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Rochester's Hesitant Promotion of the Image of Quality

By BLAKE MCKELVEY

It was in the depression of the mid-nineties that the economic basis for Rochester's image of quality first made its appearance. When the boom that had revived the city's spirits in the 1880's suddenly collapsed, plunging several leaders into bankruptcy and blighting the prospects of most residents, many were surprised to see a few firms expand and prosper despite the hard times. A decade slipped by before local observers began to analyse the situation and to discover that since Rochester had no easy access to the iron and coal fields and lacked a steady supply of cheap labor it could not compete either with heavy-industry cities on the upper lakes or with mass-production cities along the coast. Its opportunities lay in the development of patented articles and quality products whose value depended on the skills of its workers and on the talents of its managers. This discovery brought a surge of vitality both to the city's promoters and to its institutional and cultural leaders who assumed a jealous guardianship over Rochester's image. The new concept became a part of the city's identity and, like the American flag, acquired in the eyes of many citizens an immunity from cheap display.

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The Economic Basis for the Image

Rochester had based its surging growth in the eighties on the enterprise and skills of a flood of newcomers from abroad. A host of new ventures had appeared in the production of shoes and clothing, in the wood and metal fabricating industries, and in such consumer fields as tobacco, beer, and patent medicine as well as scientific and other specialized instruments. The profusion of small firms had created a demand for new workers, boosting the city's population from 89,000 to 133,000 during the eighties, a more rapid growth than any experienced since the 1840's. But the cosmopolitan city of the eighties had a profusion of standards and tastes, some of which offended old established residents. Newcomers had won a voice among the aldermen and had successfully elected candidates for mayor among other offices. Leadership in the establishment of the Chamber of Commerce in 1888 had come from a recent arrival whose meteoric rise as America's patent-medicine king had several repugnant aspects, and few lamented when H. H. Warner was the first to crash on the onset of the depression.

The Rochester *Herald*, spokesman for an educated and professional minority with liberal tendencies, had long been critical of Warner's flamboyance as well as of his Republicanism. Its struggling editors had perhaps envied the ease with which Warner had boosted the capitalization of his Safe Liver Cure concern from one to \$3 million in 1889. They were properly shocked when someone discovered three years later that the lush dividends were being paid out of capital; they were equally scornful of the *Union and Advertiser*, the rival Democratic journal, which endeavored to justify or at least to mourn the debacle. But the *Herald* was a bit too quick a few months later when, on hearing that the Eastman Dry Plate Company had increased its capitalization from \$5 to \$10 million, it warned its

readers to be wary of "the novelty works on State Street," lest it go the way of Warner's enterprise.

Although neither the new *Herald* editor, quickly installed to rectify that gross blunder, nor other local professionals could penetrate the gloom that surrounded Rochester in the mid-nineties, the proprietors of several shoe and clothing firms, which had developed trademark lines, boldly hired the skilled workers discharged by their less successful competitors and expanded their output. Quality products found a market even in hard times, but to get and hold jobs in such firms workers needed education and practical training. And in 1895 Joseph T. Alling of the Alling & Cory Paper Company discovered that most of the young men in his Men's Bible Class at Central Church lacked the training needed to hold skilled jobs. He became convinced that the Rochester schools had failed them, and with others he formed a Good Government League to free the public schools from political control. The Goo Goos, as they were called, soon discovered that they had to enter politics to achieve their goal. After their first victories in 1896 and 1900, Alling and his colleagues progressively broadened their objectives to include the development of public health and recreational services that would help to attract and hold skilled workers.

The Evolution of the Quality Concept

Rochester, enjoying a new surge of economic growth at the turn of the century, was ready for new institutional developments. The establishment of the Federation of Churches in 1901 may not have appeared related to the city's economic revival, but the support it gave to Walter Rauschenbusch when three years later he made a survey of Rochester's needs provided essential backing for his social views. A new president and new faculty appointments at the University of Rochester provided another base for a critical appraisal of economic developments.

Moreover the Chamber of Commerce, becoming aware of broader community responsibilities, assumed a new leadership in civic affairs. As the demand for improved services mounted it encompassed cultural as well as welfare goals, enlisting the participation of all segments of the community, even the ethnic minorities.

The expanding objectives of the Good Government movement were at least partly based on the desire of its leaders to safeguard the city's work force. Improvements in the schools, in the parks and playgrounds, in public health and safety facilities, contributed to this end. Leaders of the Chamber were ready to back these causes, and they formed a committee in 1901 to raise funds to assist new industries in finding sites in the Rochester area. The Chamber endorsed reforms in the schools, improvements in the parks, and supported most of the sanitary precautions Dr. George Goler the chief health officer proposed. And when Professor Rauschenbusch of the Theological Seminary made a survey of Rochester's needs for the YMCA in 1904, the Chamber also backed some of his recommendations. Among the city's ills he listed were the smoke nuisance, the need for playgrounds, swimming pools and public baths, the lack of a public library and of public facilities for art and music and entertainment. The Chamber and Mayor James G. Cutler were ready to endorse moves to correct some of these defects, but they were less responsive to some of Rauschenbusch's other criticism. His indictment of the prevailing commercialism, of the practice of selling public franchises to private corporations, of the low wages that forced young men to defer marriage and join the throngs of single men in search of unwholesome amusements in the numerous saloons and bawdy houses seemed both exaggerated and irrelevant.

Both the Chamber and Mayor Cutler, the last of the Good Government mayors, gave top priority in 1907 to the establish-

ment of a public library, though it was not accomplished for another five years. They also pressed for the opening of an improved municipal bath house, but they adhered to free enterprise approaches in other fields. Yet in 1905, when a Chamber-sponsored advertisement for workers for the projected Cluett, Peabody & Company factory brought some 500 men into Rochester before the plant was ready for operation, secretary John M. Ives hastily set up an employment bureau to assist in their placement in other jobs. That display of responsibility attracted praise from some observers, but because of its tardy appearance brought a replacement of Ives by Sidney R. Clarke two years later. Ives had launched a discussion of the steps needed to promote a "Greater Rochester," prompting the establishment of a fund to advertise the city. Although that action had brought protests from some members who declared that Rochester did not need an advertising campaign, Ives had persisted and boldly solicited pledges to contribute \$500,000 to assist the National Cash Register Company in moving to Rochester. When however it became apparent that such a move had been considered by its management only as a stratagem to secure concessions in Dayton, the Rochester Chamber not only acquired a new secretary, but adopted a more cautious promotional policy.

But Clarke, the new secretary, was equally zealous for expansion. With vice president Edward G. Miner, soon to become president, he formed a group of enterprising members to promote a "Greater Rochester." After compiling a list of fifteen reasons why industries should move to Rochester, Clarke issued a *Commerce Yearbook* and staged a Rochester Night to publicize them with the catchy slogan "Do It For Rochester." A new state law recognized cities of Rochester's size as first class cities, and the official assumption of that status on January 1, 1908, brought a surge of fresh vitality. Dr. Goler warned that the new urban stature entailed additional responsibilities as well, among

them the regulation of child labor, but most citizens were concerned with more glamorous matters. Charles M. Robinson, chairman of the Chamber's city beautification committee, addressed the influential Women's Educational and Industrial Union urging them to back a drive to remove the railroads from the river banks and to promote other needed improvements. His address prompted another citizen, who signed himself as X, to write a letter to the *Post Express* arguing that a cleaner Rochester was a more practical goal than a beautiful Rochester, and recommending a more effective campaign for smoke control and more efficient systems of street cleaning and garbage removal.

Many citizens were ready to endorse both proposals, and the Reverend Paul Moore Strayer took the lead in the formation of a Civic Betterment Committee. Eager to cooperate, the Chamber held a meeting on February 18, 1908, to which it invited the members of the new committee and representatives of eight other action groups, including the Ministerial Association, the Women's Union and the Labor Lyceum, and with a display of community support organized a new and comprehensive Civic Improvement League. Confident that the movement would attract new industries, Clarke proposed the organization of a Vocation Bureau similar to one in Boston to help young men find their most suitable callings and to advise them on the proper training. He persuaded his board in July to adopt a new official shield bearing the slogan "Rochester Made Means Quality" for use on Chamber stationery and for display on a newly approved flag.

The Chamber of Commerce launched two additional ventures in the summer and fall of 1908 to promote the city's expansion. It was on September 5 that the first issue of *Rochester Commerce*, a monthly journal devoted to local business news, made its appearance. Its first 8-page editions soon expanded to 16 pages and provided informative details concerning the expansion plans of

local firms as well as news of Chamber activities. It provided a convenient organ for the promotion of the first Rochester Industrial Exposition staged that October in the recently remodeled Convention Hall. Designed to commemorate and publicize Rochester's attainment of first class city status, the Exposition attracted some 150,000 visitors to its exhibits during the week of October 13-20 and drew another 100,000 to view its opening-day parade when 200 civic and industrial floats and accompanying marchers required three hours to pass the reviewing stand. The frequent display of the slogan, "Rochester Made Means Quality," on flags and posters in the parade and at Convention Hall effectively publicized the city's new image.

Refurbishing the Image

Pleased by the success of its first Industrial Exposition, the Chamber collaborated with the mayor in appointing a 50-man committee to plan a second exposition to mark Rochester's 75th anniversary in 1909. Emphasis on the city's history greatly enriched the program of the Exposition and gave civic and cultural leaders a larger share in its direction. The Civic Improvement League was likewise involving the participation of citizens who were not solely interested in economic growth, and soon the increased use of the quality slogan brought protests against the commercialization of the city's new image.

Rochester was better prepared for its second Exposition. Not only did the city appropriate funds for the hasty erection of an annex to Convention Hall to increase its exhibits space, but several members of the committee journeyed to Toronto in September to view its older and more elaborate Industrial Exposition in order to profit by its experience. A new feature was the recognition given to local Italian societies, which were invited to conduct special programs there on Columbus Day. A street parade of 250 teams of work horses added a rustic touch on October 15, to be

followed by the next day by an automobile gymkhana with leading local motorists competing in various car races and acrobatics at Genesee Valley Park. The prizes awarded at Convention Hall to the winners of these and other contests added to the community pageantry, but the chief contribution that year was made by the historical parade on Rochester Day, October 20, when 122 floats depicted the history of industrial and commercial firms, or dramatized the activities of social organizations ranging from Rattlesnake Pete's museum of curiosities to the Ward Natural Science Establishment which entered a float showing two mounted lions battling in a cage. An historical address by President Rush Rhees of the University on Rochester Day and a concert by the Maennerchor accompanied by the Pittsburgh Festival Orchestra, brought to Rochester by its German Societies on the last day of the Exposition, added to its cultural content.

The emphasis on history had recalled the many decades when Rochester was known as the Flower City and prompted the Florists Association to plan and stage a Flower Show at Convention Hall shortly after the end of the Exposition. The Flower Show, the first of many held in Rochester, lasted three days and featured, in addition to numerous exhibits by local florists and nurserymen, a series of musicals by local musical societies. A representative of the Florist Exchange in New York City who visited the show not only praised it as the best of several he had seen that year, but also commended the city for its traditional excellence in the horticultural field. All observers seemed to agree that Rochester should make the Flower Show an annual affair.

The second Exposition, however, had aroused some criticism. The Rev. Paul Moore Strayer, in a sermon that October at the Third Presbyterian Church on "Bowling the Knee to Baal in Rochester," had criticized the commercialism that dominated the Exposition and the complacency that accepted boss rule in

civic affairs. Mayor Hiram H. Edgerton had sprung to the defense of both the Exposition and the administration, and the editor of the *Post Express* cited two recent articles lauding Rochester's civic spirit. The announcement by the Chamber of a plan to erect two huge signs at the eastern and western approaches to the city proclaiming that "Rochester Made Means Quality" raised protests against the besmirching of Rochester's image. Professor Ryland M. Kendrick took up the debate in a talk at the college chapel in January. The Chamber, he declared, was threatening to destroy the true character of Rochester by striving to make it a bigger city. Its campaign for new industries was crowding factories into the back yards of local home owners. "No monument in Rochester except that of Mercury is worth looking at," he complained, adding that "the City Hall is a blot on the Erie Canal." But it was his conclusion, "Socrates would give the Chamber of Commerce a shock," that demanded a reply.

Rolland Woodward, who had succeeded Clarke as secretary of the Chamber in 1909, was ready to respond when a reporter arrived from the *Rochester Times*. "The Chamber of Commerce would give the old Greek Philosopher some pointers," he said.

"Beginning at his feet, we would make a good pair of shoes for him. His were so poor that he preferred to go barefooted. We would give him a comfortable, well-made suit of clothes. We would provide him with knitted underwear, shirts, collars, neckties, socks. . . . We would provide him with a beautifully built house and furnish it with furniture of the highest quality hand made or machine made. We would beautifully print and bind his speeches and lectures. . . . We should be pleased to give him a Rochester invented and made automobile, arm him with a marvelous Kodak and send him over to photograph the University of Rochester whose development will depend largely upon the prosperity and growth of this the Flower City." Yet Woodward, who quietly cancelled the order for the two bill-

boards, concluded in a more conciliatory vein: "Everyone, I think, will agree with Professor Kendrick that Rochester could and should be more beautiful and that there are many things in it, including the Chamber of Commerce, that could be and should be improved."

It was with that object in mind that Mayor Edgerton, whose secretary had inserted two versions of the Kendrick attack in the Mayor's scrapbook, met a month later with the leaders of the Chamber to consider the future of the Industrial Exposition. A committee report told of criticism from exhibitors of the high rates charged for the limited space allotted to them, and of complaints from visitors of congestion in the aisles and the inadequacy of the hall generally. Mayor Edgerton announced his hope to acquire the old State Industrial School property as a more spacious site for a permanent Industrial Exposition. Meanwhile the Chamber committee determined to hold a third exposition in Convention Hall, but to limit exhibitors to Rochester firms, and to reduce the charges and the admission fees and to balance expenses by prolonging the show into a second week.

The Chamber had been rebuffed in 1909 when it endeavored to persuade the city to appropriate \$50,000 for advertising purposes. It had raised the necessary funds by subscription methods. Now its efforts were receiving wider recognition. Three articles on Rochester in national journals appeared in the summer of 1910, two of them using the Chamber's old slogan "Do It For Rochester" as their title. Ray Stannard Baker's article under that caption in the *American Magazine* in September took special delight in the defeat of the city boss in his bid for a seat in Congress, but in other respects it was sufficiently laudatory, particularly in regard to the city's schools and industries, to please even local conservatives. Anna S. Richardson's article, which appeared in the same month in the *Women's Home Companion*, deplored the low wages paid to women workers in Rochester

(\$8 a week or less), but praised its social agencies and public health programs.

The notice given to Rochester's accomplishments in non-industrial fields prompted George Dietrich, the new president of the Chamber who delivered the opening address launching the third Exposition, to stress the fact that it would not be as purely industrial as its predecessors had been since it was planning to include educational and artistic features. A week's engagement of the Royal Venetian Band and a return visit by the Pittsburgh Festival Orchestra helped to sustain local interest and to attract a wider regional participation as demonstrated by the arrival of ten village bands to march with the two leading city bands in the Rochester Day parade.

The success of the third exposition helped to strengthen Mayor Edgerton's move for the establishment of a permanent Industrial Exposition on the site of the old State Industrial School. But the Mayor scarcely needed additional support when word leaked out that the state was contemplating the location of a new prison on that now abandoned site. Determined to avoid such a use, the Common Council, strongly supported by local business interests, agreed to cancel the unpaid taxes claimed against the old industrial school and to build a water main to supply the new Industrial School at Industry with Hemlock water free of charge for twenty-five years in return for a clear title to the old industrial school property. Most citizens were glad to support the Mayor's plan to turn that potential liability into a positive asset by renaming it Exposition Park and converting its buildings for display and recreational purposes. When the Rev. Dr. Algernon Crapsey bitterly attacked the proposed use of public funds to support the exhibit of private industrial products, few endorsed his views. Mayor Edgerton may have reflected over that criticism, however, for he soon amended his plan to include provisions for a winter zoo, a municipal museum and a

public library in the complex of old industrial school buildings.

After some study the Mayor determined that the city could not legally operate an Industrial Exposition and that it should not entrust its management to a multipurpose independent organization such as the Chamber. He accordingly assembled representatives of eleven civic and cultural organizations and secured their cooperation in the naming of a commission to establish and run a permanent Industrial Exposition. Duly incorporated in May 1911 as an independent association dedicated to the specific purpose of operating an exposition, its new directors, headed by Edgar F. Edwards as executive secretary, hastily prepared the grounds for Rochester's fourth Industrial Exposition held in the last two weeks of September. Its success in attracting over 177,000 visitors and netting a surplus of \$15,000 gave promise of more elaborate expositions in the future.

Meanwhile the Chamber was endeavoring to secure an accurate appraisal of the city's industrial activity. An industrial census conducted by the U.S. Bureau of the Census had released a list of 1313 firms, which Ralph Barstow, in charge of industrial promotion at the Chamber, declared to be inaccurate and misleading. He was, he announced, compiling a correct list, which already contained 1837 firms and which would be published shortly. Protests to Washington against the misrepresentation brought a reply that the 1313 list was a preliminary one based on old records and intended as a working list to assist in the preparation of a new one in which the cooperation of the Chamber was welcome. The Chamber, however, rushed the publication of its own "Directory of Manufacturers" in April 1911 in order to supply an up to date buyers guide and an accurate list of industrial firms, which now numbered 1667 according to its count.

The animated efforts of the Chamber, which almost doubled its membership in 1911, won new recognition from distant observers. Thus Henry Oyen, writing an article on "The Awaken-

ing Cities" for *World's Work*, cited Rochester and Kansas City for their park developments and Rochester, Chicago, and Boston for new planning schemes and industrial promotions. Dr. Rush Rhees addressed a "Dollar Dinner" staged by the Chamber's Civic Improvement League in September 1911 urging improvements to benefit and uplift the average citizen. He applauded a recent move by the Chamber to engage the nationally famous Frederick Law Olmsted and Arnold W. Brunner to prepare a new comprehensive plan for Rochester. An important task for the planners would be to determine the proper location for new civic buildings including a central library, an art gallery, and a concert hall.

When the Brunner-Olmsted plan was released, however, its grandiose designs stirred more enthusiasm in distant cities than in Rochester. "It will be a very long time before we can have a new city hall," declared Mayor Edergton, if we wait until these plans are realized. Instead he pressed ahead with the remodeling of Exposition Park. With the cooperation of the incorporated association he laid plans for a more elaborate exposition in 1912, one suitable for the commemoration of the first permanent settlement on the site of Rochester a hundred years before.

All now agreed that to portray the city's image adequately the character of the exposition should be broadened to include social and cultural as well as civic and industrial features. A Rochester Art League, formed a year before to coordinate efforts in its field, was invited to collaborate with the Rochester Art Club in preparing an art exhibit to be staged in one of the buildings at Exposition Park during the 1912 Exposition. Excitement mounted as fifty-three practicing artists in Rochester and neighboring towns brought representative canvases for display in the largest local art exhibit yet staged in the city. George L. Herdle, president of the club, assumed charge of the selection and hanging of the paintings and displayed such talent that President

Rush Rhees, who had announced a gift by Mrs. James Sibley Watson of an art gallery to the university that April, chose him as director of the projected Memorial Art Gallery. A month before its dedication in October 1913 the Exposition would stage a second and still larger art show at Exposition Park demonstrating the popular appeal of such exhibits and supplying a welcome cultural tone to the Exposition.

The 1912 and 1913 Expositions had added other new features that won a permanent place in the annual festival, as it was now frequently described. A horse show, attracting entries from many noted stables and farms up the valley, drew many on-lookers into the park in 1912 who had previously been content to watch the work-horse parade on the streets. The Flower Show, which was incorporated into the Exposition program the next year, when a women's day and a carnival were also added to the schedule of events, boosted the attendance to a new high. A new group, known as the Florilians and patterned after the Mystic Crewe who promoted amusements at the State Fair at Syracuse, had formed early in 1913 to sponsor a carnival at the exposition. Formed at the Mayor's office with H. H. Edgerton as its honorary chairman, it attracted considerable support and arranged for the erection of tents to house a series of side shows at the Exposition, supplying what became known as the Midway. It also sponsored, in conjunction with the Rochester Riding Club, a second gymkhana which rivaled that staged again by the Automobile Club. But these events proved less popular than the horse shows and the band concerts by Giuseppe Creatore who won return engagements in these years.

Diverse Promoters of Rochester's Image

The Chamber, somewhat fearful that the Exposition's more diversified character was diluting its value as a promoter of local industry, was turning its efforts in other directions. While the

number of industrial exhibitors at the annual Expositions was declining, the membership of the Chamber was expanding. A newly formed Industrial Development Corporation raised a fund in 1912 to assist interested firms find appropriate sites in Rochester. Secretary Woodward however warned that although its advice was free its assistance would be reserved for companies that would fit constructively into the Rochester economy. Rochester, he declared, does not want new industries that rely exclusively on female workers, for such plants would threaten the labor market of local firms, and the welfare of the existing companies was the first concern. The welfare of local merchants and wholesalers was equally important, and the Chamber sponsored a series of trade excursions into neighboring towns to strengthen local commercial ties and to invite their attendance at the Exposition and at a newly organized Rochester-Made Week first staged in June 1913 as a promotion of Rochester products.

Three successive industrial development committees of the Chamber in 1904, 1908, and 1913, complained of the inadequate supply of flats and other low-cost housing. High rentals for working men presented a serious handicap in attracting new industries. "Rochester will have to give up its preference for separate houses, . . . for mechanics cannot afford to pay one-third of their wages for homes," declared one committee. But when in 1908 one Chamber member organized a company to build a model tenement near the Kodak factory, its application for a zoning variance aroused indignant opposition. Although the project had Eastman's backing, Dr. Goler was able to rally sufficient support to prevent a weakening of the city's building ordinance. Nobody really regretted the decision, least of all George Eastman who soon had need of the area for plant expansion. The demand for separate homes continued and sparked a building boom, which produced almost 2000 new dwellings

in 1910 and maintained a high rate of home construction until 1913, when a new Chamber committee revived the campaign for flats. But Rochester's preference for separate, free-standing houses continued, and with the aid of numerous building-and-loan associations the city maintained a high ratio of home ownership. Merchants dealing in household furnishings multiplied and prospered in the early teens.

As the trade excursions by Rochester merchants, traveling in dust creating columns of touring cars, reached more deeply into the hinterland they occasionally encountered similar junkets of Buffalo, Syracuse, and even Cleveland promoters endeavoring to stake out rival commercial territories. After a few unfortunate encounters in which rival posters were destroyed, the chambers of the neighboring cities adopted a more friendly stance and entertained visiting delegations with the hope of promoting a profitable exchange of dissimilar specialties, which however were more striking in industry than in commerce. In their wider excursions the delegates of the Rochester Chamber picked up new promotional techniques in several places, such as the use of togas by the Floralians to match the wierd garb of the Mystic Crewe of Syracuse. The vigorous promotion witnessed in Buffalo spurred a revival of the Rochester Chamber's earlier plan to erect billboards at the city's eastern and western approaches, and \$3000 was subscribed in April 1913 to erect huge signs proclaiming that "Rochester, New York—Here Quality Dominates." Despite numerous protests from many who deplored the incongruity of boasting about quality, the signs continued to greet visitors that summer until Secretary Woodward returned in September from a visit to the Midwest and reported that Minneapolis "easily surpasses this city in . . . the beauty and the condition of her streets and parks . . . and the excellence of its street car service." He advised Rochesterians to be cautious in their boasts of quality, and soon the billboards were quietly removed.

Woodward reported with gratification several Rochester advantages, such as the easier flow of its street traffic than in congested Detroit. More important was a determination he brought back from that city where its chamber's new clubhouse presented a sharp contrast to the rooms of the Rochester Chamber and inspired a campaign in 1914 for a clubhouse of its own. George Eastman, who had stepped forward to provide a fitting reception at his mansion on East Avenue to the eleven governors who had visited Rochester on a Governors Special in December 1911 and then delivered them at the Powers Hotel for the annual banquet of the Chamber without permitting a call at the Chamber's headquarters, was fully aware of the deficiencies of those rooms. In May 1915 he offered a gift of \$500,000 towards the construction of a new building if the Chamber would raise \$100,000 to acquire a suitable site. The offer of course was accepted and the Chamber, now boasting 2500 members, soon had subscriptions for \$128,000 to launch construction.

Although the editors of several local dailies had criticized the boastful billboards, they were not averse to quoting flattering comments by admiring visitors. Thus the *Union and Advertiser* reprinted several paragraphs on October 2, 1913, from an article by Elbert Hubbard in *The Philistine* in which that cheery observer declared in part that "The city of Rochester is in some respects the most beautiful and prosperous city of its size in America, if not in the wide world. . . . The spirit of the people makes for generosity, beauty, education, health, life—and life in abundance"—much of the credit for which he gave to the Eastman Kodak Company. The *Post Express* had published a letter on July 23 from a pleased visitor who had admired Rochester's "beautiful shade trees, the large well kept grounds and the handsome houses" on East and Plymouth Avenues and the little park full of geraniums on the latter street, as well as the more spacious expanse of Genesee Valley Park. The same paper

published another letter on June 10 the next year from P. D. Barnhart of Los Angeles, editor of the *Pacific Garden*, in which he described Rochester as "the most beautiful city I have ever visited." The *Democrat & Chronicle* on September 6, 1914, quoted Mayor R. M. Cox of Middleton, president of the Conference of City Officials who had visited Rochester on a tour of 21 cities and declared that "it excels in parks, playgrounds and social welfare work . . . and in the results of its anti-vice campaign."

Of course Rochesterians were not averse to taking a few blasts on the trumpet themselves. The *Democrat & Chronicle* published a map in September 1913 showing the wide expanse of Rochester's wholesale territory which covered 23 counties in western New York and four in Pennsylvania, naming all villages and towns including Buffalo in small print. The *Post Express*, on reporting in November 1915 that New Orleans had introduced a course on its history into the grade schools, suggested that Rochester do likewise. "Few cities are richer in history than Rochester," the editor declared; "few are known more widely for . . . varied industries, institutions and civic organizations. . . . The globe girder will find the slogan "Made in Rochester" on bales . . . going down the age worn trail . . . to the Persian Gulf. He will find our goods in the bazaars of Teheran and Bokhara, in the shops of Bagdad and Samarcand. Peary carried one of our products to the North Pole and Colonel Young snapped the Dia Lama of Tibet with a Kodak 'made in Rochester.' It was a Rochester man who penetrated through the Khyber Pass and installed a telephone system in the palaces of the Ameer of Afghanistan. . . . Where every one goes one hears of our city in words of admiration and respect."

The editor of the *Herald*, on examining the new edition of *Who's Who* in July 1910, reported with glee that Rochester had 68 residents listed among its 17,546 names, which was only 6 less

than much larger Buffalo. Five years later, after describing Rochester as an ideal center from which to take week-end trips to a dozen nearby resorts, the same editor launched a City Beautiful contest by printing photographs of interesting Rochester views and inviting readers to identify them. The *Democrat & Chronicle* countered by publishing the prize winners in the 6th annual Picturesque Rochester competition conducted by Elmer Adler for sketches to be published in the *Common Good*, a journal of social criticism which had however succumbed that year. The Memorial Art Gallery, which had displayed these sketches in an exhibit that April, also hung an exhibit in June of 92 paintings loaned by Rochesterians, thus demonstrating the cultivated tastes many friends and patrons of the gallery had acquired. With a Rembrandt, a Van Dyck, and a Hals from the George Eastman collection, and choice selections from the walls of Hiram W. Sibley and Mrs. William S. Kimball among other wealthy residents, George Herdle had assembled an exhibit which, in the opinion of the art critic on the *Post Express*, few cities in America and none of Rochester's size could match.

It seemed quite fitting that the Mayor should appoint an Art Commission that August with the responsibility of approving the designs of new public buildings and any works of art erected in the parks or other public places. The commission had little business, but it symbolized the city's awakening concern for art. In the meantime, although the Memorial Art Gallery hung an exhibit by the members of the Rochester Art Club in March 1914, and in May or some other month in succeeding springs, the Rochester Industrial Exposition continued to make room for a local art exhibit in its corridors at Edgerton Park, as that busy center was renamed after the death of Mayor Edgerton in 1922. The annual Horse Shows had captured precedence by that date over industrial and other displays, however, and with the Midway and the newly popular Baby Shows sustained the Expo-

sition through the 1920's.

But business leaders had long since turned to other schemes for promoting the city. Members of the Chamber gathered late in June 1916 to lay the cornerstone for its new headquarters at St. Paul and Mortimer Streets and assembled again fifteen months later for its dedication. Designed by Claude Bragdon, Rochester's most talented architect, it won plaudits from many of the distinguished visitors invited to the opening ceremonies, including the president of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce who described it as one of the best in the nation. The Chamber, alerted to the problems of interior display by the construction of its new home, had launched a new city beautiful contest the year before and awarded prizes for the most beautifully decorated business premises in ten city districts. It had pressured the Drew Allis Company, publishers of the annual city directory, to list the vocations and business connections of all entries and to add the given name of all wives in order to enhance the usefulness of the directory in the increasingly complex urban society.

The Chamber assumed several new civic and patriotic functions during the war, but did not forget its main task of promoting the city's economy. Indeed its service as the coordinating agency for the upstate ordnance district enabled it to incubate and spoon-feed several new industrial plants. And at the close of the war George Eastman and E. G. Miner served as Co-chairmen of a Chamber committee that received and entertained the fifty distinguished members of the Allied Economic Mission on its visit to Rochester in November 1919. Earlier that year when the federal government announced plans for a new airmail service the Chamber cooperated with the Mayor in pressing for the designation of Rochester as one of the official stops. To assure it, the Chamber had to support the city's efforts to acquire and improve an airfield, but the increasing costs of the development of the 109-acre Britton farm on Scottsville Road seemed fully justi-

fied, and in 1922 Rochester was able to boast of possessing one of the best "air stations" in the state.

Among the new functions assumed by the Chamber during the war was the promotion of citizenship classes as part of an Americanization program to assure the loyalty and integration of the city's many immigrant workers. It staged a mass meeting for naturalized citizens at Convention Hall on Washington's birthday in 1919 and, impressed by the cooperation received from ethnic societies, it joined a year later with the art gallery in organizing a Homelands Exhibit at Exposition Park that attracted thousands of visitors to view the art objects, costumes, and furniture brought by immigrant families from their varied homelands. The interest created and respect shown for immigrant folk art not only enriched the city's cultural scene but reminded second and third generation Americans of their own cultural heritage and assured them of its intrinsic value. The Rochester City Club had held a New Citizens banquet annually since its establishment a decade before, but it was not until the Chamber took over the task of locating all recently naturalized residents that the New Citizen Suppers, launched in W. Roy McCanne's term as president in 1921, became a standard feature of the Rochester scene. The Chamber's Council for Better Citizenship not only established contacts with all foreign-born residents but assisted many of them in bringing relatives to America and offered advice and assistance in other fields as well.

Of course the Chamber's chief concern was the city's economic welfare but it had now abandoned most crude efforts to promote it at all costs. Indeed the selectivity it practiced in the search for new industries, favoring those that would fit into its productive mix and supporting the Better Business Bureau's efforts to exclude frauds and imposters, created an atmosphere that may have given rise to a sensational charge that Kodak was blocking an effort by Ford to establish a plant in Rochester. That charge

was made in nearby Geneva in February 1920 by an itinerant promoter who offered that town the plant Rochester had supposedly rejected. The story as published in the *Democrat & Chronicle* brought a quick denial from the Chamber and prompted Louis Foulkes as president to send a hasty wire to Ford's headquarters in Detroit assuring the company of a welcome in Rochester. Although the reply from Ford's secretary denied any such plan or any knowledge of the agent in question, every effort to refute the charge only spread it further. President Foulkes had given a fulsome statement of the Chamber's commitment to the city's image of quality in his inaugural address. "The Chamber's main effort," he declared, "should be to make Rochester the best city—for quality counts more than quantity." Rochester, he added, has much to do before it can take proper care of 500,000 residents. But Foulkes was the last of the Chamber's presidents to stress that concept.

Although the Chamber and the mayors who followed Edgerton placed a decreasing emphasis in the mid-twenties and after on the image of quality, that may simply have reflected the city's shifting priorities. A mounting interest in welfare services had developed in the teens, enlisting the support of George Eastman, particularly in the improvement of hospital services. The Red Cross and war relief drives had further engaged his energies, committing him to the establishment of a war chest and finally a community chest. Its purpose, like that of the Council of Social Agencies organized to supervise these developments, was to make Rochester, in Eastman's words' "the best city in the world in which to live and raise a family." This commitment continued to grip the community into the early years of the great depression with Rochester battling heroically to stem the tide.

But the causes that enlisted Eastman's greatest enthusiasm and aroused the largest response from the community were in the fields of music and higher education. This is not the place to

review in detail the establishment and development of the Eastman School of Music and the School of Medicine and Dentistry as appendages of the University of Rochester in the early 1920s, but it is appropriate to note here how these developments added luster to the city's image of quality. Rochester's leading industrialist, who retired in 1924 and devoted most of his energies to philanthropy, paid the major cost for these two dramatic achievements; he also provided for the organization and most of the early support of the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, but the city's mounting pride enabled it to respond generously to a greater University of Rochester drive that raised funds for the acquisition and development of a new river campus for the Men's College and the strengthening of its faculty and that of the separate Women's College.

These accomplishments prompted and appeared to justify the publication by the *Times Union* in 1924 of a series of a dozen articles by Edward Hungerford on "Rochester: A Good Town to Live In." Starting as a cub reporter on the Rochester *Herald* in 1896, Hungerford had left to win fame as a newspaperman in New York and a railroad historian. Back at Rochester as a free lance journalist in the early twenties, he wrote glowingly of the city's industrial, civic, and cultural distinctions. Lauding not only its great institutions but also its generous provisions for wholesome recreation in public parks and private resorts, he also praised its stable Yankee traditions and its ready absorption of new ethnic cultural contributions as well as the display of a democratic support for good government.

Rochester maintained its high spirits and bright prospects throughout the late twenties. A revival of the Homelands Exhibit in 1928 enlisted the participation of many members of fifteen ethnic groups and healed some of the sores created by resentment over the immigrant exclusion acts. The widely supported campaign for the city manager government finally trium-

phed and gave promise of an improved and more professional administration. Successive victories in the new baseball park on Norton Street where the Red Wings captured the International pennant four years in succession, 1928-1931, and successive triumphs by the Community Chest drives created a spirit of confidence that sustained the community's morale in spite of the onset of the depression. It was only in 1932 when all supports to the economy seemed to be crumbling and the number of the unemployed was reaching unprecedented heights that Rochester surrendered its image of quality and assumed the new goal of economy, pledging "to hold the line till '49," later shifted to '54 and points beyond. It was by sheer coincidence that George Eastman decided, a month after this dramatic turnaround, that, "My work is done, why wait," but he would have had difficulty adjusting to Rochester's new image.