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The Changing Face of Rochester

By BLAKE MCKELVEY

When a stroll up Main Street brings the soaring lines of the new Security Trust building into view; when the Civic Development Council stages a luncheon forum on the city's public-housing and urban-renewal plans; when the Rochester Society of Architects assembles an exhibit of recently completed buildings under the title "Why Modern Architecture;" when the daily papers report the delighted reactions of the first residents to move into the new Plymouth Towers, and when another article tells of plans to widen Durand-Eastman beach, we cannot escape the realization that the face of Rochester is changing. It is growing older and its lines are becoming deeper. We would like to think, with the aging couple in Plymouth Towers, that "the view is beautiful (as it surely must be from their window) and the place just suits us; we love it," but the changes are not all pleasing.

This, of course, has ever been the case, as two recently published photographs of Main Street Bridge demonstrated. One, of the late 1860's, with the southern side open to the river, showed the graceful arches of the bridge and the attractive vista it afforded; the second, a more recent photograph, showed the more familiar backs of the structures that line the south side

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of the bridge today. As we have learned to appreciate the rustic charm of that scene, when viewed from Broad Street Bridge, current plans for the reconstruction of Main Street Bridge stir feelings of apprehension as well as hope concerning the effects new changes will have. Since Rochester desperately needs many improvements, we are all generally excited about some impending moves that promise to make the city more attractive. Perhaps a candid appraisal of what we have will help establish the basis for genuine advances.

The Rochester Profile

We have discovered, however, that it is easier to make changes in the Rochester skyline than to attain architectural distinction. At least many new buildings have appeared on the skyline, giving its profile a more jagged appearance, without achieving a unified and satisfying effect. Possibly the changes in some cases are too recent, and we have not yet become accustomed to them. Good or bad, they will stand out as innovations until we see them as parts of an emerging community. And, although the details are not all gratifying, we can at least appreciate and savor their good qualities.

Take, for example, the most striking intrusion on the Rochester skyline, Midtown Tower. Victor Gruen's outstanding success with the interior plaza is not matched in the tower, which despite several novel features does not strike many observers as distinguished. And yet motorists, driving in on the Eastern Expressway and slowed to a crawl as they dip under Clinton Avenue to approach the Inner Loop, get an impressive view of Midtown Tower. As the sun catches the diamond-shaped panels between the windows on the upper section, it can have a spectacular effect. Moreover, because of the varied proportions, textures, and forms of the lower buildings in the complex, the appearance of the tower changes from every angle. This gives it a visual interest rivaled by few other local

structures.

Much has been said in Rochester and elsewhere of the lively and yet leisurely scenes enacted daily within the Plaza itself. It has become a focal point for the entire metropolitan community, and two years after its opening one can always find, amidst its ever-shifting throngs of idlers and busy passers-by, a few open-mouthed and incredulous onlookers who are visiting it for the first time. It is pleasant to see their excitement, which is not unlike the delight of visitors to Tivoli Gardens in downtown Copenhagen, only this carnival is free, and we are participants.

Fortunately, the excitement in the Plaza spills outward into its environs. The faces of Rochesterians shopping on Main Street and other downtown retail districts generally appear slightly worried as they rush along (and the effort to avoid a collision with other shoppers or to find a place on the crowded crosswalks can be nerve-wracking), but turn into the former Cortland Street entrance to Midtown and the furrows seem to disappear! The danger of a collision is not diminished, and the chances of a fall in winter are greater, but for some reason the atmosphere has changed and the spirit is gayer. The atmosphere changes again on Elm Street, for here we have a new old-world scene in the making, with the rear windows and doors of shops that face on East Avenue beckoning, and one recalls the delights of similarly narrow and winding streets of shops in far-off Edinburgh or Salzburg. This is Rochester, New York, and the temptation to buy can be put off to another day, but it is pleasant to see the contrast within and on the periphery of the Plaza between small and large stores and among the numerous specialty shops. Best of all are the spectacular views of the city now available for the first time to the public from the dining room and cocktail lounge on the fourteenth floor of Midtown Tower.

But if the face of Rochester is brighter here, it is noticeably

saddened in another and older district of specialty shops—on Front Street. There a long, slow decline in vitality is reaching the bottom as plans for the demolition and reconstruction of the area progress. Indeed, the decline has gone so far that few will mourn the arrival of the bulldozers. We will get some new skyline vistas as work progresses on the Genesee Crossroads project, and hopefully some new and improved river vistas as well.

One of the striking features of Rochester's profile is the number of its vistas. Never planned as a gridiron town, the city expanded over the decades along the routes of old township and county highways, and since Rochester was the milling and trading center of those early days, the major highways radiated out from its center, creating in effect a wagon-wheel pattern. Fortunately, the pattern is sufficiently irregular to escape monotony, and, driving in on any of the principal spokes, motorists will catch a glimpse at one point of the Kodak Tower, at another of the Lincoln-Rochester turret or of the Genesee Valley "Wings of Progress." The shifting course of the Eastern Expressway not only brings each of these towers into the view of motorists speeding into town, but also affords dramatic glimpses of Rochester's urban and suburban landscape and reopens interesting vistas of neighboring hills and valleys.

Downtown Main Street has long supplied Rochester's favorite vista. Unfortunately, the Powers Block tower, which stands out as one looks down this street from either direction, is now marred by advertising signs. So are the tops of several other structures—structures once proud enough to disdain the crude custom of mounting a nametag on their roof. The Powers Block, alas, has fallen even lower, and serves now as a sandwich man! What ignominy for that old structure, the Flower City's most famous landmark!

Rochester has lost, only temporarily, we hope, two of its favorite skyline symbols. Apparently the oldest of these, the Liberty Pole, is to be restored, at least symbolically, with the

clearing and landscaping of the triangle at the intersection of Main, Franklin, and North Streets. Seventy-five years have passed since the fall of the second Liberty Pole at that site on December 27, 1889, and the re-creation of an open space there will add historic dignity to the face of Rochester.

We can also confidently hope that the statue of Mercury, now in storage, will eventually find a suitable place on the Rochester skyline, which it graced for seventy years. But long before Mercury took his stand atop the Kimball tobacco factory smokestack in 1881, two favorite Rochester vistas had been closed off, and the prospects of their restoration are now receiving consideration.

The first, of course, was the view of the Main Falls from Falls Field. Every visitor during the town's first half century and many before and after rode or strolled down along the east bank to Falls Field for a look at the tumbling Genesee and the deep gorge. Thousands gathered there to witness Sam Patch's fatal leap on Friday, the 13th of November, 1829; other thousands went there to picnic on its scenic slope or to see the circus clowns and other entertainers that encamped on the site. Every description of Rochester written prior to the 1880's mentioned the falls as a principal attraction, and a bicycle pavilion opened on Falls Field in 1883 continued its popularity for another two years. But the intrusion of industrial plants in the mid-eighties finally closed it to the public.

The erection of Platt Street Bridge in 1891 restored a view of the falls, but it was no longer the same sylvan vista and failed to gain a favorite position on the schedule of Rochester visitors—except those guided in recent years by the City Historian. When the now-dwindling industrial uses of Falls Field are someday replaced by appropriate public uses, Rochester will regain one of its most attractive features. Possibly a current study of the river's potentialities will speed the proper redevelopment of this spectacular site.

Lost forever is the other favorite vista of the town's early decades—the view up the river from the open southern side of Main Street Bridge. That prospect included not only a sight of the Genesee tumbling over the small upper falls and churning through the arches of the Erie Canal aqueduct, but also a view of busy flour mills on both banks of the river, and, best of all, a moving panorama of canal boats pulling slowly along the canal and across the aqueduct. Sidewalk superintendents today will seldom equal that outlook, which was closed off in the mid-1870's when Main Street property owners built four-story structures east and west along the southern edge of the bridge, matching those on the north side.

As a partial recompense, however, they created Rochester's unique Ponte Vecchio, which is quite a sight itself when viewed from modern Broad Street Bridge. And Broad Street Bridge has, of course, taken its place as a deck over the Erie Canal aqueduct, now abandoned even by the subway cars. An opening on the southern side of Main Street Bridge cannot recapture the old view, but it could, especially from the second story, open an interesting new vista up the river, one framed by the Library on the east bank and by the War Memorial on the west.

The Aqua Festival last summer renewed Rochester's interest in the river vistas along the upper Genesee. For the many thousands who lined the river banks in Genesee Valley Park, these events provided a suggestion of the pleasures enjoyed there during the boating seasons for almost a half century before the First World War. It will require more than an annual festival to restore the Genesee to its proper place in the Rochester scene, but if the urban-renewal projects now in prospect or still to come do not remove the relatively unused tracks from both banks and reopen them to more appropriate urban uses, the city will be the loser. Certainly, recent developments at the River Campus and the completion of the Plymouth Towers across the river demonstrate the high potential values of the

upper river valley.

In contrast, the potentialities of the Genesee gorge, from Platt Street north to the lake, have until recently been almost completely neglected. One vista from a side road in Seneca Park, from which one can see the soaring arches of the Veterans' Memorial Bridge in the distance, suggests the spectacular possibilities that are awaiting a generation wise enough to open the gorge to an interested public. Current planning has happily accepted the challenge.

Fortunately, Rochester has done more with its pinnacle hills. Although the opportunity to overlook the city from the pavilion on Highland Park is now lost, a grand view can still be had from the drive on top of Cobbs Hill. These parks themselves and four others within the city limits rank high among its attractions. With the great elms and other trees that line all the residential streets, they provide Rochester in summertime with a leafy canopy that hides or at least shadows many of its architectural deficiencies.

Architecture

If architecture, as someone has said, is the most public of the arts, it is generally the most neglected and the least appreciated. It often requires a fire or a report that a building is to be demolished to prompt us to look at it with sufficient interest to appraise its style and form. Sometimes that is all we have time to do before the wreckers appear. So many fine old buildings have disappeared in the past two decades that it is an open question whether changes in this field have been for the better or for the worse. Some of the new construction has, however, achieved architectural distinction, and at least in the variety of styles the community is the richer.

On a mention of architecture in Rochester, one thinks first of the few remaining mansions built by the millers and others in

the 1830's and after. The classic pillars and porticoes of the Ely or D. A. R. house, the Campbell-Whittlesey and the Jonathan Child mansions are our favorite models of the Greek Revival period, and the accepted symbols of architectural taste. Choice examples of other early styles also exist in Rochester, notably the Oliver Culver house for the Post-Colonial, the Historical Society's Woodside for the classical block-mass building, and lovely old St. Luke's Church for expressions of the Gothic Revival style. A number of distinguished mansions have been demolished in recent years, but fortunately several that remain are choice representatives and well merit preservation.

It was in 1936 that the new Society for the Preservation of Landmarks in Western New York first rallied Rochesterians to the defense of threatened mansions. First to arouse concern was the Campbell-Whittlesey house, which was acquired the next year. In the course of preserving and restoring that mansion, the Landmarks Society engendered sufficient interest to acquire the Jonathan Child mansion and a few other historic houses. It could not, however, save those that stood on the tract chosen for the new Civic Center or in the way of other expanding urban functions. So many fell in the old Third Ward that all there seemed threatened as widespread deterioration prompted the authorities to designate that ward for urban renewal. Fortunately, enlightened officials, welcoming the cooperation of local residents and of the Landmarks Society, have determined to preserve as many as possible of the buildings of architectural and historic distinction, as well as those found to be structurally sound, and to replace the others with buildings designed to harmonize in scale and proportion with those retained. The object is to restore, not a Georgetown or a Williamsburg, but a wholesome neighborhood where, as in former years, residents of varied circumstances and of all origins and faiths can live in friendly harmony.

Prominent on any list of those to be saved in the Third Ward

are, in addition to the three mentioned above, the Churchill, Bronson, and Hess houses on the west side of Plymouth Avenue, the Hopewood house on Greenwood, the Brewster house on Washington, the N. T. Rochester house now occupied by the Locust Club on Spring Street, and the Gould-Watts house on Fitzhugh now again threatened.

Interest in the preservation of worthy landmarks has spread to all parts of the city. In addition to listing several score of historic houses in the old Third Ward, observant citizens have named many elsewhere that merit preservation. Fortunately, on lower East Avenue the Perkins house has become the home of the Genesee Valley Club, the Silas O. Smith house, the seat of the Rochester Historical Society, and the Daniel Powers house, the headquarters of the Boy Scouts.

With these choice examples of the Greek Revival period secured, friends and residents of the avenue determined to safeguard worthy representatives of other architectural styles. A favorite was the brownstone house, built by Josiah W. Bissell in 1844 in the English Gothic style of the popular Downing cottage, which now serves as the nucleus of the Methodist Home for the Aged. Constructed of stone salvaged from the first Erie Canal aqueduct, it has an historic significance rivaled only by the George Eastman mansion, a sumptuous example of late Georgian revival erected in 1905 and now the headquarters of the George Eastman House, Inc. Several of the more striking examples of the Victorian era have disappeared to make way for churches, the museum, and numerous apartment houses, but a sufficient number remain to assure East Avenue a rich variety of styles. Fortunately, most of the elms that have long graced this proud thoroughfare have survived, despite the ravages of traffic and of natural blights, and the city has recently announced plans to extend this colonnade of trees from Alexander to Chestnut Street.

Scattered representatives of early architectural styles may be

found on several other streets. Two well-hidden examples of pre-Civil War Greek revival architecture are the Douglas-Ward house at the corner of Grove and Windsor Streets back of the Y. M. C. A., and the stone house at the corner of Clarissa Street and Centre Park. On Mt. Hope Avenue, adjoining the small Gothic office of the Ellwanger and Barry nurseries, stands the Patrick Barry house built in 1855 in the Italian Victorian style and now in process of restoration as a residence for the university provost. No small part of its charm derives from its setting in a grove of century-old trees, each a prize example of the nurseryman's art. Across the street, a quaint battenboard cottage of still older vintage adds architectural distinction, while farther out the avenue stands the Horatio G. Warner castle, a stone replica built in 1840 on the model of an English castle. Many legends surround its turreted walls, which now enclose the herbarium of the county's park department.

Few streets can rival East and Mt. Hope Avenues for architectural survivals. The Elmwood Cottage built in 1848 in the Victorian Gothic style of A. J. Downing and the comparable Danforth house are the only ones remaining on Genesee Street and West Avenue, respectively, and the latter, now preserved by the city as a recreation center for senior citizens, seems secure. Most of the pretentious houses that once lined parts of Exchange and Lake, North St. Paul, and South Clinton have long since disappeared or have suffered such extensive remodeling for commercial use that few authentic details remain. Nevertheless, fair examples of the gingerbread trim that was popular in the latter decades of the last century may still be seen on a host of modest houses on side and back streets in the older parts of town.

The most historic Rochester home of this type is the one at No. 17 Madison Street where for many years Susan B. Anthony resided. It was Miss Mary Anthony, Susan's schoolteacher sister,

who purchased the house in the early 1880's and made it a center of women's rights activities in Rochester and a base for Susan's wider campaigns for woman suffrage. Here Miss Anthony wrote extended portions of her "History of Woman's Suffrage" and helped Ida M. Harper compile many chapters of the three-volume biography. Fortunately, this unpretentious but roomy house, which sheltered the Anthony sisters until their deaths in 1906 and 1907, was acquired in 1945 by the Susan B. Anthony Memorial, Inc., which has restored and furnished it as a fitting local memorial to Rochester's most famous citizen.

* * *

The most substantial work of the late eighties and after was in brick and stone in the heart of the city, where a business district was taking shape. No longer would the old Four Corners suffice as a retail center for, with the erection of the Wilder Building in 1887, legal and business offices pre-empted the area. James G. Cutler, who designed that building, Rochester's first skyscraper, followed the style of H. H. Richardson, America's leading architect, with happy results. Its masonry piers are clearly evident in the brick sheathing, and the Romanesque design provides a contrast to the Gothic tower and mansard roofs on the northern corners. J. Foster Warner, perhaps Rochester's ablest young architect of that period, won the contest for the design of a new court house in 1893 with a drawing that borrowed heavily from the Italian Renaissance, and many citizens still treasure the product.

Warner displayed a more eclectic spirit in his design for the Granite Building, the first structure in Rochester to be built with an all-steel frame in 1891-93. Yet its facade, with the window panels set off by Greek columns and topped by Roman arches, seems less attractive today than the simpler design of the Commerce Building erected a year later on the opposite corner.

In the latter, designed by Leon Stern, the windows and intervening panels rise in unbroken lines, simulating the flutings of a Greek column, to the twelfth floor, where they appear to support a wide cornice that resembles a Corinthian capital. Unfortunately, the building, like many in its day, was faced only on two sides, and its height readily discloses its unfinished character. Moreover, pigeons seem the only residents who appreciate this architectural novelty—to the dismay of pedestrians at this corner for seventy years. A broad canopy suspended over the sidewalk at the second-story height might restore this building to public favor, but it will need a proper face on all four sides if it is to be retained when the Genesee Crossroads project is completed across the street.

The depression of the mid-nineties checked building activities, and when work resumed a decade later several architects were ready with fresh ideas. J. Foster Warner gave the new building designed for the Sibley, Lindsay & Curr store sufficiently spacious lines to enable it to expand over a large block and to rise to greater heights without losing an air of structural unity. Claude Bragdon showed greater originality in the design of the new New York Central Station, incorporating a driving-wheel motif in the central tier of arched windows and employing other railroading details geometrically in the decoration. Bragdon's design for the Universalist Church on Washington Square was also original, displaying the influence of his study with the great Louis Sullivan as well as his interest in the Japanese. A more direct tie with Sullivan appeared in the Frank Lloyd Wright house, built on East Boulevard in 1908.

Uncertain of the contemporary taste, the designers of the Memorial Art Gallery turned back to the Italian Renaissance for a style suitable for that building erected on the Prince Street Campus in 1913. The Eastman Theatre, built almost a decade later, also recalls the Italian Renaissance as interpreted by McKim, Mead and White, the leading American firm of the

day. Its builders achieved some spectacular effects in the use of space and by the combination of varied functions in the interior, where, too, murals by Ezra Winter and Barry Faulkner were featured. The architects of the new Men's Campus, Gordon & Kaelber, chose the Georgian Renaissance style and employed brick with a stone trim to achieve a warm spirit.

When designing commercial and industrial buildings in the 1920's, the same local architects broke free from traditional style patterns. They designed the Kodak Tower buildings and many other structures on simple functional lines. Only when a turret was required, or an impressive entrance, did they display originality, as in the circular tower for the Rush Rhees Library of the University, the "Wings of Progress" for the Genesee Valley Trust Company building, and the high-pitched Gothic pinnacle, topped by a beacon light, which boosted the height of the Kodak office building another 100 feet in 1931 and assured it top place on the Rochester skyline.

Again depression halted most building activities, giving architects a chance to catch up on their home work. When in 1934, William Kaelber and Leonard Waasdorp designed the Rundel Building for the Public Library, they applied a more modern version of the Renaissance style and achieved a unique feature in the foundation facing the river. There a series of openings, matching the windows above, permit an overflow from the raceway underneath to spill out in a symbolic demonstration of the fact that the power house in modern society is a library. A decade later, the same team of architects freed themselves of any traditional style and gave Bausch Hall of the Museum of Arts and Sciences a balanced design of simple but strong character.

When, however, the University decided to merge the men's and women's colleges on the River Campus in 1962, it engaged the New York architectural firm of Eggens & Higgins as con-

sultant to Waasdrop & Kaelber in the preparation of a modern design for the new women's dormitory. A favorable response to that structure soon encouraged the University to commission its local architects to build two tower dormitories and a dining hall on the old athletic field also in the modern idiom. The resultant cluster of modern dormitories on the northeast corner, with a row of modern laboratory buildings on the southern edge of the campus, provides a new architectural variety to the University, which still centers on its original quadrangle, now shaded by towering elms and enclosed by vine-covered halls dedicated to science and the humanities.

An even more dramatic swing towards modern architecture is evident at the new St. John Fisher College and on the design boards of the projected new campuses of the Rochester Institute of Technology and the Monroe Community College. It is too early to judge the latter, but the modern Gothic bell tower at St. John Fisher College and the vaulted roof of its new gymnasium are interesting architectural innovations. They contrast with the more traditional English Gothic design of nearby Nazareth College and with the more ecclesiastical Gothic of Colgate Rochester and the German Gothic of St. Bernard's Seminary. But the contrast is more moderate than that promised at the new campuses and possibly also in new additions at St. John Fisher and the University of Rochester.

Perhaps the most striking architectural changes have taken place in church designs. The new First Methodist Church on East Avenue, designed by A. Hensel Fink of Philadelphia in an American Gothic style, most closely represents the traditional; but the contrast it affords to old St. Luke's, which was the American Gothic of its day, is as sharp as it is with the English Gothic of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, a neighbor on the avenue, designed and built in 1896 by the New York firm of Heines & La Farge. A much sharper break occurred when the Mormons raised the pitched roof of their new chapel on Reser-

voir Avenue and the Catholics built the St. Thomas More Church on East Avenue along similar lines.

No Gothic traces whatsoever appeared in the modern designs of Rochester's three latest churches or temples. Thus the leaders of Temple B'rith Kodesh, in moving out from their lovely old stone edifice, built in the Romanesque spirit of H. H. Richardson in 1894, determined to consult the Talmud and other sacred records for architectural inspiration. The twelve windows in the high cylindrical tower of the new Temple on Elmwood Avenue shed a symbolical light over the congregation and give purpose and meaning to the design provided by Pietro Bellucusi. Stylized stained glass windows likewise provide major features of the new Temple Beth El on Winton Road. Designed by Percival Goodman of New York, the walls are shaped to represent an open book, and the fine craftsmanship evident in the Ark of the Covenant has won an award for excellence. Diagonally across Winton Road stands the new Unitarian Church by Louis Kahn of Philadelphia. The sharp lines of its bare brick walls, enveloping four corner towers that admit an indirect light to the sanctuary below, are stripped of all architectural decoration, and even the windows set in deep recesses are uncompromisingly plain. Gray and unpolished concrete walls and piers on the interior eliminate all extraneous traditions, emphasizing the uncluttered simplicity of the church's doctrine.

Few buildings in the Rochester area rival these three churches in architectural boldness. Many architectural students have visited Rochester individually and in groups during the last few years with the express purpose of inspecting one or all of these edifices. Some have shown an interest, too, in the new East High School designed on modern functional lines by Faragher & Macomber of Rochester, and in the new airport terminal designed by Benedict Ade also in the modern idiom.

The new Civic Center buildings, rising from one section of an unfinished plaza, seem to lack the majesty they may acquire with the completion of that vast complex, but meanwhile the river plaza of the War Memorial is developing charm with the growth of its trees and the location there of the striking form of the Spanish-American War eagle by Carl Jennervein.

Several new bank buildings and a few industrial plants have attained architectural distinction. Although in all candor we must lament the loss of the old Rochester Savings Bank building, at the corner of Fitzhugh and Main Streets, and the current destruction of the Lincoln-Rochester Trust building at the Four Corners, at least their replacements are in the modern idiom. The Community Savings Bank and the Central Trust Company won first prize in successive Better Downtown Contests, and Columbia Banking took the prize for its new circular bank on East Avenue when the area of the contest was broadened in 1963. The new Kodak Research Laboratory and the stunning new entrance plaza and hall to the office tower on State Street supply other architectural attractions, rivaled by several new suburban factories, notably the Strasenburgh Company plant on Jefferson Road, Dynacolor's new building on Mt. Read Boulevard, and portions of the new Xerox industrial park in Webster.

Architects have supplied interesting designs for several lesser buildings in recent years. Two small blocks of doctors' offices, one on East Avenue designed by Todd & Giroux and the other on Park Avenue designed by Valvano & Valvano, fit inobtrusively into residential neighborhoods. Mrs. E. K. Botsford's dancing studio by Roger Shepard and the new Dewey Avenue Branch of the Rochester Public Library by Storrs Barrow & Associates have attracted favorable comment for their functional designs. Perhaps a dozen private residences by varied local architects display modern functional traits (the current exhibit of the Rochester Society of Architects includes three

stunning examples), but in this field the traditional patterns prevail. Local architects ready and able to make fresh new advances in this field have found more promising opportunities in the design of new institutions, as the Children's Nursery on South Avenue, the Pavilion Nursing Home on Alexander Street, and especially the new town library in Greece by Waasdorp, Northrup & Kaelber, demonstrate.

The Social Scene

Although fresh architectural innovations have brought variety to the face of Rochester, the major changes have occurred in the social and ethnic fields. This aspect of the subject merits fuller treatment in a separate article, but we must here glance briefly at its principal features in order to catch some of the animation that gives vitality to Rochester's changing face.

A rereading of Leroy Snyder's reminiscent account of "Rochester Since 1915," a paper delivered before the City Club in 1937 and published two years later by the Rochester Historical Society, reveals how extensively we have changed during the last twenty-five years. In reviewing the developments of the preceding two decades, Snyder noted as outstanding the disappearance or at least declining influence of ethnic groups, the emergence of a suburban population, which comprised a fifth of the city's real total, and the mushrooming enrollments in the secondary schools.

As we, in turn, look back, we see that the trends Leroy Snyder observed have either taken an entirely new direction or acquired startlingly new dimensions. Thus new minority groups of native American origin have emerged, reviving the old need for positive efforts in integration. This old task, once seemingly accomplished, has not only been given a major place on our schedule, but it has been made doubly difficult as the suburban population has rapidly swollen from a fifth to almost a half of

the metropolitan total, accentuating the imbalance both in the old central wards and on the new outer fringe.

At the same time the secondary school population has not only continued to expand, especially in the suburban towns, but it has also produced increased demands for higher education. And unless the minorities now largely confined to the central wards can participate fully in the higher educational services, the lines of division will be hardened and the city's democratic faith, so near to realization three decades ago, will be stultified.

Fortunately, in opposition to these ominous trends, Rochester has mustered a battery of dedicated agencies that are earnestly seeking remedies. The new bodies of the last two decades—the housing authority, the youth board, the urban redevelopment division—are all endeavoring to check the divisive forces. Even the new institutions established in the previous period—the public library, the museum, the art gallery among others—have all seized opportunities to serve the new minorities. And many citizens' organizations of Leroy Snyder's day—the Council of Social Agencies, the Federation of Churches, the Bureau of Municipal Research—have conscientiously tackled the new problems.

There is an inescapable urgency suffusing this situation that overshadows other community concerns. Every social question seems linked to it. Even the continued advances in public health, which however have been less dramatic than in the 1920's, have had to combat its retarding influence. Progress in the extension of welfare services and social security has reached far beyond the wildest dream of Snyder's time, but the new bifurcation of the population has subverted many of the benefits. The expansion of hospital services in the Rochester area is as remarkable as the new provisions for housing and caring for senior citizens, but again the mounting needs, particularly among non-whites, have outpaced the improvements.

Another marked change in the character of Rochester is the increased age of its population. No major city in the north has a larger percentage over 65 and the number in that age bracket increased from 36,000 to 54,000 during the 1950's. The activities at the Danforth Center for Senior Citizens are but the most dramatic of a dozen new programs of this character, some maintained by churches, some by ethnic societies and welfare institutions, some by the public parks, all catering to the swelling host of retirees who have made Rochester their home.

But if white-haired residents are becoming more noticeable in Rochester—in spite of an increased use of dyes and wigs—the number of children has mounted even more rapidly, especially since 1940. Those 14 and under increased by 12,660 during the fifties and the rest in their teens increased by nearly 2,000 despite a stable population total. These gains in the city were far outpaced in the rest of the county where the number of residents of school age (5-19) mounted threefold during the fifties, more than five times the rate of the total population growth.

To meet their responsibilities to this youthful generation the county has established a Community College, the towns have built thirty or more central schools, some with strikingly modern designs, and the city has erected three new schools and engaged in an ambitious program directed towards a complete remodeling and upgrading of its playground system. And even here, especially in the provision for schools, the striking accomplishments are clouded by the stormy outbreak of the integration issue resulting from the rapid rise in the number of non-whites of school age and the startling increase of their density in the central wards of the city.

Women also increased their percentages, outnumbering men in the towns as well as in the city, making Rochester more definitely a woman's town than ever before. Shoppers on Main Street could readily detect the change as the displays of old

established men's stores gave space to feminine fashions that matched the introduction of new departments inside. Women have increasingly dominated the City Club audiences and invaded other luncheon places and meetings once exclusively masculine. The number and percentage of women gainfully employed, which had increased sharply during the war years, fell off after 1946 but has maintained a much higher level than in the pre-war years and helped to explain their increased prominence and influence.

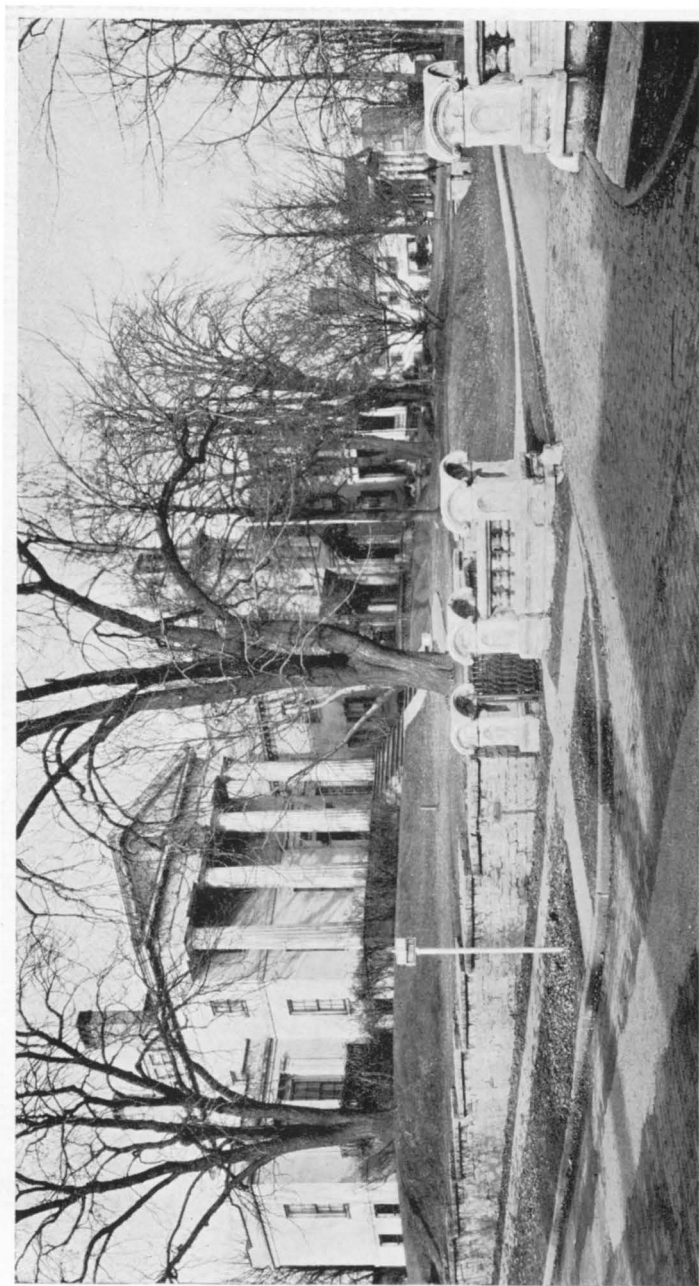
In Snyder's day the election of one woman to the Board of Education was considered an accomplishment. In recent years, women have frequently held a majority there and sometimes one has supplied its president. Women principals have become more numerous in the public schools and women chairmen on social agency boards. Only recently, part of Rochester was represented at Washington by a woman Congressman, and we now have two women on the Board of Supervisors. For the last few years Mrs. Ann Taylor has served as director of the City Planning staff.

If anybody should be alert to the problems and concerned about the character of Rochester's changing face, it is the City Planning Commission. Happily its newly released Master Plan demonstrates a full awareness of the situation and displays an imaginative grasp of the city's opportunities. Not only does it propose to bring the Genesee back into its proper place as a major feature in Rochester's future scene, both to the north and the south of the central district and within that district, promising to restore its natural beauty; but the Master Plan recognizes the need to reclaim the aging wards surrounding the business district and to rebuild them as wholesome neighborhoods for in-town residence. Other public and private agencies are rallying to the task of encouraging the development there of an integrated population rich in the variety of origins and talents that are essential for a dynamic metropolis.



Views to Remember
Rochester's Semi-Centennial Parade, 1884
and Fitzhugh Street in Its Prime, 1860's

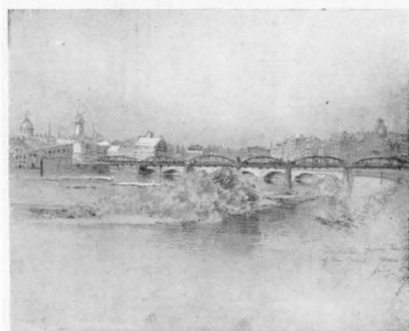




Livingston Park and the D.A.R. House

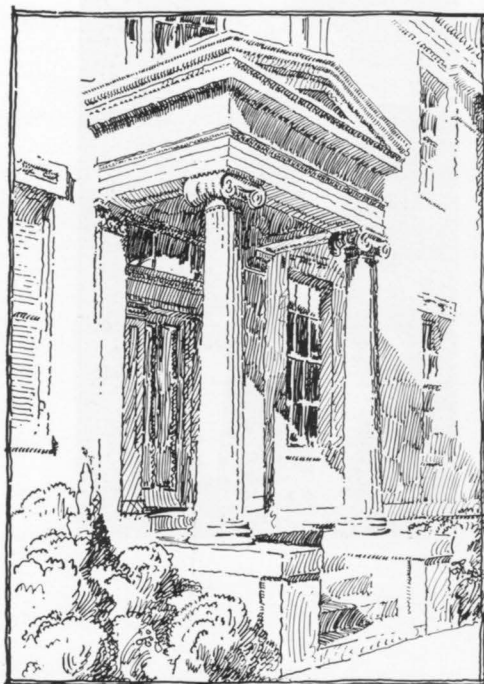


River Views of Former Days





The Ellwanger and Barry Office
Landmarks Worthy of Preservation



Jonathan Child House



Campbell Whittlerey House

Side Doorways Sketched by Carl Schmidt