields. Its numerous galleries and museums, its opera house, birthplace of the United Nations, even its Cow Palace, no longer require praise from eastern visitors. It is nevertheless interesting to note that the Academy of Science Museum

in Golden Gate Park, described, somewhat dubiously, as the oldest existing museum of science in the world, though first organized in 1853 dates its permanent collection from the mid-eighties when a natural science cabinet, purchased from Professor Henry A. Ward of Rochester for $16,000, provided the incentive for the erection of a museum building given by Mark Hopkins. Although that structure and the collection were largely destroyed in the earthquake, Ward's Natural Science Establishment shipped a new and enlarged cabinet by boat to replace it a few months later. It was also interesting, on our visit to its still more recent and imposing edifice, to find featured in a prominent alcove an exhibit depicting the development of photography prepared with the aid of the George Eastman House of Photography. However the relationship has been reciprocal, for when Edward D. Putnam was struggling in 1914 to organize the recently created Rochester Museum of Science he studied with great care the descriptions of the gifts and arrangements of the newly opened De Young Museum of San Francisco.

The art museums of San Francisco and its suburbs (several of them, like some of the other West Coast galleries, supported by public funds) provide active tourist attractions as well as a vital stimulus to local art students and citizens generally. An Art Commission in that metropolis—as in Los Angeles, Denver and Kansas City—passes on all buildings and works of art erected on city or county property and supervises all public expenditures for art or music within the county. The latter item includes maintenance for the San Francisco Opera House, the first one in America to be erected by a municipality. If we can judge by the exhibits we saw, particularly at the San Francisco Museum of Art in the War Memorial Building overlooking the Civic Center, and by the general excitement surrounding that and other galleries in the metropolitan area, the effects of public support have not been stifling, in fact, quite the reverse.

San Francisco's achievements have long been an embarrassment to other West Coast cities, but already several of them have accepted the challenge. Portland was the first to awake to its urban responsibilities, as the formation of its Art Association in 1892 indicated. Although it had to be content for several years with the exhibit facilities afforded by the public library, it acquired a building of its own in 1905 (several years before the Rochester gallery was opened) and remodeled

the first wing of its present building in 1932, a year before the younger Seattle Art Museum, likewise housed for several years in the library, opened its own building. The Los Angeles County Museum, which we did not see, dates from 1911, and all the major universities in these Pacific Coast cities have art galleries as adjuncts to their art schools or art departments. One unusual project we found at Seattle was a catalogue of all murals, sculpture, and other works of art on permanent public view in that city—a list published by the weekly *Argus* and on display at the Gallery of the University of Washington.

All of the West Coast cities seem responsive to new modern trends in art, but perhaps the most vociferous is Vancouver where the recently (1951) remodeled art gallery (first erected in 1931) provides a strikingly modern setting for the Emily Carr collection of her British Columbia paintings and drawings, and for other selections from its permanent collection, as well as for visiting shows, notably the British Council exhibition of sculpture and drawings by Henry Moore. That gallery, and the Vancouver School of Art, as well as the art department at the University of British Columbia with its small Fine Arts Gallery, have helped to stimulate a new creative urge in the Northwest, as the outdoor sculpture exhibit we visited on the university campus this past summer revealed. Each of the West Coast galleries has its ties with tradition—the Emily Carr collection so reminiscent of Indian motifs in Vancouver, the Mary Ladd collection of Japanese prints in Portland, and the somewhat comparable Fuller collection of Asiatic art at Seattle, not to mention the many permanent holdings in Los Angeles and especially San Francisco; but all of these galleries and cities display a throbbing interest in the abstract tendencies of the contemporary painters who seem to thrive on the Pacific Coast.

Although we did not see the galleries in Minneapolis or Kansas City, their reputations are well known and manifest an increased concern in these cities during recent decades for cultural values. The Minneapolis Institute of Art, organized in 1892, completed its building in 1915 and has since amassed a valuable permanent collection, while the Walker Art Center in the same city has converted a private collection dating back to 1879 into the nucleus for a modern art gallery of great vitality. The William Rockwell Nelson Gallery of Art, given to Kansas City in 1926 and opened seven years later, handsomely equipped the city with facilities and opportunities sought by various

art groups for over half a century. The struggles of those older art clubs and institutes, there and also in Denver, had been anticipated in Rochester two decades earlier, but the gift by Mrs. James Sibley Watson of a memorial gallery in 1912 had fortunately provided a handsome building. The Denver Artists Club of 1893 secured quarters in the public library in 1917 and finally saw the creation of the Denver Art Museum as a public institution in 1923. A municipal appropriation of $120,000 maintains this attractive gallery overlooking the Civic Center.

Strange to relate, all of these younger cities moved more promptly than Rochester in the establishment of their public libraries. As a result, several of their central libraries now appear somewhat antiquated. Some have long since become inadequate for these expanding towns. Denver in fact has already built a modern new library building facing its Civic Center. Unfortunately a few unfinished details delayed its opening, and we did not get an opportunity to look inside, but if the provisions there compare with those we saw in the stunning new library at Cincinnati, the reading public in Denver is due for a treat. Both Vancouver and Minneapolis have outgrown their libraries, though only the former has broken ground for a new building; Kansas City likewise faces that need which even the construction of fine new branches, as in several other cities, cannot long postpone.

As the relatively young Rochester library compares favorably with the public libraries in most of these cities, so its museums can hold their own with most of those we visited during the journey. The San Francisco museums are possible exceptions, though its metropolitan proportions and those of Los Angeles call for much more significant new developments in this field than we saw. Portland has a most interesting Forestry Building, the "largest log cabin in the world," erected by the state for its exhibits at the Lewis and Clark Exposition in 1905, which the city park department maintains to advantage; Denver has a Natural History Museum toward which the city contributed $139,000 last year, but we unfortunately did not reach it. Only in Seattle did we find a modern museum maintained by the local historical society, though several old mansions housing miscellaneous collections serve that function imperfectly elsewhere. And only on our occasional forays into the hinterland did we see exciting restorations, such as the lovely mis-

sion at Carmel which dates back to 1770, and the pioneer's museum at Cripple Creek, Colorado.

Aside from these the municipal and private museums were disappointing. Community Studies has recommended a new building and more substantial support for the struggling Municipal Museum in Kansas City. Both Minneapolis and Vancouver are considering the establishment of suitable historical museums in connection with other plans for their centennials, though no decision has yet been announced. An accumulation of records, private papers and local artifacts, by the City Archivist in the latter and by the volunteer director of the Hennepin County Historical Society in the former, may hasten such action. The attractive and informative centennial booklets published there this year recall those of Rochester in 1934 except that the one issued by the Chamber of Commerce in Minneapolis contained a history of its labor organizations too.

Each of these cities, like Rochester, has nurtured a succession of choral societies and community orchestras, but only the three metropolitan centers that now exceed a million inhabitants have been able to maintain professional symphony orchestras over a long period of years. We did not have an opportunity to hear any of them during our trip, but the records show that the Minneapolis orchestra, the oldest and an occasional visitor to Rochester, dates from 1903 and traces its antecedents back another decade. The San Francisco orchestra, which dates from 1911, also had its local predecessor in the mid-nineties, and the Los Angeles orchestra of 1919 its forerunner in the late nineties, as Rochester's Philharmonic of 1923 had in the eighties and again after 1900.

Two more of the cities we visited have maintained major orchestras during the last two decades, and each of the others has a full orchestra too, although their schedules are somewhat limited. Kansas City had its early music schools and singing societies, like other growing towns, but it was not until the city's cultural interests were aroused by the establishment of its art gallery and university, that a Philharmonic Orchestra was permanently organized in 1932. Denver got its Symphony Orchestra two years later, and each presents sixty or more concerts in the city's municipal auditorium. A Portland Symphony Orchestra, first organized in 1918, and the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra of 1928 are forced to operate on less ample budgets and present fewer concerts, while Seattle's

Pacific Northwest Symphony limits its schedule to eighteen performances. All but three of these cities have municipal auditoriums, and plans for their construction are under consideration in Seattle and Vancouver, with prospects for an early start in the latter, while Minneapolis uses the Memorial Auditorium at the university.

Although the San Francsico Opera Company is one of the few major companies to survive the pinch of inflation in recent years, Los Angeles has at last shouldered its responsibility as a leading metropoolis and organized the National Opera Association to maintain the new Pacific Opera Company. A Civic Light Opera Association there, and the summer programs we just missed in Kansas City, Minneapolis, and elsewhere, patterned after the pioneers in this field, Cincinnati and St. Louis, reminded us of Rochester's own more modest Opera Under the Stars series which we unfortunately had to skip this summer.

Each of the cities we visited has one or more colleges or universities within its limits, and several of these are major institutions, in quality as well as size. Their faculties not only help to man several research bureaus and public affairs groups, as we have seen, but also take an active part in programs of adult education of special interest to their fellow residents. The universities, libraries, public schools and varied other institutions generally conduct these programs independently, but in Denver we found a most efficient Adult Education Council operating, with a paid staff and numerous committees, as a promotional and coordinating agency. Its senior citizen conferences, its speaker training institutes, speakers bureau, film council, and monthly calendar of the city's educational activities reveal the scope of the council's work. Its list of 93 member organizations provides an illuminating review of the variety of intellectual institutions that help to make up a modern urban center.

We could of course have spent many more days in each city visiting only a small fraction of its specialized cultural institutions, but we had to limit our survey here as in the civic and economic fields. And as tourists we got only fleeting glimpses of the recreational activities in each city. All except Vancouver have large sports arenas or convention halls, local versions of the Cow Palace; and Vancouver, which still has its Exhibition Park, is debating the proper location for a modern convention hall similar to Rochester's War Memorial. Each city has its professional baseball park. We caught some of the excitement in

Kansas City over its newly acquired major league ball club, and we could not miss the intensity of the demand in Minneapolis that its claims to such a distinction, already held by rival Milwaukee, be speedily granted. In the meantime Minneapolis was preparing to enjoy its Aquatennial to the full, and the city inaugurated its centennial celebration with a parade of trucks, each bearing a bathing beauty on its hood. That display was striking, to say the least, and those scheduled to follow during the next two weeks promised to be interesting, though no more so than the accordian contest we had witnessed at one Minneapolis playground the day before. (Rochester, we have since learned, has a similar contest, and matches many of the other features we have noted in these cities, but not the checkers tournament we saw in Vancouver, played on large twenty-foot square cement slabs in its beautiful Stanley Park.) We would have been glad to tarry longer in the modern Flour City to help celebrate its 100th birthday, but the end of our vacation was in sight and we had to hasten back to the history of Rochester.

As we reviewed our trip during the daylight ride down the upper Mississippi Valley and across the rolling terrain of Wisconsin to Milwaukee and south to Chicago, and then by sleeper over the more familiar territory to Rochester, we realized that many of our observations had been too hasty, that most of our comparisons were superficial, and our analogies tenuous. Perhaps we had tried to see too much, and yet many important phases of these cities had no doubt completely escaped us. We recalled one stimulating discussion with a scholar who had spent several years plotting the geology of San Francisco and our determination at its conclusion to gather some evidence in order to compare the geologic settings of our several cities—but time had not permitted. All we had were a few dangling generalities, plus a suitcase full of reports to be examined later, and yet somehow, as we rode into Rochester, its outline and features seemed to stand out in sharper detail than we had expected. Our only regret at the time was that we were viewing it from the train windows, but then we recalled that the railroad's blighted approach had provided our first view of the other cities, too, and we determined to give the old town a fairer chance to prove itself. We were in fact very glad to be home.