

# ROCHESTER HISTORY

Edited by BLAKE MCKELVEY, *City Historian*

---

---

VOL. XXVI

JANUARY, 1964

No. 1

---

---

## **Rochester Mayors Before the Civil War**

By BLAKE MCKELVEY

News of the death at Buffalo in October 1860 of Jonathan Child, Rochester's first mayor, stirred the city's interest in its ex-mayors. The Common Council ordered the preparation of a commemorative plaque to be placed in its chambers honoring all former mayors of Rochester. Encouraged by the response, the Council moved to acquire and hang a portrait of each ex-mayor. The brief notices of the hanging of some of these portraits in the Council chambers in the early months of 1861 helped to fill out the records of these men in some instances. These with other documents enable us to review the character and contributions of the pre-Civil War mayors.

Twenty-five men served as Mayor of Rochester during the city's first 27 years. The first seven were chosen by the Common Council, of which they were elected members, and the rest, after a charter revision in 1840, won the title by popular vote. Most of them served for one year or less, though three held office by appointment for part of a second year to fill a vacancy, and one by appointment and one by election succeeded himself.

---

ROCHESTER HISTORY, published quarterly by the Rochester Public Library, distributed free at the Library, by mail 50 cents per year. Address correspondence to City Historian, Rochester Public Library, 115 South Ave., Rochester, N. Y. 14604

Despite warm political contests that brought a shift in leadership every year or so, as eleven Democrats alternated with fourteen Whig, Know Nothing, or Republican mayors, all were respected at the time as leading citizens. Most of them had served repeatedly as aldermen, and several also as supervisors; six were later elected to the state legislature and four to Congress. Three served for varied periods as postmaster and two as collector of the port. Yet only one, Jonathan Child, the first mayor, is chiefly remembered as a civic figure.

Most of the early mayors were businessmen, and in spite of the turbulent times all but three enjoyed a high degree of success in their chosen fields. Ten held office as trustees or presidents of local banks, though only two, Abraham M. Schermerhorn and Thomas H. Rochester, were chiefly known as bankers. Six were millers, but again only Thomas Kempshall and Charles J. Hill made that their principal business. Seven were known as merchant wholesalers or retailers, three as manufacturers, four as railroad men, and one as a craftsman. Four actively engaged in real estate promotion, two in insurance, and two in engineering and building activities. Three were promoters of the short-lived Rochester Exchange in 1831, and three others participated in later attempts to establish a board of trade, though all such efforts soon subsided. Only two of the twenty-five suffered penury in their latter years, while one, Joseph Field, died a millionaire.

In spite of their major concern with business affairs, many of the early mayors displayed other qualities of leadership. Five devoted long hours to local militia units and rose to positions of command, three of them to the rank of general—Jacob Gould, John Williams, and Charles H. Clark, though none saw combat action. Three of the mayors were attorneys, and two were doctors, yet only Dr. John B. Elwood practiced that profession. Four were college graduates, three taught school for a time, and three became trustees of the University of Rochester.

Of the 23 whose birthplaces are known, eight came from New York State, six from Connecticut, four from Massachusetts, two from New Hampshire, one from Maryland, and two from abroad. With the possible exception of Thomas H. Rochester, son of the proprietor, all were self-made men, and while many of them traveled widely, four to Europe, only Elisha Johnson and Nicholas E. Paine left Rochester to win a new fortune elsewhere, though five others withdrew to spend their declining years in distant places.

Drawn as we have seen from many walks of life, they marched in dignified procession through the portals of history. Nevertheless, though respected in their day, most of them were indifferently reported in the laconic press of the period, and in several cases even the obituaries were deficient. Perhaps a biographical review of their careers, even at this late date, will bring new material to light.

### **Mayors by Appointment**

As Rochester's first mayor, JONATHAN CHILD is the best known of all and the only one of the early period who is chiefly remembered as mayor. Although a son-in-law of Colonel Nathaniel Rochester, he was an able and useful citizen in his own right, and by erecting the largest and most elegant mansion of the day, he left a lasting memorial in classic design. Born in New Hampshire in 1785, he migrated at the age of twenty to Utica and five years later to Charlotte. He removed to Bloomfield during the war and there met and married Colonel Rochester's eldest daughter, Sophia. He represented the Genesee district in the Assembly at Albany in 1816, and four years later moved finally to Rochester where he opened a store at the Four Corners. On the completion of the Erie Canal he developed and operated a line of packet and freight boats on that artery, and a decade later he was one of the men who organized and built the Tonawanda Railroad, Rochester's first steam line. He was a

trustee of the first Bank of Rochester in 1824 and of the village in 1827.

A man of sober mien and deliberate judgment, Jonathan Child at 49 was the choice for mayor in June 1834 of the Whig majority on the first city council. He lent dignity to its early meetings in the session room in the Court House, but his efforts to restrain the intemperate forces in the community brought the election of several Democrats to the council the next spring. And when that body authorized the grant of liquor licenses to be signed by the mayor, Jonathan Child promptly resigned.

Somewhat relieved by his freedom from official responsibilities, the ex-mayor proceeded the next year to build his sumptuous mansion on Washington Street overlooking the canal. There he weathered the storm of the depression in the late thirties and early forties by converting some of his boats into coal carriers. He became as a result the leading importer of this new fuel. Despondent after the death of his wife in 1850, he moved to Buffalo where his own death in October 1860 provided the spur, as we have seen, to the collection of the mayors' portraits by the Common Council.

Although nine years younger than his predecessor, JACOB GOULD was a successful boot and shoe merchant and a respected citizen when elected at the age of 40 to be Rochester's second mayor. Familiarly known as General, because of his rank in the 4th Division of the New York State Militia, Jacob Gould, who was born in Massachusetts in 1794, had come to Rochester as a school teacher in 1819. In addition to opening a shoe store and a shop in which to manufacture his products, he found time to engage in politics, in opposition at first to the Antimasons and later to the Whigs. He accepted appointment to the Board of Health during the cholera epidemic of 1832 and was chosen mayor by the Democratic majority on the council in July 1835 and again the next January.

Mayor Gould could not survive a Whig revival in 1837, but the renown he had won brought his election as president of the Rochester City Bank and his appointment as a trustee of the Rochester Savings Bank and as a director of the Rochester & Auburn Railway. Having lost his first wife some years before, he married Sarah T. Seward in 1841 and proceeded to reorganize her seminary into a girls' college. Although that venture failed, Jacob Gould was named one of the first trustees of the new University of Rochester in 1850. He also became a director of the board of managers of the Western House of Refuge that year and of the New York Central Railway in 1857. His death came suddenly ten years later as he was feeding a favorite horse in the barn back of the South Fitzhugh Street home he had built in 1825.

ABRAHAM M. SCHERMERHORN, named third mayor of Rochester by the council in December 1836, served only two brief months before resigning to accept the more lucrative post of secretary to the New York State Senate. Born in Schenectady and a graduate of Union College, Schermerhorn had come to Rochester in 1824 to become cashier of its first bank, and he soon became known as the "money king" of the Genesee region. He made at least two trips to England on business affairs and was elected by the Whigs to the Assembly in 1847 and to Congress in 1849 and 1851. He died on a trip to Connecticut in 1855.

As the Flour City it was time that Rochester selected a miller as mayor, and THOMAS KEMPSHALL was named to that post in March 1837. The first mayor of foreign birth, he had come with his parents from England to settle in Pittsford in 1806 and at seventeen had moved to the falls where as a carpenter he had helped build its first mill in 1813. A man of diversified interests, he operated several mills, helped to organize the short-lived Rochester Exchange and an unsuccessful railroad venture. When fire destroyed four of his buildings, he volunteered to

serve as chief engineer of the fire department. Elected successively by the Whigs as alderman, supervisor, and congressman in the late thirties, he served nine months as mayor in 1837. He resumed milling after returning from Washington in 1841, but served again as alderman and in party councils. Yet in 1852 and again in 1857, when the Whigs and the Republicans respectively ran him for mayor, the anti-foreign feeling cost him the election. Fortunately the Civil War dissipated that sentiment, and six ex-mayors marched in his funeral procession on January 17, 1865.

One of the ablest of the early mayors was ELISHA JOHNSON. Born in Chautauqua County and a graduate of Williams College, he had moved to the Genesee in 1817 and purchased 80 acres on the east bank from Enos Stone. Subdividing the land into town plots, he opened a raceway and built a horse railroad north to the Carthage landing. He became the contractor and chief engineer in the building of the Tonawanda Railroad in the mid-thirties. Shortly after accepting the post of mayor in 1838, he broached a plan for the construction of a water works to serve the growing town. The project promised many jobs in that depression year, and the economies in fire-insurance rates would, Johnson predicted, more than pay for the improvement, but the Common Council was not persuaded. Disappointed by the lack of support, Johnson hastened at the close of his term to accept a contract to build a section of the Genesee Valley Canal; removing to Portageville to supervise the work, he erected his fabulous Hornby Lodge nearby. When canal construction was halted because of the depression, Johnson moved to Tennessee where he acquired a plantation and engaged in other engineering projects. Almost forgotten in Rochester, he died at Ithaca in 1866.

THOMAS H. ROCHESTER, sixth child of the town's proprietor, was born in Hagerstown, Maryland, in September 1797 and

came with his parents to the Genesee Country in 1810. As a lad of 18 he was the first of the family to establish his residence at the falls. When, two years later, Colonel Rochester finally moved into town, Thomas decided to try his fortune in Missouri, but he soon returned and married the younger sister of Rochester's first resident clergyman. He became interested in politics, first as a Jeffersonian and later as a Whig, and it was a Whig-dominated council that chose him as Rochester's sixth mayor in December 1838. Hard times cast a pall over Thomas H. Rochester's term and brought his political career to an end. Instead he devoted himself to banking and real-estate promotion and served as president of various organizations, such as the Society for the Promotion of Evangelical Knowledge, the Western Colonization Society, and the Rochester Athenaeum. His charming house on Spring Street, where he died in 1874, ultimately became the headquarters of the Rochester Locust Club.

SAMUEL G. ANDREWS, named in December 1839 as Rochester's seventh mayor, was the last to be appointed by the council. Few of his predecessors had found the position, which was little more than presiding officer at the council meeting, agreeable, and like Schermerhorn he soon resigned to accept appointment as clerk of the Senate in Albany. Born in Derby, Connecticut, in October 1796, young Samuel had come to Rochester with his parents in 1815 and engaged in various mercantile enterprises. He early became a friend of Thurlow Weed, who increasingly drew him into politics, at first as an Antimason, later as a Whig, and finally as a Republican. He held the post of postmaster for three years in the early forties, was president of the Board of Education in 1849, and was again chosen mayor in 1856, this time by vote of the people. His success in that contest prompted the Republicans to name him in 1858 for Congress, and he spent the next two years in Washington. He was, however, glad after one term to get back to his milling and

mercantile business and to his spacious home at St. Paul and Andrews Streets where he died in June 1863.

### **The First Elected Mayors**

Rochester's difficulty in retaining able men as weak mayors was not unique, and in 1840 a state law made the mayors of all cities elective by the people. Early charter amendments somewhat reduced the council's powers and enhanced those of the mayor, thus strengthening his leadership. Several of the first group of elected mayors displayed considerable vigor in exercising their authority.

Born in Groton, Connecticut, in December 1792, ELIJAH F. SMITH, Rochester's first elected mayor, had come to the village in 1826 and opened a store on Main Street that later became Smith & Perkins. Prospering with the town's growth, he became a director of the Bank of Monroe in 1830 and a backer the next year of the abortive Rochester Exchange and the first scheme for a railroad. He served as assistant alderman for the 2nd Ward in 1835 and was nominated and elected by the Whigs as mayor in March 1840. The city under his leadership annexed the lands purchased a few years before for Mt. Hope Cemetery, but economies springing from the depression restrained other needed improvements. Nominated to succeed himself in March 1841, Smith became the first Rochester mayor to serve two full years, but his majorities were slim and he lost in a third trial. His neighbors, however, elected him supervisor for two terms, and he became a director of the Rochester City Bank, of the Western House of Refuge, and of the Genesee Valley Railroad and president in 1851 of the Rochester Savings Bank. A staunch Baptist, he was named a trustee of the University of Rochester in 1850 and served the community there and in other capacities until his death at the age of 88 in 1880.

CHARLES J. HILL, the first Democrat to be elected mayor and the third to hold that office, was also a merchant and a backer



of the Exchange as well as a son of Connecticut. Born there in 1796, he had come to the village in 1817 and became within a decade one of its leading millers. He served as trustee of the village in 1820, as inspector of flour in 1834, and as foreman of fire company No. 1 the next year. Nominated for mayor by the Democrats in 1841, he suffered a narrow defeat but won on a second trial the next March. The affairs of his stone mill on Water Street required his full attention the next year, but he accepted the post of County Clerk in 1844 and became president of the Western New York Pioneers Society. He lived for thirty years on Fitzhugh Street in the first brick house erected in the city in 1821 but removed in the sixties to Prince Street on the east side where he died in 1883.

ISAAC HILLS, Rochester's tenth mayor, was the first to have any legal training. Born in Lenox, Massachusetts, August 15, 1798, he graduated from Union College and studied law with John Dickson in East Bloomfield, gaining admittance to the Bar in 1824, the year he came to Rochester. Elected District Attorney in 1828 and City Recorder in 1834, he supplied the legal skill necessary to formulate the rules and organize the government under the first city charter, and with that experience he took the lead, as mayor in 1843, in drafting a new city charter. Although the charter did not pass the legislature and take effect until after the end of Hills' term, it was chiefly his work and among other changes assured future mayors the power to veto council actions. It also enlarged the mayor's appointive powers, authorizing him to name health commissioners, fee collectors, and assessors who, with the justices of the peace from each ward, comprised the municipal staff. Although not renominated in 1844, Hills remained the vocal spokesman of the Democrats for several years and won appointment as secretary of the Rochester Savings Bank, of the Board of Managers of the Western House of Refuge, and of the Rochester & Genesee Valley Railway. He is best remembered for the

charming post-colonial design of the house he built in 1827 on Plymouth Avenue which he occupied until his death in 1881 and which, on its recent demolition, stirred a new interest in the preservation of historic landmarks.

The Whigs triumphed in 1844 by nominating Irish-born JOHN ALLEN for mayor. A popular leader of the local militia who rose to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel of the 18th New York State Regiment, Allen had come to Rochester in the mid-twenties and was frequently called on to chair a meeting of the Friends of Ireland. Although he declined a nomination for mayor in 1840, he served as supervisor of the 2nd Ward for two terms and headed the Whig ticket in 1843 and again in 1844. Defeated by a small margin on his first try for mayor, Allen won easily in March 1844. He presided at a public meeting to promote harbor improvements and at another to oppose the annexation of Texas, yet despite the enlarged powers available to the mayor his term was not distinguished. When in March 1845 he ran for a second term, the voters split 1523 to 1523, with one defective ballot apparently intended for his opponent, Rufus Keeler. The Board of Elections gave Keeler the victory, but he refused to serve under such circumstances, and Mayor Allen likewise tendered his resignation.

Misfortune apparently dogged Allen's steps from that point on. Even the opposition press remained charitably silent on his affairs. One brief notice, a month after the election, tells of a move by some of his friends to buy back and return his furniture sold at public auction; another in April 1848 reports his appointment as tender of mud lock on the Genesee Valley Canal. A brief item eleven years later mentions the death by suicide of ex-mayor Allen but gives no further details.

WILLIAM PITKIN, chosen by the Common Council to fill the vacancy created by the tie vote and the dual resignations in March 1845, served that year by appointment and won a second

term by popular vote in 1846. A successful merchant since his arrival at the age of thirty from Connecticut, where he was born in 1790, William Pitkin had become a director of the first Bank of Rochester and was in 1842 chosen president of the Rochester Savings Bank. He had served as alderman from the 5th Ward and trustee of the Collegiate Institute before his appointment as mayor. A Whig with anti-slavery sympathies, he completed two uneventful terms and then turned his interest to private concerns. He was the senior warden at St. Luke's Church and active in Episcopal affairs. He became a director of the Rochester Gas Light Co. in 1848, a manager of the Western House of Refuge in 1849, a trustee of the University of Rochester in 1850, and president of the Juvenile Reform Society in 1853. A widower during his term as mayor, he married Louisa Rochester, the twelfth child of the city's founder, in 1848, but unable to persuade her to live in his gracious mansion on the east side, sold it to Daniel Powers and moved to a more proper residence in the 3rd Ward where he died in May 1868.

DR. JOHN B. ELWOOD was the first physician and the only practicing one ever to occupy the mayor's office. Born in Minden, New York, in 1792, he studied medicine under Dr. Palmer in Richfield Springs before coming to Rochester in 1817. Here he opened an office with Dr. Anson Colman and helped to organize the first Monroe County Medical Society in 1821, becoming for a time one of its "censors." He served as village treasurer in 1827 and as postmaster from 1829 to 1838. The success of an operation in which he restored a woman's sight in 1824 established his reputation as a surgeon, while several fortunate real estate investments brought business profits. After a visit to Italy and a sojourn in Florida, where he acquired an orange plantation, Dr. Elwood returned to his practice in Rochester and accepted the Democratic nomination for mayor in 1847. A bachelor, he found time, too, to meet with the trustees of the projected City Hospital, and to serve the patients who

called at the small Greek temple building at the corner of Fitzhugh and Buffalo Streets where he maintained his office. When dispossessed to make way for the second Court House in 1850, he located on Mt. Hope Avenue for a time, but moved in the late sixties to Spencerport where he died in 1877.

Rochester's fourteenth mayor, JOSEPH FIELD, was perhaps the most successful of the pre-Civil War chief executives. Born at Taunton, Massachusetts, in 1787, he came to Rochester at the age of thirty as a commission merchant from New York. He took an active part in canal and railroad conventions and became the owner of a flour mill and a director of the Rochester City Bank. He helped to build and became a director of both the Tonawanda Railroad and the Rochester Gas Light Co. A Democrat, he served the 3rd Ward as alderman in 1841 and as candidate for mayor carried the election for that party in 1848. Though not a temperance advocate, he pledged a strict enforcement of the recently enacted license restraints and he backed an increased appropriation for the Board of Health to enable it to combat an expected cholera epidemic. Alarmed to discover that no exact records had been kept of the location of the early storm sewers, he ordered a survey to prepare an accurate sewer map. On his retirement in March 1849 he gave a supper to the 16 members of the Common Council and received a silver pitcher as a token of their appreciation.

Elected president of the Buffalo and Rochester Railway in 1851, Field became a director of the New York Central when in 1853 it acquired that property as a part of its cross-state line. Although defeated as a Democratic candidate for Congress in 1852, he served in the fifties as director of two banks, the Gas Light Company, and the Western House of Refuge. Described a decade after his retirement as the "most popular and most efficient mayor Rochester has had," he continued to reside in his spacious house at the corner of Fitzhugh and Troup until

his death in 1879 when many were surprised to learn that he had left an estate valued at over \$1,000,000 and had bequeathed \$30,000 to local charities.

If perhaps less successful in a material sense, and possibly less popular personally than his predecessor, LEVI A. WARD, the fifteenth mayor, was more widely associated with the city's affairs and made more significant contributions to its development than any of the early mayors. Born in Hadden, Connecticut, in 1801, he had migrated with his parents to western New York and came to Rochester in 1818 to represent his father's expanding interests there. He took the lead in forming a debating club and other societies and soon became an officer of the Rochester Athenaeum and a trustee of the Collegiate Institute. His abilities as secretary of the Monroe County Mutual Insurance Co. made him the leading insurance agent in the city. He became director of two banks and of the Gas Light Co. in the forties. Elected in 1841 to the first School Board, he served also as Supervisor and alderman for the 6th Ward before his election as mayor in 1849.

A member the year before of a vice-prevention committee, he vigorously enforced the license provisions, curbing saloons and other establishments. But in October when he suddenly trebled the night watch, it was for another purpose—to aid in removing the bodies of cholera victims. Mayor Ward met the challenge of that epidemic with courage, but he declined a second term, preferring to spend his remaining years in more tranquil business affairs.

Tranquility was hardly a Ward quality, however, and Levi A. Ward soon found himself embroiled in the struggle to effect a merger of many widely scattered telegraph lines and the equally hectic battles between rival gas and insurance companies. On the side he became the backer of the geological collections of his nephew, Professor Henry A. Ward, and a direc-

tor of the City Hospital and of the Western House of Refuge. A trustee of First Presbyterian Church and later a founder of St. Peter's Presbyterian Church, he took special delight in inviting neighbors and friends in for pumpkin pie parties at the year's end in 1866 and after. Among the tributes that marked his passing in 1881 was a bronze tablet erected in his honor at St. Peter's Church.

### **Mayors of the 1850's**

The era dominated by the pioneers closed with the retirement of Mayor Ward. His successors for the most part were younger men, and, reversing the earlier ratio, six of the ten who served in the fifties were Democrats. Only three of the mayors were prominent businessmen, but one of these and at least two others displayed able leadership in civic and community affairs. Two who had previously resigned appointments as mayor now accepted election and one went on to Congress. And although four were but faintly recalled even in their obituary notices, all conscientiously performed their official duties.

SAMUEL RICHARDSON, elected by a sizable majority in March 1850, was the first craftsman to occupy the mayor's office. Listed as a wood turner in local directories from 1834 to 1864, he was active in the Hickory Club and in other Democratic affairs. He served two terms as alderman before his election as mayor, and he filled that post with affability if not with distinction. Encouraged by the popular recognition he had won, Richardson ventured in 1851 to establish a small woodworking shop where for a time he employed fifteen men in the manufacture of laths, but he sold out and left the city in 1863. A brief notice of his death in Franklin, Pennsylvania, in January 1883 identified him as an ex-mayor of Rochester but supplied no other details.

NICHOLAS E. PAINE, who succeeded Richardson as mayor, was also a Democrat but there the likeness ended. Born in New Hampshire in January 1808, he studied and practiced law in

Maine before coming to Rochester in 1842. A relative newcomer, he was a Mason and became an active member of Brick Presbyterian Church. He served as district attorney from 1845 to 1848 and in 1847 received a nomination to the school board over which he was to preside for two years.

Elected mayor in 1851, he delivered an inaugural address that displayed a grasp of the city's problems equal to that of his ablest predecessors. He urged that the practice of McAdamizing the streets be abandoned and that stone pavement be used in its place, particularly on the principal streets, and that improvements in the sewer system proposed by Mayor Field in 1847 be promptly undertaken; he recommended the establishment of a workhouse and more adequate support for the schools; he pledged strict enforcement of the laws, even those he did not fully approve, until revisions were properly enacted. Of course that last statement was an allusion to the liquor licensing provision, and his pledge aroused criticism from some party members. Factionalism among his friends as well as among the Whigs created an atmosphere of turmoil in the council, obstructing the accomplishment of some of his projects, but the first three were at least initiated and Paine survived to win the Democratic nomination to Congress in 1857. He lost the election, but President Buchanan appointed him Rochester postmaster in 1858.

Ex-mayor Paine took part in organizing an oil refining company at Rochester in 1861, the first in the state. When transport difficulties clouded its prospects, he removed to New York City in 1868 where he engaged in numerous promotional operations and became president of the Dakota Railroad Co. before his death in March 1887.

The Democrats again elected a mayor in 1852, HAMBLIN STILWELL. Born in Saratoga County around 1805, young Hamblin had come to Rochester in the late twenties as manager of a

packet-boat agency. Becoming active in party councils after 1840, Stilwell served as alderman in 1842. Though an unsuccessful candidate for the Assembly in 1844 and 1847, he was appointed commissioner of Mt. Hope Cemetery in 1850 and two years later won the nomination and election as mayor. A return of the cholera scourge darkened his term, and the Mayor was harshly criticized for leaving the city during the epidemic. Stilwell's friends sprang to his defense, however, citing as his excuse a severe illness, which continued to plague him. Despite his broken health, they elected him supervisor in 1862 and again in 1863, but he never fully recovered and died at the age of 65 in 1870.

Mayor JOHN WILLIAMS, who succeeded Stilwell in 1853, was perhaps the strongest executive of the decade. Born at Utica in 1807, he had come to Rochester as a miller's apprentice in 1824 and soon acquired a mill of his own. He married a daughter of Warham Whitney, one of the city's leading millers, and on her early death he married her younger sister, thus maintaining the family tie and becoming in time a partner in Whitney's enterprises and president of the short-lived Merchants Exchange. Active in Democratic politics, he served successively as supervisor, school commissioner, and alderman from the 2nd Ward before his election with a comfortable majority as mayor. His inaugural address followed that of former Mayor Paine in some respects but added a recommendation that a water works should be provided and a caution against permitting the railroads to encroach upon the public streets. His sympathies for fugitive slaves prompted some critics to call him an abolitionist, yet the Democrats nominated and elected him to Congress in 1855. He became an officer of the state guard during the Civil War, rising to the rank of Major General of the Seventh Division by 1870. He served for three terms as city treasurer in the early seventies and died in office in 1875. For the first time the new City Hall was draped in flags for an ex-mayor's funeral.



The mayoralty contest in 1854 was confused, with three candidates dividing the smallest vote in five years. DR. MALTBY STRONG, with barely 40 per cent of the total, was declared the winner, but as a Whig he faced a hectic term with a Democratic-controlled council. Born at Heath, Massachusetts, in 1796, and a graduate of Yale in 1819, he had come to Rochester in 1832 and Maltby seemed to many of his opponents as a spokesman from the past. His inaugural followed those of Paine and Williams with a slight rearrangement of topics. He avoided any mention of the divisive issue of anti-Catholicism, which had played its part in the election, and his refusal to take a stand on this question may have contributed to the victory in the next election of the Know Nothing party. A licensed physician, he seldom practiced his profession, preferring the business of miller and land speculator in which he engaged until his death in 1878.

CHARLES J. HAYDEN, who frankly espoused the Know Nothing cause, won election as mayor in 1855 with the smallest plurality in a decade. Born at Pompey Hill in Onondaga County in March 1816, he came to Rochester after a sojourn in Michigan, in 1843, and soon had a furniture store on State Street and a factory at the lower falls. Active in Whig politics, he became the leader of the Know Nothing faction and on his election as mayor delivered an inaugural that focused for the first time on political rather than civic issues. His bitter attack on immigrants and Catholics stirred considerable resentment and little was accomplished in his term. Mayor Hayden made a tardy effort to heal the wounds by inviting all the aldermen to a strawberry festival and later to a formal dinner and hastened to join the Republican party at the close of his term, but he never again ran for elective office. He was, however, appointed chairman of the commission that built the City Hall and a member of the committee that supervised the elevation of the New York Central tracks. Despite a succession of fires that destroyed varied

parts of his plants, his furniture factory continued to prosper and was at the time of his death in 1888 the largest in the Rochester area.

SAMUEL G. ANDREWS, the first in 1856 to be elected mayor by the Republicans, focused his second inaugural address on the city's fiscal problems. Unable or unwilling to push ahead with sorely needed street and sewer improvements, he nevertheless followed ex-Mayor Strong's lead and extended the council a farewell party at the close of his term, giving it a more fitting end than his hasty resignation on his first appointment as mayor almost two decades before. A man of cultivated tastes, he was pleased in 1858 to win a seat in Congress and hastened off for two exciting years in Washington.

The Democrats recaptured the mayor's office in 1857 with RUFUS KEELER as their standard bearer. Born at Galway, New York, in 1808, he had come to Rochester at the age of 20 and engaged in the leather business. He served a term as supervisor and two terms as alderman in the forties and was the leader of the party's Free Soil wing. He erected a tannery, became a director of two banks and engaged in real-estate promotion. He made a business trip to Europe in 1856 and on his return was nominated and elected mayor. His inaugural revealed that he had read and studied those of former mayors Paine and Williams, but he added a few new proposals, notably a recommendation that the city press its reconstruction of Main Street Bridge to a speedy completion. His faith in that project prompted him to acquire the southwest corner at the Main and St. Paul Street intersection, and long after his death in 1875 his heirs erected Rochester's second skyscraper, the 12-story Chamber of Commerce Building, sometimes called the Keeler Building, on that site in 1895.

CHARLES H. CLARK, elected by the Democrats in 1858, was Rochester's youngest mayor. A law student, he had come to

Rochester in 1845 and soon opened an office in the Reynolds Arcade. He served as alderman for the 6th Ward before his election as mayor, but his inaugural displayed little interest in current municipal problems. He would not, he declared, lecture his fellow councilmen on subjects with which they were as well acquainted as he was. He was chosen Colonel of the 54th New York National Guard in 1863 and made trips to Albany and Washington to argue the city's claims for larger exemptions from the draft. Following the war, he won promotion to Major General of the state guard. He also served for a time as treasurer of the Home for Idle and Truant Boys, but an investigation of its accounts revealed irregularities that brought a number of forged papers to light. Overwhelmed by these exposures, Clark succumbed to a heart attack in November 1873, and the press, made charitable by the spectacle of widespread calamities that winter, suggested that an attack of insanity had perhaps accounted for his forgeries.

SAMUEL W. D. MOORE, elected mayor by the Republicans in 1859, had long experience in public service. Born in New London, Connecticut, in September 1806, he had come to Rochester at 21 as a cooper and soon became engaged in various mercantile enterprises. He was also active in Whig party affairs and served successively as alderman, deputy clerk, police justice, and school commissioner before his election as mayor. A Mason after that affiliation became respectable, he was identified with the Know Nothing faction in 1854 but hastened two years later to join the Republican party. As mayor he delivered a capable inaugural address, following the pattern set by Paine and Williams, but added a plea for improved street lighting and for the use of glazed pipe in sewer construction. After his first term as mayor he served as supervisor from the 8th Ward and was again nominated and elected mayor in 1866. Twice married, he died in April 1870.

HAMLET D. SCRANTOM, the last mayor before the Civil War,

had come to Rochester as a child of six when his family arrived in 1812 to become its first permanent settlers. He had later sought his fortune as a young man in other towns but returned to Rochester in the forties, serving as head clerk in several offices and banks. Nominated by the Republicans for mayor in 1860, he held office at the outbreak of the Civil War the next spring. He hastened a month later to accept the proprietorship of the Congress Hotel, which he managed until shortly before his death in 1881.

Aside from the obvious fact that the pioneers who became mayor were more numerous before than after 1850, few striking changes were apparent. Democrats served as mayor more frequently in the fifties than before, but most of them, like the Whigs, were bankers and businessmen, and each party had more successes than failures. Indeed, only one Whig and one Democrat finally succumbed to misfortune, though several others suffered private reverses. A few of the mayors had interlocking family ties—for example, T. H. Rochester with Child and Pitkin who married his sisters, and Andrews and Williams who married Whitney cousins—but the latter two disagreed in politics, and opposition to the Rochester clan was strong enough to prevent the development of anything resembling an “establishment.” The mayors were, in fact, a representative selection of community leaders, and if their brief terms discouraged the development of long-term programs, they at least assured a democratic expression of citizen viewpoints on many civic questions.