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The Last Eleven Mayors The First Eleven Managers and Twenty County Chairmen

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The passage in November 1925 of the Council-Manager amendments to the city charter placed Rochester in the forefront of a new reform movement in municipal government. Numerous smaller cities had adopted council-manager charters during the previous ten years, but among the large cities only Cleveland, Cincinnati, and Kansas City had joined the movement before Rochester's amendments took effect in January 1928. A major objective of the reformers was to free the city government from partisan politics, yet in Rochester, as in most of the cities that adopted this form of municipal administration, political influences soon reappeared, and the party chairmen with their backers quickly regained a large if somewhat nebulous share of the power. Thus the accomplishments as well as the personal fortunes of the eleven mayors and eleven city managers who have officially directed Rochester's development during the last four decades were determined at many crucial points by one or another of the twenty party leaders who held the political reins. The final decision resided of course with the electorate, and since its ballots chose the councilmen, who in

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turn named the mayors and the managers, a review of the political developments of the period must focus on the careers of its successive mayors and city managers.

The Transition Leaders

The transition from the strong-mayor to the council-manager form of government was a protracted and unsettling experience. Intransigent forces prolonged the ordeal and in fact distorted the pristine structure of the new system. A severe economic crisis further complicated the situation.

On the death in June 1926 of Clarence D. Van Zandt, the last of Rochester's popularly elected mayors, the old 24-man council chose its former president, Martin B. O'Neil, as mayor to fill out the unexpired term. Born at Rochester and educated in its schools and at Mechanics Institute, young O'Neil had become a successful salesman for various woodworking firms and had early taken a lead in Republican politics in the 15th ward. A staunch friend of the party boss, George Aldridge, and of his successor, James L. Hotchkiss, he had served for fourteen years on the old council, two years as its president. His term had ended with the adoption of the city-manager amendments and the triumph of Van Zandt and other former Republicans as independents. Thus the council's action in June 1926 in naming O'Neil as mayor represented a resurgence of the old-guard Republicans and threatened the prospects of the city-manager experiment even before it commenced.

When Harry J. Bareham, long the Republican leader of the 16th ward, challenged the constitutionality of the city-manager amendments in court, Mayor O'Neil reluctantly directed the corporation council to defend them and won a split decision upholding the small council and manager provisions, but setting aside the nonpartisan election clause. O'Neil, Hotchkiss, and Bareham were content with that partial "victory," and in an endeavor to restore unity, the party in October elected Bareham

as its new county chairman. Some of the insurgents who had backed Van Zandt two years before now returned to the fold. Many others, however, seized this occasion to form an independent Citizens Republican Committee, backed by George Eastman, and chose candidates headed by Joseph C. Wilson and Isaac Adler, both pledged to the restoration of the non-partisan election provision. The Democrats named a separate slate, headed by Helen Probst Abbot, the staunchest city-manager advocate, but their hopes faded as the two Republican factions, both indorsing the city-manager system, divided the nine seats between them.

Wilson, named on both Republican slates, received the largest vote and was promptly elected mayor. Adler, second in voting strength among the independents, became vice-mayor and moved a week later to readopt the nonpartisan election provision. Bareham, whose leading candidate, Mayor O'Neil, had been defeated, bided his time as the council proceeded to name Stephen B. Story the first city manager. Brought to Rochester in 1921 by George Eastman to become second head of the Bureau of Municipal Research, Story had been an effective advocate of the city-manager system. A graduate in civil engineering at Union College with practical experience in New York City and in the U.S. Navy, Story was the unanimous choice of the council, which voted him a salary of \$20,000 a year. On accepting the appointment, Story pledged an efficient nonpartisan government and, in a ten-minute address, reviewed the tasks that lay ahead for the new administration.

The city manager's statement took the place of the traditional and much longer inaugural message of the mayor, and Mayor Wilson contented himself with the functions of presiding at the council meetings and acting as the city's ceremonial head. Born in Binghamton in 1851, Wilson had come to Rochester as a young man and became a successful pawnbroker. He served his 19th ward neighborhood as an alderman for two terms and the

city successively as assessor and comptroller for three decades before winning a seat as councilman-at-large in 1927. Universally respected for his integrity and sound judgment, the aging councilman provided an ideal transition mayor who modestly permitted the new City Manager to assume effective leadership. Wilson backed Story's appointment of Harold S. Baker as commissioner of public works and of Charles B. Raitt as park director, and when that latter appointment, an outside expert, stirred the outspoken resentment of local candidates and riled their supporters, the Mayor stood loyally by the Manager until he himself backed down. Wilson ran for election again in November 1929 and was again named mayor in January 1930; he had however become seriously ill and followed council proceedings from a sick bed until his death three months later.

Wilson's death left the council divided, 4 to 4, with neither side able to fill the vacancy. Vice Mayor Adler (a native of nearby Medina who had grown up in Rochester and attended the Free Academy and the University of Rochester before transferring to Harvard where he graduated and secured a law degree in 1892) was repeatedly authorized to serve as acting mayor but only for brief periods—a protracted stalemate that prevented any decisive action. City Manager Story carried on the day-to-day functions that required no new decisions, but could make only a limited response to the demands of the Central Trades Council and other bodies for relief against the depression. When as a result several labor unions demanded the removal of the City Manager, whose \$20,000 salary had become a subject of reproach in the midst of the hard times, the council finally mustered a majority to reduce it to \$15,000. To avoid utter chaos, as he put it, Story accepted the reduction, but the unseemly controversy added to the popular reaction, which enabled the regular Republicans to win six of the nine council seats in the election of November 1931.

Charles S. Owen, a Republican stalwart who had served

successively as supervisor of the 3rd ward where he was born, as commissioner of public safety under Mayor Edgerton, and as sheriff during the war years, had reluctantly consented to run for Wilson's vacant seat. On his victory over Leroy Snyder, the joint candidate of the City Manager League and the Democrats, Owen was promptly elected mayor. Under the direction of County Chairman Bareham, the Republican majority declared the position of city manager vacant, and after reducing the salary to \$10,000 a year elected C. Arthur Poole to fill the post. Like Mayor Owen, Poole was a Rochester native and a graduate of the old Free Academy, but he had gone on to Princeton where he specialized in civil engineering. On returning to Rochester he secured a job under Edwin A. Fisher in the city engineer's department and in 1918 became its chief, holding that position until the inauguration of the city-manager system. Now given full responsibility, he reversed Story's practice and encouraged Mayor Owen to assume the leadership role before the public. Although Story had been criticized for seizing the spotlight, his reticent successor was soon charged with inactivity. When he was slow in investigating reports of fraudulent claims against the city, popular clamor mounted and prompted local bankers to refuse an extension of the city's credit.

Equally disillusioned by his new responsibilities, Mayor Owen had eagerly accepted his party's nomination for state comptroller in November 1932 as a graceful way to escape from the mayor's office. When the electors favored his Democratic rival, Owen was forced to continue as mayor, but during the fiscal impasse the next April he hastily tendered his resignation, which was unanimously accepted along with that of City Manager Poole. The council proceeded to name the bankers' candidates, Percival D. Oviatt as mayor and Theodore C. Briggs as city manager. Owen was glad to get his old job as city comptroller back again, and Poole with obvious relief turned his duties over to the new City Manager. Briggs, a youthful business man,

made a hasty trip with W. Earl Weller of the Bureau of Municipal Research to Washington where they successfully negotiated for P.W.A. funds for seven Rochester projects designed to relieve the unemployment crisis and achieve urgent civic improvements. Both Briggs and Oviatt were Rochester born and educated, and the Mayor, who had gone on to secure a law degree at Columbia, was the head of a prominent legal firm, as Briggs was of a legal publishing firm. Together they helped to restore the city's flagging spirits, but the renewed optimism came too late to save the Republicans at the polls that November when the Democrats captured control of the council.

The First Democratic Era

The four Democrats elected to the Council in November 1933 were relatively inexperienced in city government and promptly elected Charles Stanton, the one Democrat who had served on that body for the four previous years, as mayor. Stanton, the first Democrat to occupy the mayor's chair in 25 years, was English born and had spent his boyhood in Florida, but he had come to Rochester in his late teens and had studied at the Rochester Business Institute. There he became a shorthand expert, a skill that soon won him advancement in a paper company and as a foreign-trade specialist. His election as mayor in January 1934 brought him to the helm in the city's centennial year. A tall and handsome man of great dignity, he won wide respect as the "Centennial Mayor," presiding at the many functions staged by various groups and committees that year in a courageous effort to forget the hardships of the depression in joyous commemoration of the city's development.

As city manager, the Democrats brought Harold Baker back to Rochester from Washington where he had acquired many valuable new contacts. A civil engineer, trained like former City Manager Story at Union College, he had also come to Rochester as a member of the Bureau of Municipal Research,

and had been commissioner of public works under Mayors Van Zandt and O'Neil and under City Manager Story. His selection as Rochester's fourth city manager promised a restoration of the importance of that office, which the regimes of Mayors Owen and Oviatt had tended to minimize. An efficient administrator little inclined to public speaking, he encouraged Stanton to perform the ceremonial duties and, because of the heavy load in the centennial year, approved an increase in the mayor's salary from \$2500, as it had been since 1928 plus \$1500 as councilman, to \$4500 plus \$1500 as councilman. Mayor Stanton played a leading role in the newly formed State Conference of Mayors, of which he became chairman in 1937, and in the U.S. Conference of Mayors, which helped to support Rochester's bid for New Deal funds at Washington. City Manager Baker had his friends in Washington too, but he endeavored to confine Rochester's applications for support to projects that could be pressed to an early completion. While he resisted pleas for lake-port improvements and for the development of an airport, both of which he felt required private investment, he pressed the construction of the public library and of several new schools among many other improvements.

The independence Baker displayed in the management of city affairs relieved Mayor Stanton and the Democratic party of many concerns but left them ill prepared to meet the resurgence of the local Republicans in 1938. The action of the Democratic City Council early in 1936 in voting a \$500 increase in the mayor's salary, despite the continued hardships of the depression, provided a convenient issue for his opponents similar to that previously used against Story. The Mayor put in a full ten-hour day and launched numerous efforts to promote the consolidation of city and county functions. He backed the Manager's programs in face of mounting criticism from a newly revived Citizens Tax League. And when Democratic County Chairman Donald A. Dailey, who had succeeded William J.

Hunt in that position, joined the campaign for Baker's ouster, Mayor Stanton and a Democratic colleague blocked the move. Although Dailey refused to renominate the insurgents, Stanton received the support of numerous friends who formed a Citizens Party that named him at the head of a separate slate, which however ran a poor third in the November 1937 elections.

The Republicans, ably led by Thomas E. Broderick, who had displaced Bareham as chairman after the Owen-Poole fiasco, easily triumphed. Profiting by the current reaction to the failure of the New Deal to dispel the depression, the party took up the cry for tax relief and pledged to abolish the mayor's office in order to save his salary. That pledge proved an embarrassment, however, when the Republicans won control of the council and had to find a man willing to perform the mayor's duties without his salary. After two refusals the party persuaded Lester B. Rapp, a newly elected councilman from the southwest district, to accept a temporary appointment as mayor with a salary of \$750 in addition to his councilman's pay of \$1500 until a law could be adopted transferring the mayor's functions to the City Council's chairman or to the manager. The Republicans won popular approval for their decision to retain City Manager Baker, whose efficiency was widely respected. But Mayor Rapp, a successful advertising man who as a lad had dropped out of high school to help his mother support a large family and who at 40 had three daughters of his own to support, soon found the prospect of a protracted term as interim mayor at \$750 a year unrewarding. When in June Chairman Broderick turned the leadership over to Arthur Lochte, a staunch economy advocate, Mayor Rapp threatened to resign unless given a salary of at least \$2500. The proposed increase was, however, voted down, and Rapp submitted his resignation on January 1, 1939.

The Republican Era

After a hectic year under Mayor Rapp, with City Manager

Baker still at the controls, the Republican ward leaders became impatient for an increased share of the jobs. Samuel B. Dicker, councilman from the East District, had accepted election as mayor, but he had few powers and no appointments to make. Baker, who had made many enemies among the Democrats in the mid-thirties because of his resistance to the appointment of greedy ward heelers, now stirred resentment among Republicans eager for a clean sweep of city jobs. When in addition the Allied Building Trades, disgruntled over the manager's refusal to grant wage increases on municipal construction projects, called for his removal, Chairman Lochte decided to take forthright action. Accordingly on the last Tuesday in May, 1940, the council voted 7 to 2 to declare the post of City Manager vacant as of June 1. Baker got in one last blow at his opponents when on his final day in office he appointed Louis S. Foulkes, long a leader of the Good Government League and a councilman named by that faction for two terms, to fill a vacancy on the Civil Service Commission where he could continue to protect the rights of civil service employees.

Numerous protests appeared over Baker's dismissal, but general approval greeted the announcement that Louis B. Cartwright had been chosen to succeed him. Born at nearby Bristol in 1896 and educated at East Bloomfield High School and at Cornell University, young Cartwright had come to Rochester in the early twenties and had served the city in various capacities since 1928. As city comptroller since 1938 he had acquired a firm grasp of the city's fiscal problems and met Lochte's desire for an expert in economy. An organization man, who prided himself on his efficiency and felt little need for popular acclaim, Cartwright gave his chief lieutenants a large degree of independence as well as responsibility and won their loyalty in return. Although the party quickly became dissatisfied with Chairman Lochte, and replaced him with former Chairman Broderick in January 1941, all factions joined in praise of City

Manager Cartwright at the close of his first year and of Mayor Dicker whose unassuming conduct of that office was equally gratifying.

Except possibly for Isaac Adler, who though he performed the functions of a mayor never acquired the title, Samuel B. Dicker was the first Jew to become Mayor of Rochester. Among his 55 predecessors (if we count the acting mayors), three had been born in Ireland, two in England, one in Scotland, and one in Germany. Of the 25 born in New York State, seven had been native Rochesterians, four within the last fifteen years, but only Dicker had been born in New York City. He shared several characteristics with other mayors, however, for as a graduate of Cornell he had a bond not only with City Manager Cartwright but also with eight mayors who were college graduates, while the law degree he had received from Harvard linked him again with Adler of Harvard and Oviatt of Columbia. A bachelor, he could readily attend evening meetings and frequently appeared at two or more gatherings a night. Somewhat abashed at the time he devoted to the job, the council finally in 1952 voted to increase his salary to \$1000 a year, plus \$1500 as councilman.

The modest recompense awarded the mayor and the councilmen reflected the prevailing attitude in Rochester during the forties toward public service. City Manager Cartwright received only \$10,000 a year for the direction of a complex civic establishment with annual budgets fluctuating upward from \$30 to \$39 million in the decade that elapsed before his salary was raised to \$15,000 in 1951. The city manager had undertaken an extensive reclassification of the municipal services, rectifying numerous inequalities, but the salary schedules had remained fixed relatively at depression levels. The city's hold-the-line policy was frankly designed not only to balance the budget, but to pay off the entire debt by 1949, and when that date proved impossible, by 1954. Indeed, in occasional reports of his accomplishments at the close of his first three years in 1943, his first

nine years in 1949, and on reviewing his entire thirteen years in 1953 Cartwright took greatest pride in the reduction he had achieved in the city debt from \$59 to \$23 million at the last reckoning.

Yet despite his rigid economies, City Manager Cartwright inaugurated and effected numerous improvements. The post-war development of traffic congestion forced a ban of all parking along arterial streets and the use of parking meters and the provision of parking lots elsewhere. Under his leadership the city pressed ahead with the construction of the War Memorial and with the planning of new expressways and loops to tie Rochester in with the new state Thruway constructed in the late 1940's. Cartwright enjoyed a relatively free hand in these administrative developments, but a decision in the one major policy shift of the period was made at a higher level.

The party's traditional conservatism had been reflected in its refusal to recognize the need for public action in the housing field. Persistent efforts by the Better Housing Association and other groups to alert Rochester to the plight of its slum dwellers had resulted in 1945 in the appointment of a Citizens Committee on Housing by Mayor Dicker who then squashed its findings by adding a sufficient number of Republican councilmen at the last minute to outvote its members. The party hierarchy—Chairman Broderick and his chief advisers, Carl Hallauer and T. Carl Nixon, remained adamant until the unexpected victory of Harry S. Truman, who carried Rochester with 54 per cent of the vote in 1948, convinced them that something would have to be done to check the drift of city residents to the Democratic party or to the suburbs. With great reluctance Chairman Broderick finally directed action on the housing front. Cartwright and the Vice Mayor journeyed to Baltimore to study its widely famed attack on the slums, and on their return the council adopted a new housing ordinance regulating sanitary conditions in private homes and recognizing the city's respon-

sibility for the erection of public housing to be subsidized, however, by the state, not the federal government.

When Broderick, who had been battling a severe illness for several years, resigned shortly after the turnabout on housing, the party named Fred I. Parrish as county chairman. That action, dictated by Hallauer and Nixon, apparently surprised Parrish, a master plumber who had been supervisor of the 18th ward for seven years, yet despite a retiring manner he held the post for a full decade. His early success was due in part to the support he received from Hallauer and Nixon, and in part to the dissention that crippled his Democratic opponents. Roy F. Bush, who had served as county chairman for that party since 1941, winning victories in the national elections of '44 and '48, had earlier been the only local Democrat to win in county-wide contests when he was twice elected county clerk. But his failure to produce winning tickets on the local level stirred resentment within the party. His inability to harmonize the differences between Anthony A. Capone, president of the Central Trades and Labor Council, and Abraham Chatman, chairman of the Rochester Joint Board of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, cost the party a victory in the close election of 1949 when however it won two of the six council seats on the ballot.

That election had a special interest because of the new leaders and new techniques it brought forth. Parrish had added the name of Peter Barry, a recently returned naval commander, to his councilmanic ticket that year, while Bush had persuaded Robert B. Corris, a theatrical impresario to run as a Democrat. David Kessler, chief of the WHAM news bureau, arranged for a joint interview of these popular young candidates on that company's new "Speak Up" program, thus introducing the first use of television in a local political contest. Barry, a great grandson of Patrick Barry, one of the founders of the nursery industry in Rochester over a century before, proved to be an attractive candidate and led the slate with 86,527 votes, but

Corris who stood fourth, and another Democrat who took fifth place, gave that party two votes on the council for the first time in eight years.

When the Democrats, with mounting aspirations for power, carried only one seat in the 1951 election, a movement developed in the precincts to displace the county chairman. Bush, in a talk at a testimonial dinner to John G. Bittner who had captured the Northeast District, attacked George B. Kelly, formerly a Democrat Congressman, as the "party wrecker," but many in the party thought Bush the true culprit. Both factions endeavored to submerge their hostilities that summer in preparation for the national convention at Chicago, and when Adlai Stevenson, the candidate favored by the insurgents, won the nomination they redoubled their efforts to present a united front in the campaign that followed. To divert attention from the internal strife, one of the insurgent leaders, Councilman Corris, joined a councilman of the Bush faction in advocating a 10 per cent boost for all city employees who received less than \$5000. And when City Manager Cartwright refused to act on that recommendation and denied a charge that Parrish had ordered the retention of some 200 ward heelers as "straw bosses" on the DPW payroll, the two Democrats moved unsuccessfully to declare the post of city manager vacant. Their more surprising failure to rally support for the national ticket that November resulted in a sweeping victory for the Republicans in a record breaking turn out that made Eisenhower the first Republican since Hoover in 1928 to carry the city in a presidential race.

Rochester won first prize the next February from the American Heritage Foundation for its success in getting out the vote (98 per cent of those registered in the city), but a more direct effect of the Eisenhower victory on local politics was the loss the Democrats suffered in national patronage. Recognizing the inevitable, Donald A. Dailey, former Democratic chairman and Rochester postmaster since 1942, submitted his resignation in

May, and two of his top aids, who agreed to carry on until a new appointment could be made, submitted resignations to take effect when a Republican was named. Parrish, possibly to avoid a decision that might have disappointed some candidates, deferred his recommendations until after the local election in 1953 at which the Republican candidates made a clean sweep. Barry was again the leading vote getter as the party took all five councilmen-at-large seats, the three Board of Education posts, and increased its hold on the Board of Supervisors to 35 of its 43 seats. With the party's control securely established, Parrish announced the nomination of Cartwright as the new Rochester postmaster, an appointment which was soon made by the President, thus opening the post of city manager.

The fact that the City Council would have to elect the new manager was somewhat overlooked as the Republican press reported a joint announcement by Parrish, Hallauer and Nixon on November 5 that Robert P. Aex had agreed to take the job on January 1st. Born at Rochester in June 1912 and educated at Madison and West high schools, the Rochester Business Institute and a business school in New York, Bob Aex, as he was familiarly known, had held successive posts in the auditor's department after 1934, advancing to city auditor in 1944, city treasurer in 1947, budget director in 1948, and comptroller in 1950. He had resigned two years later to become city manager of Newburg where he proceeded to win national honors and offers of attractive appointments. His decision in December 1953 to return to Rochester as successor to Cartwright, his former mentor, was widely applauded even by the Democrats, some of whom could remember that his father, Paul B. Aex, had been city comptroller during the Stanton years.

Nobody now objected to the frankly political character of these developments. Thus it seemed quite fitting that Chairman Parrish should receive an appointment early in January to a \$7480 job as assistant secretary of the State Senate in Albany, a

post which would not require that he resign as the party's county chairman. Indeed the Democrats, rather than attacking the partisan aspects of local government, indorsed a proposal by John P. Noonan that the charter be amended to provide that the mayor and the vice mayor be directly elected by the people and that the manager be appointed not by the council but by the mayor who would thus be fully responsible for the city government. Chairman Bush hastily appointed a committee of leading Democrats to back the Noonan plan. Although the committee collected several thousand signatures to petitions favoring the plan, leading Republicans on the council spoke out in opposition, and the Bureau of Municipal Research, which had originally studied and recommended the council-manager form, rose again to its defense. An appeal to the courts brought unfavorable decisions from the State Supreme Court and the Appellate Division and blocked action at the polls that November. Even City Manager Aex could now admit, however, that the city manager government in Rochester had become, in contrast to its original intent, openly partisan; he took occasion at a city manager's convention in Kansas City, one of the few other large cities still in the movement, to boast of the increased strength partisan elections gave to the manager government.

Aex was in any event conducting a vigorous administration. Breaking loose from the hold-the-line policy of his predecessor, he recognized that Rochester had more urgent needs than a balanced budget and that it could well afford to go into debt to improve its highways, build ramp garages, a new incinerator, a new high school and other improvements. He was ready to press ahead with the urban renewal project launched under his predecessor and to prod the State to speed the completion of its arterial highway within the city. He was eager to make a start on the projected new civic center.

As the return of Bob Aex brought vigorous new leadership to the Republicans, the Democrats became even more conscious of

the need for reorganization. A group of insurgents gathered on January 20 to devise a plan of action. Prominent among them were A. Roger Clarke, who had recently led the Democrats of Webster to an unexpected victory, former Councilman Corris, and Richard C. Wade, a member of the history department at the University of Rochester and vice president of the Americans for Democratic Action (ADA) of New York State. Other names soon linked with this group included former Congressman George B. Kelly, Francis J. D'Amanda, who had run for state attorney general in 1950, and Abraham Chatman, leader of the strong Amalgamated Clothing Workers union. Chairman Bush retaliated by refusing to admit any of the insurgents to the annual party dinner at the Seneca that May, but many of the 500 who attended felt a bit embarrassed by the exclusion. The insurgents, popularly known as the Reform Democrats, chose Robert B. Corris as chairman and launched a drive to round up support among the 886 members of the county committee. When that effort seemed hopeless, the insurgents switched to a campaign to capture the party at a primary election in September. The new group, officially known as the Organization Democrats for the Reform of the Party, chose D'Amanda as its permanent leader and won the backing of Louis A. Wehle, formerly a Bush supporter, and of George B. Kelly, the original insurgent. In striking back, Bush and his colleagues charged that Wade of the ADA and Chatman of the Amalgamated were the real instigators of the revolt and planned to take over the party. At the last moment James P. Wilmot, a staunch Bush supporter, endeavored to persuade him to resign, but the Chairman battled to the end and suffered a severe defeat.

The reform groups triumphed and elected D'Amanda as the new county chairman pledged to a restoration of unity and of responsible leadership. Neither task was easy, yet, despite the resentment of Bush and the disgruntlement of Wilmot and also in the end of Corris, the party won a slim majority in the city

for Harriman for governor in November, which aided in his narrow victory and enabled D'Amada a month later to get an appointment of Wehle to the state conservation commission, a post that paid \$17,000 but was valued by the Rochester brewer more for its potential influence in the fields of conservation and sportsmanship. D'Amada brought Wilmot and several other Bush men back into the fold, but he could not mollify Anna May Rush, president of the Women's Democratic Club; even Corris announced plans to run in November as an independent. Parrish snubbed the new Democratic leadership by naming Bush as that party's Commissioner of Elections. D'Amada was sufficiently in control, however, to call a full meeting of the county committee in April for a report of his leadership, which gave him a noisy acclamation and enabled him to announce his retirement a week later and to name as his successor William N. Posner, the Brighton town leader who had grown up in the 14th ward.

While the Democrats were thus experiencing a drastic reorganization, the Republicans were enjoying almost undisputed control of the city. Parrish, however, was advancing in years and because of his duties in Albany felt the need for a young assistant. Donald H. Foote, who had won repeated advances under Cartwright, becoming in the end his commissioner of commerce and later serving as deputy city manager under Bob Aex, was shifted to a new post as executive secretary of the Republican County Committee.

A more fundamental shift in Republican leadership occurred the next month when Mayor Dicker, confined to the house by a severe illness, tendered his resignation both as mayor and as councilman. The City Council, meeting on June 14, 1955, accepted Dicker's resignation and elected Peter Barry, its most popular member, as mayor. A bachelor like his predecessor, Barry had found time to serve the community as regional chairman of the Red Cross blood program, as vice chairman of the

Otetiana Council of the Boy Scouts, as a Community Chest campaign chairman, and as commander of the Northern Area of the New York State Naval Militia, among other functions, in addition to his duties as councilman and his job as safety director of the Rochester Gas & Electric Co. No mayor before him had had a longer family tradition in the city nor a broader personal commitment to varied aspects of its affairs. A gracious chairman he brought a degree of dignity to the office not known since Mayor Stanton's day.

Yet Mayor Barry, despite his vote-getting abilities, was overshadowed by his efficient city manager. Bob Aex worked smoothly with Donald Foote as well as with Mayor Barry and was able to press forward with a program of civic developments unmatched since the early days of Stephen Story. Many cities were enjoying a renaissance in the late fifties, and Rochester had to bestir itself to keep pace. Now at last the Republican leadership of Parrish, Hallauer and Nixon, influenced by the progressive views of Elmer B. Milliman, Howard T. Cumming and others, was ready to move ahead not only with highway improvements but on housing and welfare problems as well. The efficiency with which the City Manager pressed forward with new projects encouraged four leading downtown merchants who wished to develop a venturesome enclosed plaza to approach him with a proposal for the extension of Broad Street to provide better access to their development. The secrecy surrounding the plan until the land titles were secured stirred criticism from some Democrats but assured the launching of Rochester's spectacular Midtown Plaza, which greatly stimulated other downtown developments. Attacked for his secrecy on this occasion, Aex was criticized again in the spring of 1959 when he refused to attend a closed meeting of the Retail Merchants Council to discuss a proposed park-and-shop plan. That the promotion of innercity developments had its hazards, few knew better than Bob Aex, and it was not surprising to hear

that Governor Rockefeller on the establishment of a new State Office of Municipal Affairs had invited Aex to fill it.

The resignation of Bob Aex created an unexpected vacancy and brought several candidates into the running. Mayor Barry, who had earlier brought F. Dow Hamblin, an ex-Navy man and graduate of Annapolis, into the city service as Commissioner of Public Works, secured the backing of Hallauer and Nixon and of a majority of the City Council for his election as city manager. Vice-mayor Joseph Farbo, who the previous year had lost a bid to replace Parrish as county chairman, backed a rival candidate without success, but his action apparently alerted party leaders to trouble ahead. In any event they called a special meeting of the County Committee the next January at which the 70-year old Chairman suddenly submitted his resignation, and friends of Gordon A. Howe, the newly appointed county manager, who had previously been Greece town supervisor and chairman of the Board of Supervisors, promptly secured his election as the county chairman. Caught by surprise, Farbo held his fire for a month but then launched an attack on Howe, condemning him for attempting to hold both jobs. When an appeal to the courts brought a decision upholding Howe's right to fill both posts, the new county chairman in an effort to silence criticism within the party issued a "Blueprint for Recovery" in March 1960 that called for the cooperation of city and county officials looking for the integration of many of their functions.

The Democratic Resurgence

The restructuring of the Republican party had not come soon enough to check the resurgence of the Democrats who had effected their reorganization a few years earlier. County Chairman Posner had passed the gavel along to Robert E. O'Brien who was able to draw all Democratic factions together for a united campaign that captured control of the City Council and the Board of Education in November 1961. Henry E. Gillette,

the first Democratic councilman elected from the Northwest District two years before, had demonstrated his ability as campaign chairman that fall and was chosen as Rochester's 59th mayor. A 56-year old attorney, he was born in Pennsylvania of Rochester parents and educated in its schools and at St. Bonaventure and Columbia Universities, with a law degree from the Harvard Law School. He was the first Rochester mayor of Italian extraction and the first of the city-manager era to revive the earlier practice of delivering an address at the opening of the new council year. He not only pledged, in January 1962, that the new Democratic administration would give Rochester "the most humane and efficient government at the most reasonable cost," but he promised that opportunities for a wider participation in government would be made available to all classes. He specifically invited the minority members of the council to attend the sessions to be held by the majority members with their executive heads before the regular council meetings.

Chairman O'Brien and Gillette as mayor-designate had previously announced that a nation-wide search would be made for a professional city manager. On January 2, the City Council elected Henry R. Dutcher, Jr., as interim city manager to hold office until a proper successor could be found. A 37-year old attorney, Dutcher was Rochester born and a product of its schools and of Dartmouth College with a law degree from Cornell. A Marine Corps veteran he had become Democratic leader of the 10th ward and secretary to the county committee, and he now worked closely with Mayor Gillette and Chairman O'Brien in launching the new administration. Together they made the chief appointments, bringing a few from out of town, notably William F. Denne from Buffalo to be Deputy City Manager and William Lombard from Batavia as chief of police. And with the aid of other Democratic Councilmen they chose Porter W. Homer from a list of 49 applicants for the city manager's post.

A 38-year old city manager of Tucson, Arizona, Homer was Rochester's first professionally trained city manager. Born in the town of Oxford, New York, he had graduated from the University of Connecticut and studied municipal administration at Maxwell School at Syracuse University. He had served as assistant manager at Kansas City under L. P. Cookingham, its great city manager, and he had held the top post at Tucson for six years, supervising its expansion from a population of 60,000 to 220,000. The sudden absorption of so many newcomers and suburbanites had brought a political turnover, which freed Homer to accept a new appointment, and he came to Rochester in March ready to take over on April 17, 1962. A man of few words but firm decisions, he was able to weather several hectic storms among the more volatile political leaders. His caution and firmness won the respect of the equally taciturn Chairman O'Brien, and the two men moved together to oust the public works commissioner, a friend of former Chairman D'Amada, when in the summer of 1963 he attempted to dodge the requirement for open bidding on street repair contracts. And in spite of his close collaboration with Mayor Gillette, Porter Homer survived the inner-party struggle which brought Councilman Lamb into the mayor's chair in January 1964.

An untiring worker, Mayor Gillette had early become a master of the complexities of municipal finances. His grasp of the subject, which touched all other facets of government, was so great that he became the official spokesman on many matters, overshadowing the other councilmen to the point that several felt his attitude to be overbearing. A split developed in the fall of 1963 and resulted the next January in the election of Frank Lamb as Rochester's 60th mayor. Six months later Chairman O'Brien, who despite his mild manner had accomplished more than any other chairman but only at the neglect of his own practice, decided to step down. Before doing so he appointed Leonard L. Schieffelin, formerly the party's executive secretary,

as vice chairman so that under the party rules his resignation would automatically make Schieffelin chairman. The committee voted to make it a full-time and salaried post.

Mayor Lamb, the tenth Rochester native to occupy the chair, whose father had almost won the title 43 years before, had a friendly and relaxed personality that was not easily ruffled by events. It was however put to a severe test in his first summer during the outbreak of inner city riots on three hot nights late in July. After long hours with City Manager Homer, Chief of Police Lombard and other officials called to headquarters during the crisis, he endeavored to assure the public that the city was in capable hands and that order had been restored; urging his fellow citizens to resume their normal functions, he soon began himself to extend the mayor's ceremonial activities. He made a visit in December to Rennes, Rochester's sister city in France, and prepared for similar visits the next year to new sister cities in Italy and Germany. He paid the first of several visits to the White House the next March and not only assumed a leading role in the State Conference of Mayors, of which like four of his predecessors he ultimately became president, but also in the U.S. Conference of Mayors. He journeyed to Washington on two occasions as a member of a committee of mayors to present petitions of that body to Johnson asking increased aid for the cities. He served for two terms as chairman of the Town Affiliation Association of the U.S. When elected as an official delegate to the State Constitutional Convention at Albany, he finally found it necessary to resign his old post as membership secretary of the Rochester YMCA in order to devote full time to his public duties. A family man with increasing responsibilities, he was considerably relieved when the City Council boosted the salaries of its members and the mayor in several steps from \$1500 and \$2769 respectively in 1964 to \$8500 and a total of \$17,000 by February 1968.

This more generous recompense for the services of its elected

officials reflected the city's increased affluence and the mounting confidence of its Democratic administration. Before the resignation of City Manager Homer to accept a similar post in Dade County, Florida, he had commenced collective bargaining with union representatives of various groups of municipal employees, and these negotiations had begun to achieve salary schedules more in line with private employment in the community. The steadily mounting returns from the county sales tax, though never adequate to meet the city's needs, supplied increased revenues until threatened by a redivision of the proceeds ordered by the Republican controlled county government. To safeguard the city's revenues, Mayor Lamb made repeated pleas, not only to the federal and state governments for increased aid, but also to his fellow citizens for a fair distribution of the county's revenues.

Despite his generally placid manner, Mayor Lamb demonstrated political skill by surviving more party shifts than any predecessor. The retirement of O'Brien and the naming of Schieffelin as county chairman in June 1965 had closely followed the departure in April of City Manager Homer and his replacement by Arthur B. Curran as a temporary appointment to be succeeded eight months later by Dr. Seymour Scher. A few weeks before that last shift, an even more dramatic overturn had occurred in the county chairmanship as Schieffelin resigned to make way for former Councilman Maloy, thus precipitating a struggle for the control of the party that lasted for three years before still another shift occurred. Although Mayor Lamb retained his composure throughout these inner-party struggles, he could not escape the political injury they inflicted upon local Democrats.

That widely based party, reflecting the views and interests of various economic, social, and ethnic groups and strata, was not unaccustomed to internal strife, but the friction between rival factions became intense in the sixties. The effort to pick a suc-

cessor to City Manager Homer produced a stalemate between supporters of Dr. Scher, the Assistant City Manager, and another clique that rallied at first around William Denne and later around Joseph Silverstein. Mayor Lamb with two of his Democratic colleagues on the council favored Scher, but three others headed by Councilman Maloy were so strongly opposed that Party Chairman O'Brien, though favoring Scher, agreed to name Corporation Council Curran as an interim appointment while making another nation-wide search. Curran, a Rochester native with a law degree from Notre Dame, had been active in local politics for ten years and had many friends and well wishers, but legal skills could no longer fill the need for administrative talents, and by the end of the year both factions were ready to give the top job to Dr. Scher who had remained at his post throughout the intervening months and had rendered loyal support during the election that fall. Curran resigned as city manager in December 1965 to become a City Court judge.

A former University of Rochester professor of political science, Scher had been brought into the manager's office by Chairman O'Brien as an assistant to Porter Homer. A native of Connecticut, educated there and at Chicago, he was at 36 younger than any of Rochester's ten previous managers and the first to bring a Ph. D. to the job. He was also more politically oriented and more thoroughly trained in local problems than any of his predecessors, with the possible exception (in the latter respect) of Harold Baker, and he had the assistance of a staff of young specialists assembled by Porter Homer and ready to carry on without interruption. They felt challenged by the opportunity to grapple with critical urban problems, such as the long deferred urban renewal projects which were finally getting underway in the old Third Ward, the Model City area north of the tracks, and the Manhattan Street area, as well as the Crossroads redevelopment project which was slowly moving to completion. Improvements in the police and fire departments and a start in

the battle against water pollution in the river were other accomplishments, but everywhere a shortage of funds made the fixing of priorities a painful one. The City Manager's emphasis on efficiency and his insistence that applicants have the training and skill needed for the job brought him occasionally into conflict with County Chairman Maloy whose concern for adequate patronage was predominant, but the two leaders managed to keep their differences under control.

Yet despite their many efforts, the Democrats were unable to solve the problems of the inner city slums, which now practically ringed the central business district. Earnest attempts to draw the residents of these districts into the planning of urban renewal projects had brought discouraging delays and bitter hassels between rival factions that proved damaging to the party's image. Although Chairman O'Brien, at the appointment of City Manager Curran, had persuaded young Harper Sibley to assume charge of the Public Safety department and [in a move to develop better communications with inner-city blacks] had approved his naming of Laplois Ashford, a militant young Negro, as deputy commissioner, the problems could not be so readily solved, and the loss of Negro votes helped to cause the defeat of Councilman Maloy in 1965. And when he was nevertheless made chairman of the party's county committee, the apathy in the Negro districts increased and ultimately contributed to the defeat of November 1969.

The Democratic reverses were not solely due to internal frictions, however, for their Republican rivals were gradually surmounting their own internal problems and presented an increasingly effective opposition. When Gordon Howe resigned as County Chairman in February 1963, in order to silence the criticism of his two jobs and to give more effective leadership as county manager, the Republican committee had elected its executive secretary Donald H. Foote as chairman. Foote, more of an administrator than a politician, did an effective job in the

local reorganization of the party but stepped aside two years later to make way for Vincent L. Toffany, a 38-year old leader of Greece who became the party's first full-time, salaried chairman. Chairman Toffany launched a vigorous campaign in the summer of 1965 that helped to check the surging growth of Democratic support in local and state politics and won himself an appointment the next year to the State Motor Vehicle Commission. His resignation to accept that \$30,000 a year job again brought the party's executive secretary, Ralph F. Murphy, a retired business man who had turned to politics as a hobby, into the post as chairman. When, despite Republican gains in the two previous years, the party failed to win control of Rochester in 1967, Murphy received much of the blame. In order to get an early start on the next year's campaign for the presidency, the executive committee accepted his resignation in January 1968 and named Richard M. Rosenbaum, an able trial lawyer who had recently won distinction as the Penfield representative in the county legislature, as the new chairman. At 36 the youngest man ever to hold the top position in the Republican party locally, he pledged his full time and energy to carry the district in November and to capture control of the city too in 1969.

Chairman Rosenbaum shared in the nation wide victory of the Republicans in November 1968 though he failed to carry Rochester for Nixon. The party received new patronage benefits as well as a resurgence of spirit, and Rosenbaum, in rejecting a national appointment, reaffirmed his determination to achieve a clear local victory. The prime requirement he declared on one occasion was to find outstanding candidates. His predecessors, from Gordon Howe on, had taken a similar stand and Chairman Toffany in 1965 had nominated and promoted the election to the City Council of two young attorneys, Stephen May and Robert F. Wood, who had waged a continuous campaign that kept the affairs of the council in the public view as never before. Rosenbaum not only renominated the two veterans but secured

the nomination of two other young attorneys and one teacher to present a slate offering a wide range of views in November '69.

The Democratic Committee had made a new attempt to achieve internal harmony that January with the election of Robert J. Quigley as chairman. A railroad man from Wheatland, Quigley had won repeatedly in that traditionally Republican town and not only represented it in the county legislature but achieved recognition there as minority leader. Accordingly, when Chairman Maloy decided to step down, following Wilmot's announced withdrawal from political activity after the Humphrey defeat, the Democratic committee turned to Quigley with the hope that his ebullient personality would lead it to victory. Mayor Lamb and his fellow Councilmen were confident of success, especially after the addition of two strong new candidates, Laplois Ashford and Louis Cerulli, to present a broadly representative ticket. The Democrats, however, were too confident and failed to get out the votes necessary to assure victory. Only Mayor Lamb, formerly the top vote getter, retained a seat in a City Council now split 5 to 4 with the Republicans in the majority. Despite an unseemly squabble over the seating of one councilman, whose residency was belatedly challenged after the election, the council was successfully organized with the election of Stephen May as Rochester's 61st mayor and of Edward P. Curtis, Jr. as the 12th city manager on a temporary basis until a suitable professional could be chosen.

This last turnover, which occurred after the writing of this article was in process, has prompted much reflection on the achievements of Rochester's city-manager government during the last four decades. Clearly its original objective, to eliminate partisan politics, has been completely forgotten as the trend now is towards a wider participation in government. A considerable advance however has been made towards the second objective, which was the development of an efficient administration of the city by a professionally trained staff. The abandon-

ment of the first objective and the achievement of the second has had some disconcerting results. Some though not all the technically skilled staff appointments have felt restrained from political activity and yet have periodically found themselves subject to removal on partisan grounds. Their recurrent expressions of a preference for a frankly political system have been matched by the still more outspoken desires of some elected officials for a return to the strong-mayor system. Even some of the county chairmen, burdened by the responsibility of mediating between city and town interests, have from time to time longed for a situation that would enable them to deal with leaders who were in each instance truly representative of the electorate and not party puppets.

In the perspective of history, however, it is clear that although the quality of the man determines whether he is a leader or a puppet, the system often limits his functions. The council-manager system has attracted a growing number of able professionals into the administrative branches; it has made the council and other elective posts increasingly attractive to aspiring young attorneys and potential community leaders eager for the opportunity to demonstrate their vote getting abilities as a means for later advancement in governmental or party channels; and it has placed the decision on nominations and often on policy more definitely in the hands of the county committees of the two major parties, which have sometimes delegated it to their chairmen, to their executive committees, or to fund raisers or other counselors. Thus the the council-manager system is a sort of troika, as Dr. Scher put it recently, with the mayor as the titular or symbolic head, the manager as the administrative head, and the county chairman as the political chief. The ultimate control of course still rests with the electorate, but the personal appeal of the candidates, the skills of the administrators, and the responsiveness of the party leaders determine how fully and clearly the public will is expressed.