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Rochester's Metropolitan Prospects in Historical Perspective

By BLAKE MCKELVEY

Rochester's resurgent growth, with its many insistent problems, has focused attention on the city's prospects for future expansion. One result has been a more intensive study of the Genesee Country's latent potentialities. Arch Merrill in the *Democrat* has long been probing the region's lore, but last winter this new interest inspired Bill Ringle's articles in the ~~Times-Union~~ ^{D.C.} on "The Towns of Monroe County." Still more to the point was Calvin Mayne's earlier series in that paper on "Suburbia," which won a well-deserved award from the National Association of Home Builders. His more recent series on nine neighboring counties also presented some of the wider ramifications of the city's Genesee hinterland. And now Stephen Hammer has written his instructive pieces in the *Democrat* on some civic features of the towns. Breney's

Indeed the Local History Division in the Public Library has in its files several fat folders of articles and editorials published during the last decade on various aspects of Rochester's metropolitan growing pains. One of them bulges with clippings on the activities of the Joint City-County Committee organized in 1953 to devise and promote plans for the integration of mutual functions. Other folders contain numerous items dealing with specific efforts to consolidate city and county health programs, to integrate the supply and distribution of water, to launch a united attack on youth problems and many other pressing area-wide concerns.

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Of course these perplexities are not peculiar to Rochester. Former Lieutenant-Governor Frank C. Moore has in fact called for a special legislative commission to restudy local governmental affairs throughout the state. This able student of local administration sees the need for a fresh approach to the increasingly complex and overlapping functions of the numerous authorities operating within each of the state's expanding metropolitan regions. Similar difficulties have been troubling urban communities throughout the nation, and Congressman Harold Ostertag has proposed a national study of these matters. A recent series of articles in the *New York Times*, which stressed the far-reaching extent of some of these problems, followed them across the continent from New York to Los Angeles, from Miami to Toronto, and even took a glance at their appearance in our own Henrietta before journeying to London and Stockholm for additional illustrations.

A warning has been sounded by numerous experts who predict that any metropolis which fails to make a beginning towards the solution of some of these difficulties within the next decade is inviting disaster. Prophecies of doom are perhaps endemic to a free society, but if a "beginning" will save us, Rochester is safe, as this record will show. And since no blanket of smog has as yet settled over "our fair city," we may at least hope for an additional decade or two in which to devise practical solutions for that and other impending predicaments. Yet even such leeway hardly invites complacency.

The Historic Origin of Metropolitan Rochester

The many aspects of metropolitan growth fall into two major and closely related categories. Each contributes to and responds to the other. First in time is the rise of a city as the commercial center of a productive region to which it gives focus and sometimes leadership. But as the city grows, the relationships with its hinterland become more complex and the struggle for integration frequently arouses bitter hostilities that may check the development of one or the other, often both. Such an impasse may enable a nearby metropolis to absorb part or all of the disjointed region into its more expansive hinterland in which the formerly independent city assumes at best a junior rank. Only where the continuing process of integration keeps pace with the evolution of a region's economic and civic life does a fully rounded metropolitan society emerge.

Thus the prospects of any large urban center depend on a variety of circumstances imbedded in its history. Its site and the extent and character of the territory it serves are of prime importance. Equally important are the vitality of its enterprise and the farsightedness of its civic leadership, both of which help to shape and may even transform the basic ingredients of site and environment. Since Rochester has experienced every phase of this evolutionary pattern, a review of the history of its metropolitan growth and of its civic responses to emergent problems may help to clarify some present dilemmas.

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Rochester's situation at the falls of the Genesee and a few miles from Lake Ontario gave it from the start superior advantages as a trading center. The produce of the growing settlements up the valley floated in increasing volume to its doorstep. There an abundance of water power enabled the early residents to mill the lumber and grain for more economical shipment to distant markets. The building of the Erie Canal, with its Genesee crossing in the heart of Rochester, assured that town undisputed precedence as a commercial mart for the rich Genesee Country. Only Syracuse and Utica to the east, where the Oswego and Chenango canals respectively joined the Erie, challenged its bid for upstate New York commerce in pre-Civil War days. Buffalo to the west had still greater advantages as the transshipment point for the swelling trade of the upper lakes. Fortunately these potential rivals were spaced at sufficient distances to afford each an opportunity to establish a thriving regional trade.

Rochester's water power supplied an additional incentive. Its numerous mills, vying for grain and lumber, sent agents up the valley and into neighboring counties in search of raw materials and helped to establish trading ties to the Genesee mill town that proved equally advantageous to its merchants. The mills also encouraged the development of small foundries and machine shops to make and repair their equipment. Thus Rochester became the leading industrial city in upstate New York, rivalled in this respect only by Troy in its heyday.

Both commercial and industrial interests supported early attempts to supplement the canal by building feeder rail lines. Rochester's pioneer railroad in 1829 used horse-drawn cars to transport cargoes and passengers to and from its lake port, then located at Carthage on the east bank at the lower falls. It is interesting to note that the city's first

steam roads, built approximately a decade later, invaded rival provinces to the east and the west. The first, to Batavia, tapped a region south of the canal but much closer to Buffalo and encouraged old Genesee County to look eastward to Rochester for an outlet. The second likewise swung south of the canal to link the pioneer villages of Canandaigua, Geneva and Auburn to the Flour City. That last town, a close neighbor and rival of Syracuse, soon had a rail connection to that city, while Buffalo built one to Batavia. But Rochester had at least staked its claims to a vastly wider region than the Genesee Valley and would never fully surrender them. The building of a tributary canal south along the river to Dansville and Olean in these same years asserted, though less effectively, a similar interest in southern-tier counties.

Before New York capitalists had successfully united the several independent lines that linked east and west across the state into the New York Central in 1853, Rochester men undertook the construction of three additional railroads. The first ran eight miles to Charlotte, by now the favored port on the west bank at the mouth of the river, and promised more convenient access to the mounting trade on the lake. The second reached Avon to the south and soon established a junction with the Erie Railroad pushing west from New York City, thus assuring improved connections with eastern and southern-tier communities. The third streaked west to Lockport and Lewiston and ultimately into Upper Canada in an effort to bypass Buffalo.

Long before this network of railroads was completed or fully envisioned, Rochester had developed an inner system of highways to serve its immediate neighbors. Five plank-road companies, organized in the late forties, hastily improved varying stretches along the major arteries leading into the city. While the maintenance of their surfaces and the collection of tolls proved difficult after the first years, the traffic, which supported four daily stages in and out of Rochester in the forties, increased and maintained five daily and three tri-weekly stages by 1870.

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Of course no one dreamed of applying the term "metropolis" to Rochester a century ago. With barely 50,000 residents in 1865, it served as the chief trading center of a region that contained another 250,000 inhabitants. Yet some of the close ties of earlier years were

already beginning to weaken. The major task of clearing and settling the land had largely been completed throughout the ten-county area. Not only had its first rich crop of lumber been harvested, but most of the farmers and villagers had also built and furnished their homes; when the wheat crops failed for three successive seasons during the mid-fifties, trade with the Flour City dropped off.

As its commercial activity declined, Rochester focused its attention on industries that served national markets. Millers in the city turned increasingly to the wheat fields of the mid-west for their supplies. While lumber mills, transformed into furniture and carriage factories, continued to find customers in the growing city and its environs, the new industries after the mid-century developed in fields that had little relation to the Genesee Country. Shoes and clothing took the lead by the seventies and found their markets in the East or among the migrants through Rochester to the West. When the Genesee flour mills lost dominance to those of new western grain centers, several enterprising nursery firms arose and won Rochester the new title of Flower City; but they, too, looked to the Great West for their principal outlets.

However, as Rochester's growth progressed, it acquired a new dependence on its immediate neighborhood. The city, which encompassed 4819 acres at the time of its incorporation in 1834, four times the area of the original village, annexed several neighboring tracts before the Civil War and again in 1874 when it doubled its territory. The construction of its first horse-car lines in the early sixties hastened this expansion. Residents and land owners beyond the city limits, eager to tap the water mains under construction in the mid-seventies welcomed annexation. Inevitably, the rapid introduction of running water created a sudden demand for sanitary sewers, and the effort to supply them during the next decade so boosted the city tax rate that later moves to extend its borders met opposition.

While Rochester was largely preoccupied with internal and industrial affairs during Reconstruction years, several attempts to improve its trade facilities did occur. Local capitalists helped to promote three additional railroads during the seventies and persuaded the city to invest nearly \$1,000,000 in public bonds to hasten their construction. The object, this time, was to tap Pennsylvania's coal resources and to establish competitive links with distant markets. Although the depression and other delays intervened, the State Line Railroad, renamed the

Buffalo, Rochester & Pittsburgh, commenced operation in 1883, and the Lake Shore Railroad, renamed the Rome, Watertown & Ogdensburg, steamed into the city four years later. Meanwhile the state's decision to abandon the ineffective Genesee Valley Canal provided an opportunity for the construction of still another rail line in its old bed in 1882. When, a few years later, the Western New York & Pennsylvania absorbed that road, Rochester acquired a second connection with the soft-coal fields of the latter state. East of the river a locally-backed Honeoye Valley Railroad, built in the late eighties, became a spur of the Lehigh Valley Railroad in 1892 and promptly developed a hard-coal dump on the site of a former lumber yard on the river bank.

The steam lines, which thus radiated out of Rochester in the early nineties, linked it with every section of its ten-county hinterland as well as with vast regions beyond. Some of the local connections were tenuous, however, since the main lines of the Erie, the Lehigh Valley, and even the Buffalo, Rochester & Pittsburgh served Buffalo and helped to draw southern-tier counties, as well as Wyoming and Genesee, into the widening sphere of its influence. The aggressive commercial interests of that thriving lake port had organized a Board of Trade in 1845, and its committees devised numerous schemes to enhance Buffalo's regional trade. Even when Rochester businessmen successfully established a Chamber of Commerce in 1888, their attention remained on the city where the rise of several new industries proved absorbing.

Although Rochester had lost its distinction as a national milling center, it continued to serve as the commercial outlet for grain farmers up the valley. Its nurserymen founded and provided leadership to the Western New York Horticultural Society which met annually in the city. It became the principal shipping point for apples and other products of the fruit orchards which began in the seventies to dominate the farming region stretching fifty miles east and west of the Genesee. Fruit and vegetable canners and processors, as well as seed firms, established close ties with regional farmers and further contributed to local industrial growth by nurturing basket makers, light wood and paper box manufacturers, and other useful enterprises. One of its early technological industries was printing, and the Flower City persisted until the nineties in publishing farm journals—the *American Rural Home*, after the sale of the *Genesee Farmer*, and the *Fruit Recorder & Cottage Gardener*

To envisage the confines within which Rochesterians lived in the early eighties, it is well to review the boundaries of that day. The city of 100,000 extended east to Culver Road, west to approximately the line of Thurston Street, and roughly from Norton Street on the north to Elmwood Avenue on the south. Though not a perfect rectangle, and not completely developed, its settled districts spread out two or three miles in all directions from the central Four Corners. Yet the slow pace of the horse cars discouraged their use, even for these distances, and most men walked to work. Except in the northeast district, where home industry thrived, only citizens who could afford a horse and rig favored the outskirts, where their substantial "villas" contrasted sharply with the humble cottages of truck gardeners who supplied the city market. Even the three or four hundred who owned carriages hesitated to plan extended drives into the surrounding towns, lest a broken axle, a lamed horse, or a misturn on the rough and unmarked roads leave them stranded in strange territory at night.

Early Suburban Stirrings

Yet the situation changed rapidly as the newly-tamed power of electricity burst Rochester's bonds in the late eighties and nineties. The gas-lit horse-and-buggy days passed with the joint arrival of electric lights in the mid-eighties and clanging trolleys in 1890. The electrification of the horse car lines speeded the service and encouraged a rapid development of outlying wards, some of them by residents of modest means. When the trolleys reached the entrances of Genesee Valley and Seneca Parks in 1892, the popularity of these new public pleasure grounds was assured

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Few workmen had time for more distant excursions except on Sunday, but that day saw increasing numbers heading for Charlotte and other nearby resorts. The building of the first suburban electric to the lake port in 1890 opened a new era of beachside entertainment. The attractions of the lake had begun to draw a few bathers and other pleasure seekers early in the sixties. An excursion boat on the lower river had vied with the steam railroad for such patronage during the seventies. Local backers of the Rochester & Lake Ontario Railroad had founded a rival resort at Sea Breeze in 1877, and the new road, popularly known as the Bay Line, stopped for passengers at two points

convenient to cottages springing up along Irondequoit Bay. Excursion trains on Sundays and special holidays swelled the crowds at these resorts and stimulated a move to build a third or Belt Line to carry visitors to Summerville, a new development at the lake east of the river. Soon a fourth line running west from Charlotte to Manitou, and a fifth from the city to Glen Haven, at the head of the bay, supplied additional channels of escape from the city during the "melting season." While the majority of their passengers remained content with an occasional excursion, the numerous summer cottages along the lake and bay gave many Rochesterians their first brief residence in the city's environs.

The arrival of the safety bicycle in 1888 sparked another surge of city folk into the countryside. Thousands of young men, and a few women too, hastened to demonstrate their powers by peddling out to neighboring picnic groves. Many joined bicycle clubs, one of which sponsored the construction of a cinder path to Charlotte in 1889. As the number of cyclists increased, accidents mounted, and the city banned them from the sidewalks in 1892, thus creating a demand for sidepaths along the principal highways. An association of cycle clubs sold bicycle tags in 1896 and soon netted over \$1000 for the construction of cinder paths. Fortunately the Supervisors created a Sidepath Commission which laid out the routes to Fairport and Pittsford, to Scottsville and Sea Breeze, and on a circular course around the city. By 1898 the number of Rochester cyclists exceeded 30,000, and their annual tag sales had produced a sufficient revenue to construct 130 miles of sidepaths within the county, thus bringing many outlying villages and hamlets within the range of venturesome city folk. Inevitably, some of their activities created new problems in rural towns, prompting the revival of Sabbath-observance rules and other restraints.

Meanwhile the city, as an active consumer of farm products, had in its turn discovered a need for health regulations. The most critical situation grew out of the expanding demand for fresh milk. Occasional complaints protesting adulteration had appeared during the seventies, and the Common Council first authorized public inspection in 1881. However, the test by a lactometer, designed to detect adulteration, did not long suffice. The appointment of young Dr. George Goler as chief inspector in 1892 brought an alert guardian to the fore. With increasing knowledge of the dangers from tubercular cows and other health

hazards, he urged more effective regulations. The discovery a year later of a number of infected cows in a Pittsford herd provoked an appeal to state health authorities for an order directing their destruction. Similar cases involving a dairy at Avon and another in Penfield, from which Rochester drew some of its milk, prompted an effort in 1897 to test all herds within a forty-mile radius but raised disturbing questions concerning the authority the Rochester health officials could exert beyond the city limits.

Since the local consumption of milk already exceeded 50,000 quarts a day, it was obviously impossible to inspect all deliveries on arrival. Only a continuing check of sanitary conditions at the source and care to maintain high standards in transit would suffice, Dr. Goler declared. A city ordinance, passed in 1899, gave the health officer authority to exclude the milk of farms which refused to admit his inspectors or failed to secure their approval, but protests from 400 dealers brought its repeal a year later on the promise of more effective self regulation. When, however, the efforts of a dealers' association to maintain standards broke down in 1903, Dr. Goler assumed responsibility under state law for the inspection of all milk within a radius of sixty miles. However, his attempt to compel the railroads that transported milk into Rochester to maintain 50-degree temperatures met determined opposition, and the issue continued to disturb relationships between the city and its hinterland for many years.

Still another health provision exerted an early and powerful influence on Rochester's metropolitan growth. The installation of sanitary sewers, beginning during the seventies, had created a problem of sewage disposal, and the practice of discharging the waste into the river below the main falls and into streams or open ditches at the eastern edge of the city soon brought numerous damage suits from affected property owners. After several years of indecision, the city finally built two large trunk sewers to pick up the discharge from the older sewers and deliver it into the river below the lower falls. The completion of these improvements had the immediate effect of transforming insalubrious tracts beyond the limits, particularly on the east side, into desirable residential areas. As the population spread outward, petitions for the right to tap water mains and sewers came from many of these migrants; when Rochester refused to serve those beyond its borders, new

movements for territorial annexation developed, and the city acquired nearly 1000 additional acres in 1891.

Such proposals met opposition too. In the case of Charlotte, a village of barely 1000 residents, agitation for and against annexation began in the early nineties. In order to head it off, the inhabitants voted in 1894 to install a sanitary sewer along Beach Avenue to serve the fine summer residences of leading Rochesterians who paid a major share of the village tax but, lacking local votes, had launched the annexation movement. The improvement served its dual purpose, and the summer colony further took the lead in bringing electricity to Charlotte before the end of the century. When, as we shall see, a water company appeared a few years later, some of the owners of the more substantial cottages on Beach Avenue installed furnaces and settled down as Rochester's first genuine suburbanites.

Unfortunately, the sewage problem was not yet solved. The discharge into the lower river proved more troublesome than had been expected. Not only was the Glen House blighted and the pleasures of boating destroyed, but beautiful Seneca Park also seemed threatened, particularly in dry seasons when the Genesee's flow was not sufficient to dilute the sewage. A proposed storage dam at Mount Morris up the river seemed to offer a solution for this problem and of the annual flood threat as well, but when the Chamber of Commerce sought a state appropriation for the dam, conflicting interests within and outside the valley blocked action. Critics in Buffalo and elsewhere charged that Rochester's chief objective was to assure its millers and electric companies a steady source of power throughout the year. Let interested business groups raise the funds and build the dam if they needed it, several editors up the valley declared, and the Flower City suddenly awoke to the fact that the Buffalo Board of Trade, by its persistent campaigns, had practically achieved commercial dominance throughout Wyoming and Allegany counties and threatened other portions of the Genesee hinterland.

Startled by that discovery, Rochester began to reappraise its position. Two local dailies, which had printed news reports from correspondents in a few area villages once a week for several years, now expanded that service, while another paper engaged a columnist to write a score of historical articles on as many scattered towns. Rochester should cultivate trade relations with every village within a forty-

mile radius, Secretary Ives of the Chamber declared in 1904 as he launched a campaign to promote "the metropolitan feeling." Five years later, when news reached Rochester that Buffalo was conducting an advertising drive in the upper valley, the local Chamber determined to meet it with vigor.

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The city's renewed growth during the eighties, when an increase of almost 50 per cent topped that of any two of the three previous decades, brought a surge of optimism and expansion. City engineer Emil Kuichling forecast that Rochester would pass the 200,000 mark by 1900 and, after annexing adjacent towns, would approach 300,000 in another decade. A sober calculation by the engineer in charge of the water works pushed these figures still higher. Unfortunately, another depression intervened and disclosed weaknesses in the economy that placed new burdens on the city's fiscal resources. Business recovery eventually arrived, but when the census reports at the close of the century revealed a population growth of barely 21 per cent, less than that of either Syracuse or Buffalo, the editor of the *Herald* blamed it on the conservative policies of local bankers and business leaders. Looking further afield, he discovered that bank clearances in Providence, Indianapolis and Kansas City, each practically equal to Rochester in population, ranged from three to nine times as large as those of the Flower City.

The *Herald* had no explanation, other than the charge of inertia, but a closer look would have revealed the much broader spheres of influence which each of these places enjoyed. The last two were already serving as vital commercial and financial centers of vast and growing regions, while Providence was the heart of an emerging metropolitan district with several thriving suburbs on its borders. Rochester stood, in contrast, as a prosperous industrial city in a region that had shown remarkable stability but little growth over the previous half-century. Aside from its immediate neighbors, only one town (Perinton) in Monroe County had experienced a population increase of as much as 500 during that period, while several had actually declined. Indeed the county's total, outside Rochester, had advanced only from 51,247 to 55,246, and most of the gain had occurred on the city's periphery. Moreover, of the other nine counties sometimes included

in its broader region, only four had shown increases totalling barely 15,000.

Yet this apparent stagnation was in some respects deceiving. The agriculture had become more diversified, the towns more self-sufficient. Perhaps their most important export now was the young people sent to urban centers near and far. At least a dozen villages in the area, all located on one or more rail lines, showed population gains, and five of them—Batavia, Geneva, Hornell, Corning and Canandaigua—had attained small-city status. They gave evidence of independence by establishing state or national banks—more than a score of them in as many places—and by the development of numerous retail stores and minor industrial enterprises. Moreover, this essentially urban growth at the chief centers of each county had attracted newcomers from abroad as well as from surrounding farms, thus displacing many of the villagers who moved to the cities. Rochester continued to receive its share of these latter migrants, whose ties to their native heath strengthened its bonds with the Genesee Country.

Several villages within Monroe County had displayed independent enterprise. Four had established banks, and one, Brockport with 3500 residents, the largest in the county, installed a sanitary sewer system equipped with a reduction plant in 1904. Not until 1913 did Fairport follow that lead, but five villages piped water through their streets before this date, and several boasted active if modest industries. All were proud of their history, which dated back in many instances to settlements planted before Rochester's birth in 1812.

Only in one case did a village owe its start to Rochester, and its inception in the late nineties marked a dramatic break with local traditions. In fact, that new town, East Rochester, was deliberately planned, like many elsewhere in these years, as a satellite community. The first move came in 1896 when the Merchants Despatch Transportation Company, which employed 300 men in a Rochester factory and 1000 in scattered plants elsewhere, determined to consolidate its activities in one factory to be erected on cheap land where taxes would be low. Rather than see it move to Depaw, an industrial satellite recently developed near Buffalo, the Rochester Chamber helped the company select a convenient railroad site fifteen miles east of the city. Following a pattern set by western promoters, a great barbecue of four roast oxen attracted hundreds of cyclists and some autoists, as well as many farmers

in horse-and-buggy, to help lay the cornerstone on May 30, 1897. Originally called Vanderbilt, the community quickly changed its name to Despatch because that railroad magnate opposed a projected trolley line from the city.

The early years at Despatch presented unexpected difficulties. All schools, churches and stores, as well as homes, had to be built, and the Vanderbilt Improvement Company, which undertook to provide water and sewers, could not always meet the demand. Three additional companies located factories there, but two soon found isolation from the city a great disadvantage and withdrew. Nevertheless, the village prospered and was formally incorporated in 1906 as East Rochester, changing its name again in order to attract another firm. Though its shops afforded employment to 1200 men on the date of its tenth anniversary a year later, its homes barely numbered 300, and most of the workers commuted from nearby farms. Yet the village already ranked fourth in size in the county, and its industrial base assured further growth as soon as transport facilities to Rochester could be improved.

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The most promising instrument of metropolitan expansion in these years was the electric trolley. The future prospects of a half-dozen villages in the Rochester area, as well as those of suburban tracts on the city's border, seemed to hinge on the speed with which trolley service could be established. The five daily and three semi-weekly stages that still lumbered out to neighboring villages no longer sufficed. Several western cities were vigorously promoting interurban electric roads in the late nineties when Rochester also entered that field.

Aside from its resort trolleys, completed by the mid-nineties, the first local suburban line was projected as an extension from the Monroe Avenue terminus of the Rochester Railway Company to Pittsford, East Rochester, and Fairport. Options for a right-of-way were obtained, but there the matter rested, apparently blocked by the New York Central whose Auburn and main lines served respectively the first two villages. A second proposal, two years later, for a trolley to Sodus Bay enlisted a more determined response. Work commenced the next year, and the enthusiasm of most farmers along the 42-mile route persuaded the few obstructionists to grant the necessary rights-of-way for the big trolleys designed to haul fruit and vegetables as well as passengers. The work crews extended the line eastward to Sodus in Wayne County

within a year, stirring new activity in a half-dozen hamlets. Webster center, incorporated as a village in 1905, attained a population of 1032 by the end of the decade.

The completion of that first road spurred the construction of additional interurbans fanning out from the city in all directions. The Rochester & Eastern procured the necessary franchises for its line through Pittsford, Victor and Canandaigua to Geneva and broke ground in 1901. Its big, orange-colored cars started running to Canandaigua in 1903 and entered Geneva the next year when, also, a spur line from Pittsford reached Fairport. The Rochester, Lockport & Buffalo secured its franchises that year, as did the Rochester, Syracuse & Eastern. The cars of the latter commenced operation as far as Lyons in 1906 and after some difficulty reached Syracuse in 1909, when the Lockport company also completed its final link. The promoters of Batavia and Dansville lines had lost heart, and the New York Central had already secured control of the Sodus and Canandaigua roads, drastically curtailing their freight services, but Rochester in 1910 had four interurban electrics in active operation. Their 205 miles offered some competition to the New York Central, but their chief contribution was the speed and efficiency of the service they extended to interlying communities.

Yet the impact, as reflected in population growth, was not startling. Of the villages in Monroe County, East Rochester, Fairport and Pittsford to the east, as well as Spencerport and Brockport to the west, each enjoyed a modest increment between 1905 and 1915, in contrast with the decline that Honeoye Falls and Scottsville, among others not served by the electrics, experienced. In like fashion the Wayne, Ontario and Orleans county towns favored by the interurbans prospered, while most of those bypassed, as well as the counties to the south, languished. However, Genesee County, though untouched by the Rochester network, experienced rapid growth, especially the city of Batavia which now had a trolley connection with Buffalo. Likewise in the southern-tier counties, after several Rochester schemes for electric or steam belt-lines collapsed, a new pattern of growth developed around Elmira and Corning.

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While the Flower City thus strengthened several commercial ties with certain portions of its hinterland, the most striking growth of

these decades occurred on its immediate outskirts. Primarily an industrial city, Rochester centered its attention on internal development and lateral expansion. Despite a check experienced during the depression of the mid-nineties, the city's population mounted 55 per cent between 1890 and 1910, and although a minor portion of this gain resulted from annexations, the city contributed still larger numbers to the surrounding towns. The trolley company had extended several of its routes to the city limits, thus encouraging settlement in adjoining tracts. Three lines actually crossed the border, to serve the old village of Brighton in one case and the two rising factory centers growing up on open land, one at Kodak Park just beyond the limits to the north, and the other at Lincoln Park on the western outskirts.

This outward migration of industry and residents, though inspired by the prospect of tax economy, soon raised troublesome problems for all concerned. Rochester readily agreed to sell water to neighboring firms while its supply was adequate, but when the demands of its mounting population threatened a shortage, the taxpayers naturally received first claim, and outside companies had to look elsewhere for their water. Sewers presented a similar difficulty, and it was the desire for a connection with the city system that prompted the village of Brighton to vote for annexation in 1905. The rest of that town, which had refused to approve a sewer district project for the village, thus learned its lesson and promptly issued bonds for such a district when the promoters of Home Acres laid out their subdivision a few years later.

Experience had demonstrated the practicality of isolated sewer districts and treatment plants, but the search for an adequate water supply presented greater difficulties to subdivision promoters. Again, members of Rochester's summer colony at Charlotte led the way. Their thirst seemed absurd, with the vast lake before them, and several enterprising cottagers joined to construct a filtering plant and to extend a pipe out beyond the sandbar in the lake for a supply. When in 1904 their filtered water satisfied the state inspectors, the group, now organized as the Rochester & Lake Ontario Water Company, began to lay pipes to other scattered groups of cottages in Greece. A call for water in Irondequoit prompted the construction of a pipe across the river in 1905. George Eastman determined to build his own water line from the lake for Kodak Park, but the Lincoln Park factories needed water,

too, and soon reached an agreement with the railroad which served them permitting the water company to use its right-of-way. A similar agreement with the New York Central enabled the private company to extend a water line through the city to serve new settlements in Brighton.

As a result, later annexation drives encountered more determined opposition. Some neighborhoods cited additional objections. A settlement of Hollanders, who had located beyond the city line in Brighton, opposed annexation because it would raise taxes, absorb their children into the public schools and in other ways disrupt their community's isolation. Irondequoit, still a rural town in the early nineties and chiefly engaged in truck gardening for the Rochester market, gave little thought to city services. In Greece, on the other hand, many residents were becoming annoyed by the intemperate activities of excursionists to the lake, where the concessioners blocked efforts to maintain decorum on the Sabbath. The city police would restore order, they argued; others, too, urged annexation as the only means to secure municipal support for the development of the port. However, the resort interests at Charlotte and many old residents as well opposed the move and successfully deferred it until 1915.

The annexation movement had almost run its course. A scheme proposed by Mayor Edgerton in 1908 to build a spacious boulevard around the city on open land to be annexed and subdivided for the purpose met criticism within and without the city. Some protested that only "the carriage crowd" would use it; others feared a tax boost. Fortunately a number of promoters determined to lay out the southwest section of the encircling boulevard and to develop it as a speculation. In order to speed the extension of water and sewer pipes, gas and electric lines, they consented to annexation in 1913. Charlotte finally reached a favorable decision two years later, and in 1918 even the industrial suburbs of Kodak Park and Lincoln Park, plagued by sewer problems and other difficulties, voted to merge with the city. The 4,879 acres added at this time included much undeveloped land, sufficient to give Rochester jurisdiction over both banks of the river with adequate land depth on the west side to encourage a continuous urban growth north to Charlotte. These additions finally doubled the city's 1891 area and gave it some room for expansion. Except for minor tracts purchased and annexed to round out the parks or to supply

some other public service, the boundaries have since remained unchanged for almost four decades

An Emergent Metropolis

Rochester was gratified, though a bit surprised, to see itself listed as a metropolitan center in the Federal Census of 1910. Residents there, as throughout the East, still thought of New York City when they spoke of "the metropolis." Yet the Flower City, as we have seen, had already experienced some of the expansive tendencies characteristic of such communities. Moreover, troublesome questions of jurisdiction had arisen, and the action of the Census Bureau in recognizing the existence of twenty-five major metropolitan districts, with that of Rochester standing twenty-first among them, had the effect, by defining their limits, of suggesting the wider compass essential for orderly development.

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Rochester's metropolitan district, as defined in 1910, included, with the city, four bordering towns and adjoining Chili and Pittsford. Almost nine-tenths of its 248,512 residents lived in the urban core whose acres comprised barely one ninth of the total. Unlike most central cities, Rochester's own growth-ratio still exceeded that of its district, and further annexations before 1922 prolonged the period of inner development. Yet centrifugal forces were in motion, notably the trolley and the automobile, while the subdividers, home builders and utilities soon carried the active frontier into the suburbs and raised new questions of jurisdiction.

Several old problems of this sort remained unsolved. Thus the contest for control of the milk shed still raged. In the much simpler matter of maintaining sidepaths the efforts of a county commission had finally collapsed in 1905. The difficulty in this case sprang from the automobile which now rapidly drove bicycles as well as horses from most streets and highways.

The automobile in its turn brought new problems. The city re-drafted its traffic ordinances in 1904 and limited the speed of vehicles in the central district to eight miles per hour. Later that year, when the state prescribed a ten-mile maximum for cities, the first jurisdictional conflict arose, to be complicated a few months later by Char-

lotte's decision to enforce six-mile speeds in that village. Neighboring towns adopted other limits, and three of them engaged "spotters" equipped with watches to catch and fine speeders. When a state law required all cars to display a license number, the city police, though reluctant to undertake its enforcement, soon discovered the advantage of central registration. The Rochester Auto Club supported that regulation but questioned the need for an examination of all drivers.

It was quite an adventure to set forth into the countryside in one of the early machines. The condition of the roads was often frightful with many stretches reflecting the neglect of town and county authorities. Assemblyman Armstrong of Rochester helped to sponsor the first bill providing state aid for road construction, and Monroe County, ready to match all the funds it could get, pressed successfully for the improvement of over 1000 miles during the next fourteen years, more than any other could boast. When the work lagged in some adjoining counties, the Rochester Auto Club organized a tour for road inspection in 1910 and invited numerous town officials as well as state representatives to join the expedition. Five years later it collaborated with the State Motor Federation in a concerted campaign for road signs. Pending a decision as to the proper authority, the two private groups marked numerous steep hills and dangerous curves.

Use of the automobile for commercial purposes gave additional impetus to the suburban movement. An early effort to establish regular bus service to Penfield at fifty cents a passenger failed to attract sufficient patronage in 1904, but the possibility of such service helped to defeat the plan to build a suburban electric into the upper valley. Meanwhile the delivery truck had won its place in the expanding urban community. Over 400 commercial vehicles were licensed in 1912, nearly a tenth of the county's total registration. Of the six trucking firms listed in the city directory two years before, only one advertised an auto for quick service, but five years later five out of seven supplemented with, or relied entirely on, motor trucks, and two specialized in out-of-town delivery. One distributor secured a contract in 1918 to transport Rochester newspapers to surrounding communities. Two years later the *Times-Union* alone shipped over 12,000 papers daily to 100 scattered villages, chiefly by truck, and over 2000 to rural subscribers by mail.

The effect of the automobile was scarcely evident as yet in residential trends. While the city contributed several thousand migrants to the suburbs before 1920, most of them settled in the villages or in subdivisions on Rochester's outskirts. Not until the mid-twenties did non-farm residents begin to scatter along the back roads. City folk able to afford a private car for suburban commuting had acquired other standards which could not easily be met in an isolated villa until the introduction of the septic tank and the improvement of well-drilling machines opened a new era of metropolitan expansion throughout America.

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The optimism of the 1920's quickened other expansive tendencies. The Chamber of Commerce extended the range of its motor tours, first started in 1913, and endeavored to visit each secluded hamlet as well as all major villages in the Rochester area at least once a year in order to counteract the influence there of Buffalo and even Cleveland wholesalers. The Auto Club continued its inspection tours for a time, too, though the rapid multiplication of car registrations had created sufficient popular pressure to secure the hard-surfacing of half the 1446 miles of public roads within Monroe County during the twenties, while other counties in the area were striving to match that record.

Highway improvements had enabled seven bus lines to displace the last stages by 1920. With schedules of one or two trips daily, their routes fanned out to Hamlin, Bergen, Churchville, LeRoy, Dansville, Lima and Holcomb—all places skipped by the electrics. The latter had opposed the grant of state charters, but the City Council, eager to encourage improved service, passed an ordinance in 1921 authorizing local permits. Again a question of jurisdiction beyond the city limits complicated the situation. In order to present a stronger front, several of the lines consolidated in 1924. The new company soon acquired better buses and, directly challenging the electrics, established two additional routes, one west along the Ridge Road to Brockport, the other east to Fairport and East Rochester.

Meanwhile the city was busily engaged in solving one of the major problems created by the interurbans. Their big trolleys had presented a traffic hazard on its streets from the start, and every attempt to find a new route for their entry had brought congestion. Finally a plan to place them in the bed of the old Erie Canal was hit upon. Unfortu-

nately, several years elapsed before the Barge Canal took over that old artery's function, and the construction of the subway required additional years. It was 1927 before the first "Big Orange" cars from Geneva rolled into Rochester through the partially enclosed ditch. The Lockport cars began to use the subway early the next spring after the completion of its western section. Those from Syracuse gained access through an East Avenue underpass at about the same time. In August, contracts with several steam railroads inaugurated a switching service that considerably improved the movement of freight coming to Rochester from the south.

However the electrics, challenged by the automobile and the bus, were waging a losing battle. The Sodus Bay line had ceased operations before the subway opened. The Rochester & Eastern ran its last car in August, 1930, and the last from Lockport arrived the next April, while the Syracuse line carried on barely two months longer. The subway continued the passenger service it had inaugurated within the city limits and maintained its freight switching business, but the prospect that it would become the instrument to revive regional commerce disappeared.

The automobile, which had triumphed over the electrics, soon transformed the suburban seepage into a flood and would eventually change many aspects of urban life as well. The number registered in the county reached 51,925 by 1922 and doubled in the next six years. Traffic clogged downtown streets and created a parking problem. When in 1910 the city limited standing at the curb to thirty minutes, the practice of leaving one's car at a gas station sufficed for a time, since the 500 competing dealers were eager to accommodate customers. But that situation also called for more efficient regulation, as a survey by the Bureau of Municipal Research of the hazards of fire and explosion revealed in 1923. The city's action, two years before, in opening the first local parking lot, had suggested a new solution. At least four commercial parking stations appeared before the end of the decade; in the next period they began to appropriate the many vacant lots left by the demolition during the depression of antiquated buildings on the periphery of the business district.

While the automobile created difficulties downtown and required the introduction of a traffic-light system on Main Street in 1924, it greatly stimulated the city's outward expansion. A real estate boom

hit the surrounding towns in the mid-twenties. Home building in the city, which had increased steadily since the war, from 519 permits in 1919 to 2039 in 1925, tapered off as the active promoters moved into the suburbs. Permits in Brighton climbed from 140 to 394 in four years, and a similar trend occurred in the other towns. Indeed, Irondequoit's three-fold growth during the twenties slightly exceeded that of Brighton, while Gates matched it and Greece increased four fold. No other town rivalled these gains, which created such a fever of excitement that numerous subdividers laid out and improved hundreds of additional acres. The towns authorized the sale of sewer-district bonds totalling several million dollars during the late twenties; the Rochester Gas & Electric and the Rochester & Lake Ontario Water Company extended their mains through numerous undeveloped tracts as an inducement to prospective homeowners.

The major utilities proffered their services to more distant communities as well. The water company, which already reached an estimated 25,000 people in seven towns in 1921, pushed its lines west to Parma Center, east to Waynesport and south to Pittsford by 1927. Its Rochester directors sold control that year to the Federal Water Service Corporation which soon established the New York Water Service Corporation to operate its many properties in the state. The Rochester Gas & Electric also acquired a broader sphere. The consolidation moves in the early years of the century had joined the old gas and electric companies, the trolley system and the Sodus and Canandaigua suburban lines into the Rochester Railway & Light Company under the control of the New York Central. When that giant combine was redivided on a functional basis, the Rochester Gas & Electric emerged with electric transmission lines reaching as far as Red Creek to the east, Mount Morris to the south and Ogden to the west. By the end of the twenties it had purchased or developed local services in numerous villages along each axis. The Rochester Telephone Company, with 13,500 of its 40,000 subscribers outside the city in 1922, hastily strung its lines into many regional hamlets during these years.

Fortunately the expansive character of Rochester's growth kindled the imagination of public officials, too, and led to the creation of the Monroe County Park Commission in 1926 and the Regional Planning Board three years later. The commission planned a ring of large and small parks to be located five or ten miles beyond the city borders. The

community's pride in Rochester's parks assured a ready response to the county's request for \$1,500,000 to purchase appropriate sites and develop a series of connecting parkways. The commission made rapid progress in the acquisition of land for five regional parks, but the onset of the depression halted its efforts to complete their improvements and to lay out parkways. Meanwhile the Regional Planning Board had, in its turn, prepared a series of maps showing population trends, housing and road conditions and traffic densities for all sections of the county. It designated the principal highways, worked out a schedule for their paving as funds should become available, and encouraged nine towns to adopt zoning regulations governing future land use.

Of course the effect of these expansive tendencies was constantly apparent in Rochester, not only in the new problems it faced, but also in the increased activity which centered there. The city's retail shopping district was prospering as never before. A national survey of such markets in all cities over 100,000 gave that in Rochester a high per-capita rating in 1927. A major criterion was the ratio of the number of income tax returns to the population, which reflected the productivity of the four counties accredited to the city. Rochester, however, was less significant as a wholesale mart, since the secondary shopping centers in Lockport and Batavia, Geneva and Auburn, Elmira and Olean turned with equal or greater ease to Buffalo or Syracuse or directly to the wholesale capital in New York. The new office buildings and stores which arose in downtown Rochester in the late twenties amply demonstrated its metropolitan vitality. Unfortunately the depression caught several of them unprepared for a severe blow and checked improvements elsewhere. The city's commercial resurgence, like its suburban expansion, suffered a sharp setback during the thirties.

Renewed Metropolitan Growth

The severity of the great depression brought a reappraisal, in Rochester as elsewhere, of the future prospects of urban growth. Many began to see the city in less rosy hues. The blight the railroads had spread along their routes; the neglect and decay which was converting many old neighborhoods into slums; the traffic congestion which threatened to strangle the business district; the desolation which spread over many speculative subdivisions after foreclosures began—all contributed

to the disillusionment of once-hopeful promoters, many of whom now acquired a pessimistic outlook.

Rochester disregarded some of these trends until the influx of automobiles threatened to tie up all traffic and in fact slowed it to such a degree that many citizens demanded action. Fortunately, state aid for a radical inner loop development has spurred the city to undertake the construction of a worthy civic center and parking garages for the business district. It has at the same time devised plans for more adequate industrial zoning and more wholesome housing within as well as without its borders. Again, as with earlier metropolitan difficulties, some of which have scarcely diminished, the need for a fresh definition of authority has come to light. Indeed the demands for integration have intensified as the retrenchments of the thirties and forties have given way to a new burst of expansion and reconstruction in the fifties.

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The first critical study of the area's metropolitan ills came from the Division of State Planning in 1938. After a careful analysis of the situation in the vicinity of several upstate cities, the Division found several Monroe County towns, like those in other urban districts, to be suffering from premature subdivision practices. Out of a total of 77,345 lots, Rochester had 14,661 that were vacant, mostly in the nine outlying wards. The situation in eight neighboring towns was much more serious. Not only were over half the lots in seven towns listed as vacant, but many owners of such lots had failed to pay their taxes, and the towns were greatly embarrassed. The optimistic officials had authorized bonds, and subdividers had rushed ahead with basic improvements, piling up a debt (in Rochester's four neighbors and Pittsford) of \$14,606,932, most of it on very limited districts in each town. They had of course been caught by the depression, and the vacant lots in these five towns totaled 27,615, sufficient to accommodate 85,331 new residents at existing family densities. By adding the excessive subdivision provisions of the other towns and Rochester, the Division estimated that the metropolitan district could absorb 180,500 newcomers in its existing subdivisions. Meanwhile the 400,000 residents of the area were carrying the full tax burden. Even wholesale foreclosures would not correct the situation since there were no buyers ready to put the land and the improvements to full use.

Foreseeing these dangers, a group of old residents in Brighton had staged a political revolution a few years before and refused to issue new district bonds until the construction of homes commenced. The county, too, under its Division of Regional Planning, was endeavoring to apply more effective regulations. These efforts received commendation from the state report, but the news that some other cities faced still graver problems in this respect failed to lighten the local tax burden.

There was, however, a brighter side to this picture as the Monroe County Division of Regional Planning demonstrated in a series of town and village studies made between 1938 and 1940. Most of the new homes already built within the four suburban towns had water and sewer connections, gas and electric and telephone services, and enjoyed convenient access to buses and other urban facilities. Only scattered old homesteads in these towns still relied on wells and, in some cases, out-houses, though cisterns were rapidly displacing the latter there as at the non-farm homes springing up along the highways in some of the more distant towns. Most villages throughout the county boasted a few of these improvements, and several provided all of them, plus a local community life. Even in the outlying towns, most of the residents had electricity, and approximately half had telephones, running water and bath rooms. At least 90 per cent had radios by this date, barely a decade after the establishment of Rochester's pioneer stations.

The county survey revealed other significant metropolitan relationships. A check of social affiliations disclosed a preference in the villages for local associations, although some of their residents reported active memberships in city groups. In the rural districts, particularly in the ten towns with numerous commuters, the report showed a reverse situation. There, many families maintained earlier ties in Rochester clubs, attended its churches and patronized its markets. Almost all the non-farm inhabitants of rural areas used cars in preference to bus or rail for travel to the city, though the latter still carried some commuters. Each village had its library, established during the thirties or earlier, and a traveling library, the first in the state, had in the course of ten years built up an active circulation throughout the county. Though not included in the survey, the distribution of city newspapers to the villages and rural homes of Monroe and neighboring counties more than doubled during the decade

Although few reports are available on the situation in the other counties of the Rochester region, their hardships during the depression were at least mitigated by the absence of excessive speculation beforehand. Their populations showed little change during the thirties, but all began to rise in the next decade when most of the villages and small cities experienced an upturn. Possibly the arrival of more dependable electric power from Rochester, Niagara, or Binghamton, with the wider distribution of telephone service, contributed to this trend. Rochester banks, which had established branches in eight area villages during the thirties, absorbed some of the independent banks within another decade. These branches and a dozen or more local banks helped to launch new enterprises in many villages, while several Rochester firms, as well as expanding companies from other cities, opened factories at scattered places within the area. The number of automobiles increased until the registrations in 1956 showed one to every $2\frac{1}{3}$ persons, thus assuring the new industries a wide field for the recruitment of workers. Union organizers followed the factories into the hinterland, and one Rochester joint board has fourteen affiliated locals in a dozen villages—more than the largest trust company's branches. Slowly but surely even such rich agricultural counties as Wayne and Ontario have moved into the ranks of predominantly industrial counties, where Steuben, Genesee and of course Monroe have long stood.

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This renewed vitality throughout the Genesee region has had many stimulating and some troublesome effects on its central city. The extent and variety of its administrative functions and trade services have inevitably increased the number of white collar workers and junior executives, many of whom have located in the suburbs. Yet, in contrast with most metropolitan communities, Rochester is still predominantly industrial. It stood seventh in this respect in the nation at the last census, when it ranked fortieth in wholesale and retail trade. Whether the renewed activity in its valley hinterland, hemmed in by vigorous rivals on all sides, can keep pace with that of some younger but more extensive urban regions in the West and the South, which were still behind it in 1950, is an open question, but Rochester as an industrial city, producing for national and world markets, stands to benefit economically from the contest, whatever its result.

That Rochester's fortunes are closely tied with those of the nation at large is clearly revealed by a comparison of the fluctuations in business activity as depicted on local and national graphs. The Chamber of Commerce has frequently drawn such comparisons, showing a local tendency to follow rather than lead national trends. Thus the city, which withstood the onset of the depression more successfully than most others, also responded somewhat tardily when revival set in. This relationship, which derives in part from the town's concentration on light industry and consumer goods, has had a direct effect on the shifting course of its metropolitan outlook.

Rochester retained a confident attitude into the early thirties and vigorously supported some community programs that greatly relieved the hardships of the depression's local victims. When, nevertheless, the effects of economic contraction became apparent and the city's former growth came to a halt, its leaders undertook a reappraisal of the community's prospects. An earlier planning board was reorganized as a commission and given larger powers and responsibilities. A St. Louis firm, engaged to study Rochester's needs and capacities, took a rather dim view of the situation. The population had declined slightly during the thirties when the number of in-migrants fell off, and out-migration erased the natural surplus of births over deaths. The expert's report forecast a continued decline within the city and a slow growth in the metropolitan district to 470,000 by 1970. This was in line with pessimistic views throughout the country, but the study did note that Rochester's concentration on industry had given it a high rating in several urban categories, and placed it at the top among cities of its class in value-added-per-family, and very near the top in income-per-family.

Apparently that survey failed to give full weight to the regenerative forces latent in this high productivity and in the fine standards it also noted in the city's schools and other civic services. At any rate, the forecast missed the mark. The out-migration continued strong during the forties, again exceeding the in-migration, though not as dramatically as before; now however the city's natural surplus assured it a slight population advance, 7,513 by 1950. But this time a major portion of the out-migrants went to the suburbs, which attracted nearly 25,000 (over and above their losses) or practically two thirds of their total increase. The four bordering towns had added 57,000 since 1930, enough to take up a major portion of their excess subdivision lots of

that date. The total metropolitan population had almost reached the predicted 1970 figure two decades early.

This renewed growth brought an intensification of several old problems. Fortunately it also created a will to meet them. The water question, which had troubled the city since the mid-twenties, could no longer be postponed. In 1949, when the levels of Hemlock and Canadice Lakes again dropped dangerously low, the fact that Honeoye Lake, which the city had long coveted, was also reduced by the same dry season, prompted a final decision to turn to the inexhaustible waters of Ontario. An agreement with the Eastman Kodak Company enabled Rochester to draw an extra supply through the company's intake pipes until its own plant was ready for operation in 1955. The new source not only answered the city's wants, but also permitted it to extend relief to neighboring towns where the New York State Water Corporation, which had finally taken over the Rochester & Lake Ontario Company, had failed to gauge the needs.

Dissatisfaction with the private company's rates and policies prompted the Supervisors to appoint a Monroe County Water Authority in 1951 to seek a proper solution. Its studies led to a plan for the public purchase and operation of the utility, but disagreement over the price resulted in condemnation proceedings which are still in process. Several towns on the westside, discouraged by the delay, have joined forces to open a new supply, and in the interim the city's available surplus has helped to relieve the shortage that threatened to halt suburban growth in several directions. A number of villages have maintained independent systems, drawing from deep wells or springs. The need for a clear definition of territory and responsibility and for cooperation in developing our water resources are part of the task of metropolitan integration still with us.

Rochester has extended the use of other facilities to neighboring towns on various occasions. A "mutual aid" agreement dating from 1941 has enabled the city and the towns to call on the fire-fighting equipment of adjoining places during emergencies, with the assurance that other neighbors will move in to protect the lending area. The plans for the new Public Safety building at the Civic Center envision a joint use of crime-detection laboratories, police gyms and other features by city and county officers; this prospect has already spurred a drive to create a joint force for the metropolitan area. An old example

of cooperation is the city's practice of admitting outside pupils to its schools from towns which make tuition payments. Their number has fluctuated over the years, and reached a high of 1,848 last year. As city birth rates have advanced during and since World War II, the increased demand for classroom space has prompted the board to give warning that it may soon have to curtail its non-resident admissions.

Another and entirely distinct aspect of the situation involves the so-called "free riders." These children come from the remnants of old school districts, chiefly in Greece, parts of which the city annexed over three decades ago, promising free schooling to the children in the remaining portion of each district. Their number totaled only 321 in 1924, but rose to 1,348 last year. Many families have built homes in these school-tax-free areas and stoutly declare their right to have the rich tax property of Kodak Park returned to their district if the city wishes to escape its part in the arrangement. A plan which in effect meets this point was advanced several years ago when the sub-committee on schools of the Council on Postwar Problems considered the merits of a metropolitan school district. Fear that the City Council, which would have to supply a major part of the funds, might exert either too much or too little influence brought its rejection. But since the large district would encompass the expanding city's industries, shopping centers and sub-divisions, it could spread its levies on the total tax base and meet the school needs of all families equitably. Earlier objections have disappeared now that the plan to give the Rochester school board fiscal independence has made the larger scheme possible. But this decision, too, is still before us

Meanwhile the rest of the county has been making rapid strides towards school integration. The success of the first central district, launched at Brockport three decades ago, which progressively drew most of the pupils of nineteen local districts into its modern schools, spurred similar moves in other towns throughout the region. The final decision has rested with the voters in each locality, but the state's action in creating four (later consolidated into two) supervisory districts for Monroe County has helped to coordinate the new developments in towns and villages beyond the urban area. The organization of a Board of Cooperative Educational Services in the westside supervisory district in 1955 has assured democratic expression. An increasing school population in most towns has forced new construction, thus

speeding reforms, while the post-war prosperity has sustained the cost. The nine other counties in the Rochester region, though not under as great pressure from population growth, have rapidly centralized many rural schools and erected fine new buildings, some of which present the most striking note of modernism in these lovely old towns.

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Overlapping responsibilities in numerous other areas have inspired drives for a closer integration of functions. The first and most successful move occurred in the welfare field where, in 1947, all such work was consolidated under a County Social Welfare Department. A year later Rochester sold its airport to the county in order to fix responsibility for the necessary expansion beyond the city limits. The county also has full administrative charge of the sales tax, collecting and apportioning the revenues to its various subdivisions. The proposed unification of city, town and county health services is still under discussion, but at least in the control of the milk shed the city and county inspectors accept each other's reports, thus avoiding a double-check of the 1,380 dairy farms scattered over the seven counties which now ship 193,000 quarts to Rochester daily

The most striking example of coordinated effort, as distinguished from consolidation, is the Monroe County Library Board organized in 1952 to administer state aid to local libraries. It has fostered improved book stocks and other public services in the village libraries but has relieved their limited staffs of the work of ordering, accessioning and repairing books by delegating these functions to the non-professional departments located at the city's main library, thus greatly benefiting all parts of the system. It has also established a cooperative relationship with libraries in two neighboring counties. In similar fashion, the Joint City-County Committee, created in 1953, has coordinated civic-center planning. But now that construction is about to commence here, the plan for a joint body has won legislative authority. No doubt the experience of building this centralized administrative headquarters for the entire metropolitan area will reveal other fields where integration is needed, while the convenience of working together will speed its attainment.

Meanwhile, Rochester has entered into two basic agreements—one with the State for the reconstruction of its major highway system, the

other with the Federal government for the rebuilding of its worst slum area. It is unnecessary to describe these projects or their development here except to note that they represent a coordinated attack on two of our most critical metropolitan problems. The honors Rochester has recently received for its housing program attest its awakening in that field.

The vitality of the central business district can only be preserved by assuring the automobile an unimpeded access to its stores and offices. The popular preference for private cars over buses has long since been demonstrated, and while in some cities commercial expansion has made any concession to this preference impractical, the special character of Rochester's metropolitan growth, notably its preponderant industrial emphasis, has given it an enviable opportunity to achieve the desired goal.

Yet the development of a central business district, with department and specialty stores, office and warehouse buildings, financial and civic headquarters, concentrated on a more limited area than during the 1890's, has left a wide fringe of decay which will certainly spread if unchecked. Thus the effort to replace some deteriorated portions of this fringe with broad traffic arteries, parking ramps, civic buildings, and, near the rail lines, light industry, promises to restore free movement and functional utility to the central district. If the depressed areas beyond that fringe can also be redeveloped for wholesome residential use, the metropolitan heart of the Genesee country may regain full vigor. The fact that Rochester's home-building permits have dropped during the last five years from one fourth to one tenth of the urbanized area's total makes the restoration of sound residential values throughout the city a fiscal imperative, as Mayor Peter Barry has recently declared.

This and other hopeful objectives depend of course on intelligent planning, and fortunately the efforts to coordinate city and county functions in this field are also progressing. We are reminded of the urgency of this step by the day-to-day announcements of inner- and outer-loop developments, impending thruway connections, new suburban shopping-center projects, additional subdivision schemes, and the migrations of old and new factories. Experience tells us that unless these crucial developments are coordinated, Rochester may find itself in the desperate fix that almost all large metropolitan centers face today.

The city has been spared some of the more rigorous effects of this development partly because of its absorption in light industry but chiefly because of the moderation of its growth. The crisis apparently sharpens as a community passes the 500,000 mark, and, according to the recent census count in this area, Rochester with the thirteen towns included in its milk and gas basins has already reached that figure. Zoning boards have demarcated extensive new industrial tracts in ten of these towns, assuring ample space for this vital aspect of the city's strength; but a glance at the map will reveal that some of these are dependent on the 100 trucking companies which already burden the area's highways; only comprehensive planning can safeguard our future.

If integration in planning is desirable on a staff and administrative level, it is equally necessary in the legislative and political spheres. The leadership occasionally supplied by private groups of citizens—the cycle and auto clubs in earlier years, the Chamber of Commerce and various civic improvement associations, the Council of Social Agencies, the Bureau of Municipal Research, and local party organizations—such leadership is indispensable. So also is that provided by state and national authorities, often, as we have seen, in connection with cooperative efforts to build roads, improve housing, schools and other public services. But the future of Rochester's metropolitan growth depends in the final analysis on the local development of broad and responsible units of government and equally broad conceptions of the community of interest.