

# ROCHESTER HISTORY

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## OUR CITY TODAY

Some Facts and Figures  
of Economic and Civic Import  
on Rochester, New York

By BLAKE MCKELVEY

Rochester is an urban community situated astride the lower Genesee River in western New York State. It is primarily a manufacturing city, the dynamic heart of Monroe County, which comprises its metropolitan area and numbered in 1957 approximately 578,000 residents. Nearly three fifths of them live within the municipal borders which spread out from Lake Ontario on the north to and beyond Elmwood Avenue, some eleven miles to the south, and from the Barge Canal, looping around the southwest, roughly to Winton and Culver Roads on the east, a breadth of approximately eight miles. Its 21,760 acres include 1,930 of park land, some of them jutting into neighboring towns where several suburbs have mushroomed in recent decades. Indeed the built-up portions of five adjoining towns and four adjacent to them extend in irregular patches as far as ten miles in some directions to make a loosely unified community of nearly a half-million inhabitants.

Variously known as the Flower City, the Kodak City, the Home of Quality Products, Rochester is also the commercial hub of the Genesee Country. This rich agricultural province stretches thirty-five or more miles to the east and to the west and as much as fifty to the south. The eight counties sometimes included with Monroe in Rochester's service area swell its total to approximately a million people. A land of rolling hills, refreshing lakes, fertile and productive grain and dairy farms, orchards and truck gardens, it sustains many thriving towns, three of

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which have attained modest urban proportions. This beautiful and prosperous hinterland has within the last decade displayed fresh signs of growth, reflecting and helping to support the resurgent vitality of its central city, whose prospects for metropolitan expansion have acquired a luster comparable to that of the 1920's.

Rochester has for over a century held a secure place, population wise, among the increasingly numerous second-flight cities. While it never attained major rank, it has surpassed several old rivals and fluctuated between twenty-first and twenty-fifth place among American cities after 1870, ending as twenty-third in 1940. With the upsurge of new urban giants in the West and the South, nine bounded ahead during the forties and possibly another three or four since then. Rochester's metropolitan rank similarly declined from twenty-eighth to thirty-fifth during the forties and has probably slipped another notch or two in more recent years. Yet, because of the city's special industrial character — the manufacture of technical and other finished products for nationwide consumption — this renewed vitality throughout its vast market is a guarantee of its own stable growth.

As we shall see in a more detailed review of its economic situation below, Rochester's prospects are exceptionally bright, provided national prosperity continues. Yet these generalizations, though accurate enough for the city as a unit, may sound a bit florid, for they tell only part of the story. Ours is a fair and prosperous community, but, like all others, it also has its problems. Some are of the normal housekeeping variety, intensified by renewed growth, and present a continuing challenge to local government. Others result from blemishes that have developed because of a failure over the years to meet every such problem as it arose. A true description of our city must include a review of its municipal structure and of its quasi-public organization, too, as well as an assessment of the proficiency of their operations.

Of course a full description of any community must include more than the sum of its individuals, a measure of their material output and an appraisal of its civic arrangements. But we will have to defer a review of its social and cultural characteristics until a later issue.

### **The Rochester Economy Today**

As an industrial city, Rochester has a relatively high proportion of its workers engaged in manufacturing. Indeed only a half-dozen met-

ropolitan areas displayed a greater concentration in this respect in 1950. The percentages, which fluctuated upward between 43 and 50 during the preceding decade, have tended to drop slightly (to 45 per cent for September 1947) in recent years as the non-manufacturing occupations have expanded more rapidly since the cessation of hostilities in Korea. This slow transformation may be hastened if the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway greatly stimulates Rochester's commercial activity. However, the historic character of the city's industries, most of which require only limited imports of raw material and produce relatively light shipments, suggests that port developments will be promoted cautiously, if at all, and that the city will remain predominantly a technical manufacturing center.

Indeed the prospects in this respect are most favorable. The mounting demands of the American economy for technological products have maintained a steady pressure on most local firms for a larger output and have encouraged them in turn to expand their work forces. Many fluctuations have of course occurred as automation and other shifts in the economy have had their effects, locally as elsewhere, but the Rochester labor area retained throughout 1957 an enviable rating as one of sixteen in the country classified in the balanced labor supply category. Approximately one third of its workers are listed in the census under professional, technical and skilled categories, which is a higher proportion than that of any of the other large metropolitan areas and should assure it a fair share of the jobs of building the new and more efficient machines still to come. The *Labor Market Letter*, issued by the New York State Employment Service, reported at the close of 1957 that "Factory weekly and hourly earnings had reached record highs again in November" when the averages stood at \$89.88 for 40.1 hours, a gain both in pay and in leisure time during the year.

The output per man-hour has also increased markedly in recent years. Although comparable figures are unavailable, the Census of Manufacturing records an advance of 78 per cent in the value added by manufacturing in the Rochester area between 1947 and 1954. The total thus employed increased by 3.6 per cent in that period and the payrolls by 40 per cent. Despite some inflationary effects hidden in these statistical trends, the community's industrial health is clearly revealed.

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Approximately 34,000, or 30 per cent of the county's factory workers, are employed by the Eastman Kodak Company. The leadership that concern has achieved in its field for Rochester is further demonstrated by the fact that other local firms engaged in the production of photographic and optical goods and other instruments employ almost 13,000 additional workers, or more than any other industrial category. The nearest rival is that of electrical machinery and equipment, which has expanded markedly in recent years and may soon equal a third of all in the photographic and optical companies. The men's clothing industry, the food processing plants and the makers of machinery (other than electrical) each employ 8,000 to 9,000 workers, while somewhat lesser numbers are engaged in such categories as printing and publishing, transportation equipment, primary and fabricated metal parts, and other durable or non-durable goods. The *Labor Market Letter* shows that, of the total employed in manufacturing in September 1957 (113,900, the year's monthly record), 31.2 per cent were women.

The Eastman Kodak Company plants have grown so rapidly that they are now grouped under several divisions. Kodak Park, the largest, employs 21,000 in the many buildings that crowd its 900-acre site on Lake Avenue two miles north of the business center. It produces photographic film, paper and chemicals and shelters the Kodak Research Laboratories and other special services. The Hawk-Eye Works, situated east of the river in factories of a strikingly modern design, produce photographic lenses, filters and optical-mechanical products for photographic use, as well as Recordak microfilming equipment. The third and oldest division, Camera Works, is located adjacent to the Kodak Tower building and is the manufacturing center for both still and motion-picture cameras, projectors and other photographic equipment. These two divisions have recently been consolidated as the Apparatus & Optical Division. The offices occupy the nineteen-story tower which overlooks downtown Rochester and provides the high point on its skyline. Another and much smaller division, Distillation Products, has sprung up more recently near the city's northwestern border to house the many production activities that have resulted from the company's researches in the field of molecular distillation; among its products is a group of vitamin concentrates.

While no local competitor approaches the Eastman Kodak Company in size, several in the photographic field have attained a distinctive

position in specialized lines. Thus the Haloid Company, which celebrated its semi-centennial in 1956, early concentrated on the development of quality record paper and photocopying machines and has in the last few years pioneered in Xerography. Meanwhile Graflex, a younger and smaller concern, has specialized in rapid-action cameras. Both firms, employing 1100 and 700 respectively, have recently developed suburban sites to facilitate future expansion, and the latter has moved its entire force into a spacious new factory bordering the canal in Pittsford.

Of the several local companies engaged in the production of optical and other instruments, Bausch & Lomb is by far the largest. It has won international distinction for its microscopes and binoculars, its optical glass and lenses designed for all conceivable uses. The 4500 employed at its St. Paul Street plant produce a variety of ophthalmic articles, notably spectacle frames and lenses, and comprise the largest body of optical workers in the world. Two other major firms, the Ritter Company and Taylor Instrument Companies, specialize respectively in dental and scientific instruments. The latter, which employs over 2000 at its West Avenue factory, has recently achieved a new advance in the field of automation through the development of its Trans-Scan-Log control system, enabling one man sitting at his desk before a panel of gauges to control operations encompassing as many as one hundred measurement variables.

The manufacturing of electrical equipment has long been a local specialty, but it is only within the last decade that the activity in this field has achieved second place in the Rochester industrial picture. The largest concern in this group, the Stromberg-Carlson division of General Dynamics, enjoyed a long history as an independent, a firm which moved to Rochester in 1902 and was only consolidated with the recently formed General Dynamics in 1955. Although its local production of television equipment has since been discontinued, the increase of its work in tele-communications' production has required an expansion of its staff at the Carlson Street site, developed in the twenties, while a new emphasis on electronics and on the manufacture of instruments for atomic reactors has prompted the division to acquire the vast Bond Company plant on North Goodman Street. These rapid strides have boosted its payroll to nearly 8000, second largest in the city. A second major firm, the Delco division of General Motors, traces its

origin back to the North East Electric established at Rochester in 1908 and acquired by General Motors in 1929. It has recently expanded its work force to 3600 and is described as the largest producer of small motors in the world. In addition to making tiny machines to operate numerous automobile gadgets, its factories on Lyell Avenue produce automatic heating equipment and other mechanical appliances.

Only two of the other electrical-equipment manufacturers have attained major size. The General Railway Signal Company, which traces its origin from a pneumatic signal company of the 1890's, has specialized in electric controls since the early 1900's. Despite fluctuating fortunes marked by successive expansions and contractions in the work force at its factory on West Avenue, it is today one of the twenty leading firms in the city. A much younger firm, the Fasco Company, organized in 1921, grew rapidly during the late forties and acquired two plant sites on North Union and Bickford Streets. Its workers produce medium-size electric motors for ventilator fans and other uses. The General Electric Company has acquired a factory at Brockport within the last decade and has already brought another 750 jobs to the Rochester metropolitan labor pool.

Rochester's third major industrial category, in number of workers, is men's clothing and apparel. Once the city's dominant occupation, employing over 15,000 a half-century ago, this industry has slowly contracted its operations during the last two decades and now averages around 9,000 production workers. Of the major companies, the youngest, Bond Stores, Inc., has the largest force and is now located in its original plant on Martin Street. Michaels-Stern, the oldest, with over a century of experience, has its headquarters in an 1893 factory on Clinton Avenue North, close to the downtown business district. Fashion Park, barely half as old, is situated much further out that street and, like Timely Clothes on Portland Avenue, represents a merger of two or more earlier companies. Each of these three firms employs 1,000 or more workers in the production of quality clothing for men, a field in which Hickey-Freeman also on North Clinton, with its greater reliance on skilled craftsmanship, still excels nationally. Among accessory enterprises, the Hickok Manufacturing Company, and Superba Cravats, Inc., makers of belts and neckties respectively, are the largest.

The more numerous food processing concerns give less permanent employment to another 9,000 workers. One of the oldest, the R. T. French Company, dating from 1876, has a stable work force of 450 on Mustard Street where it manufactures spices and sauces that command a wide market. The Tobin Packing Company, with its Arpeako brands, the Beech Nut-Life Savers, Inc. and Gerber Products (whose baby-food sales topped \$100,000,000 for the first time last year), employ permanent staffs of around five hundred each. The Quaker Maid Company in Brockport and Duffy Mott in Hamlin have similar work forces which expand sharply during the rush seasons when they process the rich harvest of area fruit and vegetable farms.

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A city of many industries, Rochester has more than a dozen other companies whose employment varies from 500 to as much as 5,000. The Rochester Products Division of General Motors is the largest, and its plant on Lexington Avenue, with 1,000,000 square feet under one roof, is the biggest factory structure in the area. Its work force, ranging between three and five thousand, produces steel tubing, carburetors, cigar lighters, keys and other automotive parts. Next in size is the Gleason Works on University Avenue where some 2,500 build intricate gear-cutting machines to equip automotive and other factories throughout the western world. Three additional machine makers, the American Laundry Machine Company on Glide Street, the Consolidated Machine Tool Company on Blossom Road and the Commercial Controls Company on Leighton Avenue, each employs between 500 and 1,500 workers. The last has recently been acquired by the Friden Calculating Machine Company of California, and, as its Commercial Controls Division, continues its manufacture of office equipment. It has ventured into the production of space heaters in a factory on Culver Road taken over from the Schlegel Manufacturing Company which has moved to the suburbs. The laundry machine company was a product of an earlier consolidation, forty years ago, securely within its own control.

The great wave of industrial mergers, which has swept across the country during the last few years, has hit Rochester with exceptional force chiefly because of the fact that until recently most of its concerns were locally owned and operated. Advancing technology has radically changed the situation. Independent companies of modest

size can now seldom realize the advantages to be derived from active research laboratories, vast sales promotions, the integration of patents and production for regional distribution. General Motors demonstrated the gains to be reaped from consolidation in the twenties and absorbed Delco at the close of that decade, establishing its second division here in 1939. More recently, as we have seen, General Dynamics has acquired control of Stromberg-Carlson; Friden, of Commercial Controls; while the Farrel-Birmingham Company of Connecticut has purchased the Consolidated Machine Tool Company, the Revere Camera Company of Chicago has absorbed the Wollensak Optical Company, and Graflex has become a division of the General Precision Equipment Company of New York City. Yawman & Erbe on Jay Street has passed through the hands of several outside owners during the past decade and is today a subsidiary of the Sterling Company of Buffalo. Still another important Rochester factory, the Todd Company, which employs approximately 1,000 workers at its plant on University Avenue, has merged with the Burroughs Corporation of Detroit. Todd, like most of the others thus absorbed, will continue its earlier specialties, in this case the manufacture of check protectographs and the printing of checks, but new decisions for each of five scattered plants with headquarters in Cincinnati.

Of course Rochester has not been a passive observer of this industrial trend. In an earlier age of consolidation its leading firms absorbed many competitors in distant cities, often moving them bodily to Rochester. When the anti-trust laws checked that practice, some local companies purchased or developed plants abroad to produce beyond the tariff and other trade barriers. Today, Eastman has one or more factories in five foreign countries; Taylor Instruments and Bausch & Lomb each has three such branches, while four additional Rochester concerns have one apiece. Still another local firm, the Pfaudler Company, has determined to maintain its independence by extending its operations to four distant countries in an endeavor to retain its position as the leading manufacturer of glass-lined tanks. Pfaudler, as well as Eastman, operates a plant in another American city too, and several of the clothing and food-processing firms have branches in regional towns, but no local company has as many subsidiaries as Rochester's leading publisher, the Gannett Newspaper Company. Its chain of twenty-four dailies and four radio and tele-



vision stations is largely confined to upstate New York, but one city each in Connecticut, New Jersey and Illinois is represented, and the company has recently branched out and acquired a television station in California. Indeed, barely one fourth of its 4,500 employees reside of these factories will come from the head office.

Thirty of the city's leading firms employ 80 per cent of its industrial workers, leaving perhaps 25,000 to over 900 smaller companies and privately owned shops now operating in Rochester. Scarcely a third of the total work in factories controlled by outside companies, though of course the shares of some local firms are widely distributed. In the case of Eastman, an international enterprise, nearly four fifths of the stock is held outside of Rochester, yet no place, not even Greater New York, matches the proportion held locally. The management however is rooted in Rochester, in this and in other local firms, and the direction of the city's industrial enterprise is still in the Rochester area.

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In addition to its tradition of home management and its emphasis on skilled labor, the Rochester industrial community has other striking characteristics. Its high percentage of female workers, most noticeable in the clothing and food-processing fields, extends into other categories as well. Exceptionally low turnover rates and a minimum of work stoppages indicate a stable labor force. The last factor also reflects the absence of union-organizing drives. Indeed, while organized labor has in the past won a secure place in the clothing, food, steel and electrical machine industries, its leaders there and in a few scattered plants elsewhere have long since developed mature relationships with management. A.F.L.-C.I.O. unions hold bargaining contracts in half the city's leading firms, while a few others have strong independent unions. Several non-union companies, following the example set by Eastman, have generally maintained good working conditions and reasonably high wages, and some have recently matched or bettered union demands for vacations with pay and other benefits. At least five companies employing approximately 38,000 workers have adopted the practice of distributing annual wage dividends based on the length of employment and the size of the stock payments. In Eastman's case these often represent an extra month's pay check for all workers with five years standing. Twenty other firms share their

profits with some 30,000 employees on the basis of length of service. Several factories provide dining rooms, recreational facilities and other features to alleviate the drudgery or the monotony of their employment and promote plant loyalties. At least twenty publish weekly or monthly newspapers featuring the activities of the workers as well as those of the company.

While the great majority of the city's smaller enterprises are, in effect, housekeeping industries, essential to every city, a few have achieved national prominence in specialized lines. Thus numerous printing establishments make that a major occupation in Rochester, and one firm, in addition to the Gannett Company, has acquired national prominence. The Lawyers Cooperative, a publishing house with 600 employees, performs a unique service for its professional subscribers throughout the country. In similar fashion, the Rochester Button Company, with but 400 workers, produces a major share of the American output in its field which is of course a tangent of the clothing industry. The Consolidated Vacuum Corporation, an offshoot of Kodak researches, is the Rochester Division of Consolidated Electrodynamics of California and produces in addition to its standard line of vacuum pumps, a new device for use in guided missiles and aircraft.

Although its manufacturing specialties help to distinguish Rochester from other cities, more than half its residents derive their livelihood from other sources. The 27,000 (24,000 in the city) in retail trade in 1954 are proportionately less numerous than in most towns of comparable size, and the same disproportion holds in the wholesale field and in transportation services. This of course reflects its industrial concentration, and yet Rochester has undeveloped rail and water potentialities that could transform its character. Thus the St. Lawrence Seaway may revive the now dormant activities at the Genesee port. Such a development will depend on the city's rail connections to the south, all four of which have atrophied in recent decades. Already the Rochester-Pittsburgh division of the Baltimore & Ohio shows interest and plans a modernization of its facilities at the port. The export of its coal may eventually be balanced by the import of iron ore or other raw materials from Canada. Possibly some of the oil barges, which now supply the fringe of tanks on the city's southwest border and comprise a major portion of its Barge Canal

trade, will find a new opportunity, with the installation of short pipelines, to serve the lake commerce.

While the activity on some of these old trade arteries has declined in recent decades, that on the highway and at the airport has mounted steadily. More than one hundred state and national trucking companies conduct a thriving business at Rochester. Their combined shipments are estimated by informed local observers at 40 per cent of the 1,500,000 annual rail tonnage. A count of automobiles entering and leaving the city in 1947 totaled nearly a million in one day. This traffic has increased greatly during the last decade and is swollen by the weekly flow in summer months of approximately 59,000 cars (and over 32,000 a week in winter months) passing to and from the State Thruway at Exits 45 and 46. Three airlines make a total of over 400 scheduled stops at Rochester each week and already threaten to overtax the modern airport completed only a few years ago by the County of Monroe on the city's southwestern border. Its passenger load, augmented by the traffic of the sixty private planes of residents and firms who operate from its hangers, exceeded 400,000 in 1957, which is nearly double those carried in and out of the city by bus. Together these services handle more than half the number who use the New York Central station, served by its major east-west lines, with twenty-three scheduled trains each day.

The city's banking institutions represent a major coordinating force in the economy. While they play a somewhat lesser role in a manufacturing city than in one engaged primarily with commerce, since the major firms rely more on the accumulation of reserves than on bank credits, the handling and administration of these reserves has become an important function of the Rochester banks and has helped to bring industrial representatives into strong positions in the banking hierarchy. The leading banks are known for the firms they serve, and the consolidations that have occurred in recent decades have not only reduced their number but have tended to group the city's industrial enterprises into closer alliances as well. The banks serve many other functions. The credits they extend to commercial ventures have assumed a new regional aspect as the Rochester banks have established branches in more than a score of towns scattered throughout the Genesee Country. They have in recent years increasingly pooled the savings of modest citizens generally and have made them available through small loans

to enterprising merchants, ambitious householders and impatient consumers, thus accelerating the pace of the city's economy and contributing to its surging growth.

Several additional organizations help to integrate Rochester's miscellaneous industrial and commercial activity. Most prominent and most effective is the Chamber of Commerce with its offices and lunch-conference rooms conveniently located on St. Paul Street in the downtown business district. Its growth over seven decades has produced one of the largest chambers in the country, numbering at the close of 1957 nearly 6,800 members. Its staff of twenty executives maintains a ceaseless watch over the community, checking all trends in industry and commerce and promoting civic activity and public safety, among other matters. A closely allied organization, the Industrial Management Council, has quarters in the same building and gives intensive study to problems arising within its more restricted field. Other organizations serve special business purposes—the Real Estate Board, the Better Business Bureau, the Convention and Publicity Bureau, the Rochester Clearing House.

Still different objectives bind many workmen together in unions and federations. Over two score of these bodies, some with numerous local units, represent nearly 60,000 members in the Rochester area. Although organized in loose federations—the A.F. of L. Central Trades Council, the C.I.O. Regional Council and miscellaneous Independents—they exert their chief power as craft or industrial unions and in this form have secured contracts with most though not the largest of Rochester's manufacturers and with its leading utility and commercial enterprises other than retail stores. Although still an object of fear and suspicion in some local quarters, the unions have won praise in others for the contributions they have made towards a stable organization of the labor force and towards harmony within each industry. They have also on occasion supplied an additional voice on important community issues affecting the Rochester economy or its civic life.

Many of those employed in industry and commerce are of course clerical workers, two thirds of whom are women, and this category, not generally organized, shows a steady increase, percentage-wise, in recent decades. The number of managers and other officials has been more constant, but the percentage of professional and technical workers

has mounted slowly, while that of laborers has dropped off sharply. Many technical workers find a ready demand for their talents in the major industrial firms and in the numerous concerns that serve them, such as the forty or more architectural offices, the thirty-odd advertising agencies and similar groups of independent engineers, accountants, insurance and real estate men. Members of that last calling have been especially active during the last decade as the shortage of homes has spurred many renters and newcomers to buy.

Home building has in fact become a major industry in Rochester as in other expansive towns. The First Federal Savings and Loan Association has made annual surveys since 1948 which show a total construction of 18,500 new homes in Monroe County in the last seven years. The values have risen steadily, and the median price for new houses last year was practically double the \$10,000 figure for 1950. The sales value reached \$53,600,000 on 2,800 homes in 1956 and included an estimated \$21,500,000 in wages. When commercial and industrial construction is added, the total output assumes major proportions, comparable to that of the clothing or electrical machine industries. Nevertheless the 6,500 listed in the 1950 census as engaged in this occupation comprises a smaller percentage of the total than is true in boom towns of the Southwest. Rochester has a larger representation in some other fields—4,000 in utilities, 4,500 in education, 6,000 in various medical services and 5,300 in public administration. It is time that we turn to consider the organization and activities of that last group.

### The Civic Scene

Rochester inaugurated its council-manager government in January 1928 and, although important changes have occurred during the past three decades, the structure is still basically the same. A city council of nine members, chosen at biennial elections for overlapping four-year terms, names the mayor and a few other officials and selects the city manager who has general executive responsibilities. The manager has direct charge over Rochester's financial affairs and over most of its administrative functions. But the city proper, while a distinct entity, is also a part of the County of Monroe, which likewise has a management form of government. Since the two governments share some responsibilities in common and divide others, they face a constant

need for coordination. They receive their powers from the State of New York, which also maintains administrative functions within the local community, as does the federal government in its turn.

Of course these agencies do not operate in a vacuum. They spring from and are responsible to the public will, as marshalled by official party organizations, and they are subject to the interpretations and directives of the courts. Moreover they are supplemented by many quasi-public citizen efforts to instigate, implement and control community services. The mounting demands of urban life and the added complexity of metropolitan growth present a constant challenge to intelligent leadership in a democratic society.

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Rochester's council-manager government is based on several extensive amendments adopted in 1925 to the old (1907) city charter. These embodied many of the municipal reforms current at the time—the short and of course the secret ballot, the initiative, referendum and recall, an independent civil service and non-partisan elections. An effort to incorporate proportional representation failed, but the drafters did free the new council from the earlier practice of horse-trading between the aldermen by dispensing with ward representation. Instead, it divided the city into four districts, each to elect one representative every four years, with five councilmen to be chosen at large at the intervening election. A challenge as to the constitutionality of the new arrangement delayed its application until January 1928, when a small council elected under its provisions took office and chose the first city manager. The section on non-partisan elections was soon repealed, and later amendments abolished the initiative and modified other sections.

The city council has in fact remained a political body from the start. If it has not always been a political forum as well, that is chiefly because the predominance of the Republican Party has often limited and sometimes precluded opposition representation. This situation has had the effect of drawing the administrative and legislative functions closer together and identifying the public service more directly with the party in control. While civil-service standards help to maintain the quality and safeguard the status of most public employees, a sense of party responsibility has developed in the top

administrative posts. In recognition of this fact the selection of department heads has been kept separate from the civil service, and these officials, with the city manager, have become, in practice, the executive cabinet of the party government. While this arrangement is not clearly spelled out in the charter, it is not a violation of its provisions either. It has promoted harmony between the legislative and administrative branches.

The council is the decision-making body. It meets regularly twice a month to consider the reports of its committees and its official agents as well as petitions from the public. Within the authority delegated by the state to cities of the first class (all those over 175,000 in population), it may pass local laws changing the structure or function of the government, but only after a public hearing on the matter. It adopts ordinances regulating public activities, and may pass them without delay at one session if its vote on that procedure is unanimous. The council appoints a clerk, elects the mayor who serves as its chairman and is the titular head of the city, as we have seen, and chooses the city manager. It must consider and hold a public hearing on the annual budget the manager is required to submit and must adopt or amend it within thirty days and levy the appropriate taxes.

The mayor is the presiding officer at the council meetings and at other public functions. He appoints nine standing committees of the council from its roster and names the citizen members of a half-dozen other public boards. His services, like those of the councilmen, are part time, and he receives only \$1500 in addition to his salary of \$3000 as a councilman, but he enjoys a position that often enables him to exert real leadership in the determination of public policy.

The city manager holds the key executive position in the municipal structure. He has full responsibility over its administration. Only the courts and the schools, the legislative and the planning bodies, lie beyond his jurisdiction, and he attends the meetings of the latter two and serves as an ex-officio member of the last. He has full authority to name the five major department heads and the directors of four special bureaus as well as the members of five citizen boards or commissions. The five department heads are directly responsible to the city manager with whom they consult on appointments and operations.

Despite numerous changes over the years, these departments cover, as we shall see, much the same functions as at the start, but several additional bureaus have been created and placed under the manager's direct supervision to aid in the over-all administration of the government. Thus the bureau of the budget, the bureau of personnel, that of public information, and lastly public relations, all have a more recent origin and show a readiness to keep abreast of organizational trends in America. The city manager also appoints the civil service commission which gives examinations to determine qualified applicants for some 2,400 competitive positions. It is from the top three candidates in each category that the manager or his appropriate subordinate names approximately 200 annually to vacancies occurring in the public service. The civil service commission also classifies jobs and prescribes rules for promotions, transfers and other personnel matters. The manager represents the city in official dealings with the county, state and federal government.

Four of the major departments also assist the manager in handling staff and governmental functions. The city comptroller, appointed by the manager, heads the department of finance. He names the chiefs of five bureaus—the auditor, the treasurer, the purchasing agent, the assessor and the superintendent of real estate. The last is a recent addition and gathers under one responsible official the management of real properties owned by the city for other than municipal purposes. The corporation counsel, also appointed by the manager, heads the department of law and handles all legal business involving the city directly or the Board of Education. He appoints his assistants under civil service rules, represents the people at utility rate hearing drafts legislation to be presented in Rochester's behalf at Albany, and institutes tax foreclosures and other legal actions essential to efficient public administration.

The department of public safety has the greatest variety of functions and the largest staff of permanent employees. The city manager names the commissioner who in turn appoints the police chief, fire chief, director of parks, and the heads of eight other divisions or bureaus charged with related matters. In addition to the major responsibilities just mentioned, this department originally had charge of public charities, but with the onset of the depression that function was assigned in 1930 to a separate department of public welfare;



after further experience the city's efforts in this field were consolidated, in 1947, with a similar department of the county government and transferred to its jurisdiction. The health bureau, long a part of this department, has even more recently been given full departmental status as we shall see. However, the department of public safety has expanded more than it has contracted over the years. The addition of new functions, such as the bureau of traffic engineering, the radio division, a training division and the youth bureau, mark the city's progressive response to changing circumstances. Several of the traditional divisions have likewise expanded, and the director of parks now supervises 750 employees who help to maintain the parks, the playgrounds, the street and forest trees and the cemeteries. The fire chief commands about 600 men, and the police chief 500.

The department of public works, also under a commissioner appointed by the manager, is a close second in number of employees. Its bureau of sanitation had 715 men engaged in refuse collection and street cleaning in 1955. The bureau of maintenance has charge of street construction and repair, sewer maintenance and sewage treatment, refuse disposal, building maintenance and such municipal enterprises as the port, the market and the subway. Even the abandonment of the latter's operation has not released the bureau from its maintenance. These numerous functions require a staff of 670 workers. The bureau of the water works and the bureau of engineering perform other important functions and employ 190 and 90 respectively.

After a protracted discussion the council determined this past summer to transform the bureau of health into a full-fledged department of health. The amendment, formally adopted on July 9, 1957, made the chief health officer the commissioner of health and charged him and his staff with the enforcement of all health laws and ordinances within the city. He has the power to examine into all complaints against nuisances and the duty to use adequate means to protect the public health. The department compiles the city's vital statistics, renders important health services in the schools and through public health nurses, maintains sanitary and laboratory services, and performs functions of an educational and advisory character in various fields including mental hygiene. It has numerous inspectors who safeguard the city's milk and other food supplies and endeavor to reduce the hazards from communicable diseases and to alleviate the hardships

suffered from some chronic diseases. It cooperates in many ways with private physicians and public health institutions and takes an active interest in accident prevention and health precautions generally. And, as we go to press, an agreement has been reached between the city and the county to extend this department's responsibility over the latter and to transfer it to that jurisdiction.

The manager also appoints the citizen members of the several commissions and boards that supervise the city's social and cultural projects. He names the trustees of the public library, the museum commissioners, and those of the war memorial and appoints the city historian under civil service rules. The trustees and commissioners select their directors and staffs under similar regulations. The war memorial building is a recent addition to the municipal scene, opened in 1955, but the three other functions have been active features since the early twenties. The public library, with its central building on South Avenue and 12 branches scattered about the city, is noted for its subject divisional system, its film collection and other features. The municipal museum on East Avenue is a progressive pioneer in the use of habitat-group displays and in hobby and cultural-club participation activities. The historian's program is almost unique among the cities of America. The newest boards to be appointed by the manager are the housing authority and the rehabilitation commission created in 1955 to direct the slum-clearance program previously launched by the council in the Baden-Ormond district and to undertake, with the approval of the council, other urban-renewal or redevelopment projects as they may deem necessary.

Although the city administration has no direct supervision over the public schools or the courts, it does collect their revenues. This responsibility applies, in the latter case, only to the city court which has five judges who adjudicate cases involving civil action by or against residents for sums under \$3000 or criminal actions for misdemeanors and traffic violations. The judges are elected for five-year terms and they act as a body to appoint, under civil service rules, necessary clerks and a chief probation officer who heads a city court bureau of probation. While the city council processes the budget requests of the courts and the school board, it has no control over the allocation of specific funds. Indeed in recent years a move has developed to separate the budgetary responsibilities of the council and

the school board even more definitely. The manager and council now hold the board fully responsible for its budgets. Although Rochester's effort to secure a clear legislative enactment of fiscal independence for the public schools has been blocked by opposition from other communities, the city has maintained this principle in practice during recent years.

The five-member Board of Education dates from the Dow Law of 1899. The elected members serve staggered four-year terms and hold monthly meetings which they have opened to the public. They choose their own chairman and secretary and appoint the superintendent of schools for a six-year term. They have complete administrative responsibility over the system but may and do delegate large areas of operation to the superintendent. The board names, on recommendations of the superintendent made under state and local educational standards, the principals of the city's ten high schools and its forty grade schools. The board determines policies, prescribes the course of study, recommends a budget of capital and current expenditures to the council and supervises its execution when passed. The superintendent is, next to the city manager, the highest paid administrative officer in the Rochester service; in addition to his professional responsibilities as an educator, he had supervision over an expenditure of \$20 million in 1957-58.

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Because of its expansive growth, Rochester has exerted an increasing dominance over the economic and social life of Monroe County which became in 1950 its standard metropolitan area. The resulting interdependence and interrelationships have stimulated many efforts to coordinate city and county governmental activities. The city, as we have seen in the case of public welfare, has surrendered full jurisdiction and responsibilities to the county in some instances, but the two governments have more frequently reached a working arrangement for pooling resources in joint action, or have divided the field as between the sheriff's office and the city police. A forthright example of cooperative action is the Joint City-County Committee created in 1953 to coordinate civic-center planning and other mutual enterprises. The struggle for a more efficient integration is one of the major problems of this as of all metropolitan communities.

Monroe was in 1935 one of the first counties in the nation to adopt the management system. The old board of supervisors continued as the legislative council with the responsibility of appointing a county manager as its executive officer. However, the state laws regulating county government had previously created a number of statutory elective officers whose responsibilities are independent alike of the supervisors and the manager. Other laws have given that board direct responsibility over certain matters that it has not delegated to the manager. Thus the organizational arrangement is somewhat less centralized than that of the city, and its complexities are compounded by the juxtaposition of city and town authorities. Although we need not review the county's organization in full detail here, it is well to note some functions that directly involve, and some boards that directly serve, the city.

Rochester proper elects 24 of the 43 supervisors and pays about 60 per cent of the county real estate tax. The court house located in the heart of the city serves its residents more conveniently perhaps than it does outlying townspeople. Certainly the county clerk, the district attorney and the coroners, all of them elective, perform functions vital to the entire county. Of the elected officials, only the sheriff confines his operations largely to portions of the county outside the city. However, several functions of the supervisors are chiefly directed, at least at present, toward the towns. This is especially true in the case of the water authority and the county library system. On the other hand, Iola Sanatorium and the boards of election and of jurors all serve the county as a whole.

As in the city government, the county manager has a series of major departments, headed by directors whom he appoints, and a number of lesser bureaus and officers under his personal supervision. Among the latter are the county penitentiary and the veterans' service agency, which are available to residents throughout the county. Other appointees of the manager render administrative aid to the county officials, such as the legal adviser and the county civil service commission. The county and city managers collaborate in appointing the office of civil defense, and they are endeavoring to reach an agreement on the creation of a planning commission that will combine the functions of city and county planning under one head. The county manager likewise appoints a county historian, a county sealer in charge of a department

of weights and measures, a budget officer, and a director of sanitation who cooperates closely with the city health bureau in sanitary and health inspections and regulations. He will in the future appoint the head of the newly formed county health department noted above.

The largest of the three major county departments is that of social welfare. It has a staff of over 1,000 workers, about half of them employed in the operation of the county home and adjoining infirmary on South Avenue at the Barge Canal. While this institutional division under a deputy director is the largest, other deputies direct a field-work division, one handling administration, another the county parks. The county, in accepting full jurisdiction over the local welfare programs, relieves the city government of a major responsibility. Yet the fact that 64 per cent of the county's budget is consumed by this department has a misleading implication. Approximately half of these funds come from state and federal appropriations to match local contributions. The city, as we have noted, pays approximately 60 per cent of the county tax, and, since the city and towns are charged directly for the home-relief and medical-care payments made to their residents, any contribution of the towns to city welfare are slight. The municipal officials are relieved of a duplicate function, and the community as a whole benefits from more unified management. The program represents the first demonstration of metropolitan integration.

The department of public works has charge of construction, maintenance and snow removal on 600 miles of county roads, entirely within the towns. It also has jurisdiction over numerous county bridges and buildings, including the court house, but in the current planning for a new civic center the supervisors have collaborated with the city council in creating a Joint City-County Commission to plan and supervise its construction. The public works department also has charge of the maintenance and operation of the Rochester and Monroe County airport. The one remaining county department, that of finance, includes the treasurer, the auditor, purchasing agent and tax collectors. Its most extensive operations fall under that last category and include the administration of the sales tax inaugurated in 1952. The original 2 per cent charge was later increased to 3 per cent and produced a total of \$4.8 millions in 1957, which provided sorely needed revenues to help sustain the towns, villages and city as well as the county gov-

ernment. The successful administration of this tax is another demonstration of metropolitan integration.

The supervisors have no jurisdiction over the schools or the courts except to levy the latter's budgets. There are five judges elected by the county, two for the county court which tries civil and criminal cases and those appealed from the city court, one surrogate who probates wills and supervises adoptions, and two for the juvenile court which handles the cases of children under sixteen. The judges of the first and last courts name probation officers under civil-service rules.

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The state and federal governments also maintain numerous offices and perform useful functions within the city. The county and city courts are of course state courts under local jurisdiction. The seventh judicial district of the state or supreme court is likewise located at Rochester. Its judges are elected and try major cases directly and others on appeal from the county courts. There is a further appeal to a court of the appellate division whose fourth department includes Monroe County and is staffed by judges appointed by the governor from among the elected judges.. A similar division of responsibility occurs in the welfare field where the state has assumed the care of the more severely handicapped. It shelters mental defectives and the insane at the State Hospital and pays all costs for the training of the hard-of-hearing at the Rochester School for the Deaf. It takes intransigent youths that need institutional treatment to the State School of Industry on the county's southern border and removes convicts to more distant prisons but maintains local probation and parole offices for major offenders released under their surveillance within the county. Indeed these and other departments of the state government staff over fifty branch offices in Rochester, some to facilitate the performance of supervisory duties in public health, banking and the like, others to render substantive services to the unemployed, the disabled, the veterans of past wars, or to intercede in labor-management disputes. The state conducts major operations under the public works department which builds highways within as well as beyond the city borders and operates the barge canal.

Local offices of federal agencies perform such functions as the collection of customs and of internal revenue, the distribution of the

mail and the administration of social security. The old post office building at Church and Fitzhugh Streets serves as the Federal Building and houses recruiting offices for the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard and Air Force, and other local offices for the customs collectors and appraisers, for the census bureau, the F.B.I., the federal district attorney and district court, the marshal, the quartermaster and several more. Other federal bureaus maintain offices elsewhere in the city, among them the Federal Housing Administration which has helped to revitalize home building activities throughout the county.

Rochester and Monroe County are represented by four state assemblymen, two state senators and two congressmen. Portions of the city as well as selected towns are assigned to each of the four assembly districts, the two senate and two congressional districts. In the last case, the 38th and 39th Congressional Districts also include adjoining counties, Wayne in the first instance, and Genesee, Orleans and Wyoming in the second. Thus, even in its legislative representation, the city does not stand alone, but is linked with extensive portions of its regional hinterland. In similar fashion the seventh judicial district encompasses eight area counties, and the state and federal administrative offices have jurisdiction over regions of varying extent, in the case of the customs house, twenty-six counties.

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Of course these administrative officials, while responsible directly to authorities in Albany and Washington, are, like the city and county governments, subject in the last analysis to the popular vote as marshalled by the leading political parties. The party organizations are likewise based on local citizen participation. Their control resides in a county committee made up of delegates from the wards and towns and headed by a chairman. Three such party organizations had a sufficient numerical standing locally to secure a place on the official ballot in 1956. The state conducts primary elections every other year at which voters registered in each party select their ward or town committeemen who in turn elect the chairman. The strength of the party depends not only on the support engendered by its platform and the reputation of the candidates it nominates, but also on the energy and effectiveness of numerous ward and district workers.

To win and hold the loyalty of these volunteers, the parties distribute such perquisites as they can muster. Most of these are honor-

ary appointments and give the recipient a sense of status or gratification over his accomplishments in the community's service. The party in power, at the local, the state or the national level, has a number of remunerative appointments to make. Despite the wide application of civil service qualifications, several municipal and county departments are but partly covered, especially in the semi-skilled and unskilled categories, and enterprising ward leaders can generally find modest jobs for their needy friends. The top appointments in the city and county, particularly those with policy-making functions, are also exempt and, while special talent not common to active party workers are usually required, the latter can often rejoice over the appointment of their friends. The state and federal offices in the city present additional opportunities for patronage, sometimes for different parties. While civil-service regulations apply in some instances, the coverage is by no means complete, and perhaps a hundred state and federal posts help to maintain the zeal of party workers.

The parties are not the only groups interested in influencing or controlling the city government's activities. Powerful economic forces often become involved and endeavor to direct the course of public policy. An industrialist's plea to his Congressman for tariff protection, a labor union's opposition to right-to-work laws, the pressure of an aroused citizenry for a county health bureau—these are all wholesome manifestations of a realistic democracy as long as their methods are open and within the law. Indeed a dozen important agencies in Rochester have organized for just this purpose, notably the League of Women Voters, the Citizens Tax League, the Federation of Churches, the Rochester Association for the United Nations, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Bureau of Municipal Research. Many other organizations have committees or public relations directors whose duties include active efforts to influence local or broader governmental policy. Thus the legislative committees of many social agencies and the many divisions of the Civic Development Council of the Chamber of Commerce are but examples of a variety of organized efforts to inspire or steer municipal, state or national action. The individual vote counts one and once, but the organized citizen can express his opinions effectively both early and late.

Moreover, as a free society, Rochester has numerous voluntary bodies that supplement its public provisions in the civic realm. This



is especially true in the welfare field where many forthright social agencies perform significant services not yet assumed by the local authorities. These activities, which reflect important aspects of American democracy, are especially noteworthy in Rochester and help to reveal its character. Their melioristic spirit and the opportunities they present for voluntary participation in good works and in community efforts, as well as the cooperation they inspire from many of the recipients, are basic aspects of wholesome community life as Rochester interprets it. We shall want to develop this phase of the city's contemporary life more fully in another issue, but it is necessary to observe here that no portrait of Rochester's organizational pattern is complete that leaves out of account its health, recreational and character building agencies.

### **Problems and Progress**

But the economic and civic structure of a city is never static. Any description that depicts only its forms is inadequate, for the civic and economic processes are always in motion, tackling or dodging current problems, and building a new if not always a better tomorrow. One can never be sure on that latter point, but at least the animation of the attack in Rochester today has an exciting, almost a thrilling quality.

The major problems have developed on the civic scene partly because of earlier triumphs on the economic front. The success with which the city's industries converted from war-time to peace-time production and achieved a condition of relatively full employment has brought a new surge of growth to the community and presented its civic officials with a host of difficult problems. The historian must await his proper time for an objective judgment on the results, but at least we can note with pleasure that official sleeves are rolled up and dramatic action is occurring in the municipal area.

Perhaps the most dramatic action is that involved in the building of a new civic center. Work on the main portion of this great undertaking has just commenced and will no doubt attract hundreds of kibitzers daily throughout the next eight or ten years. By no means the least thrilling feature of this project is the fact that it represents a new advance in the direction of city and county planning and co-ordination of effort. The decision to go ahead has broken a log jam

that had obstructed progress for a half century, and the prospect now is for a spacious and efficient civic core which may inspire a suitable reconstruction of the adjoining business district and of the aging residential areas that surround both.

Almost as striking as the civic-center project is that of the now partially completed inner loop. This likewise represents cooperation, between the city and the state, and is designed to untie the traffic snarls that have increasingly throttled the downtown section in recent years. The simultaneous construction of an outer loop, and of limited-access arteries leading from the inner loop to the outer and on to the Thruway, with other major state parkway improvements, promises to make Rochester easily accessible from all parts of its metropolitan region.

A third major project concerns the slum district bordering the railroad on the northeastern sector of the business area. The construction of the Hanover Houses in this section a few years ago helped to reveal the need for wider action. The Baden-Ormond Redevelopment plan also calls for cooperation, this time between the city and the federal government, with several tasks to be picked up by private developers. Any citizen can name additional areas on the periphery of the old downtown district that earnestly require reconstruction. Thus the future of the recently created Rochester Housing Authority and Rehabilitation Commission promises to be a busy one for many years to come.

Two other fields of major civic effort are off-street parking and the abatement of water pollution. In the former case the city has undertaken a \$6 million program for the building of several strategically spaced multi-storied structures aimed at increasing off-street parking spaces in the downtown district by 4,000. Two of the projected facilities are already in use and a third is nearing completion while construction will soon commence on two others. In addition the city operates 13 metered lots accommodating over 1,700 cars and has under consideration plans for other temporary answers to this long-range problem.

The city's program for the abatement of water pollution is much vaster in scope. After careful study by engineering consultants it has undertaken a series of projects designed to correct the danger of pollution in the lower river and the bay and to preserve these natural

sites for the best interests of the entire community. A new Tryon Park pumping station is already under construction; chlorinating stations have been installed at sewage discharge points on the lower Genesee, and the engineers have almost completed detailed plans for the enlargement of the main treatment plants and for the enlargement and reconstruction of the main trunk sewers. The city council has approved an estimated expenditure of over \$18 million on these combined projects which have received high praise from both state and national sanitation authorities.

Though less dramatic in scope, a half-dozen other civic projects promise great changes in the Rochester scene during the next few years. The new East High School and the new State Hospital are already under way. The new Northside Hospital and additions to several others have recently been completed. The drive for a unified city-county health department has now succeeded and, with other efforts at city-county integration, presages the emergence of a more efficient form of metropolitan government. An illustration of the close relation between the studies made by volunteer social agencies and new decisions by the political authorities is afforded by the alert response of the county officials to the recommendations of the Vilas Swan Committee for a more efficient use of public welfare facilities.

These are but a few of the current developments that add excitement to the local civic scene. Many others could be listed as well worth watching—the creation of a port authority, for example, or of a youth bureau—but the decisions on these matters are still to come, and we will have to defer comment until a later time. We mention them here only for the reminder that our city will have its tomorrow.