

ROCHESTER HISTORY

Edited by Ruth Rosenberg - Naparsteck, *City Historian*

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Rochester History

The Voice of the City Historian

*by Dr. Blake McKelvey
City Historian Emeritus*

ROCHESTER HISTORY

Ruth Rosenberg-Naparsteck, Editor

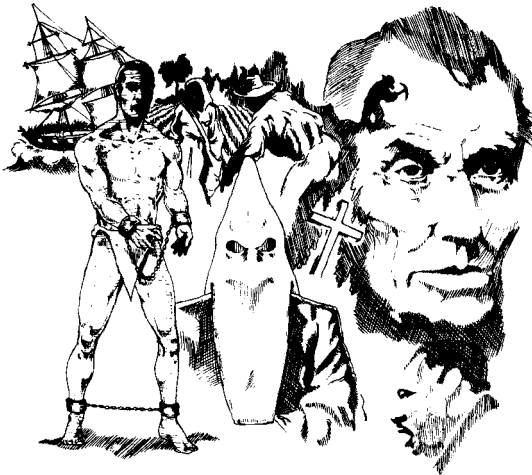
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Nos. 1 and 2

A Growing Agitation: Rochester Before, During, and After The Civil War

By Ruth Rosenberg-Naparsteck





Above: **Rochester History** was first published in January 1939 under City Historian Dexter Perkins, a University of Rochester professor. Perkins was an international authority on American diplomatic history. He was City Historian from 1937 to 1948 when Assistant City Historian Dr. Blake McKelvey succeeded him. From a painting by John C. Menahan at Rush Rhees Library at the University of Rochester.

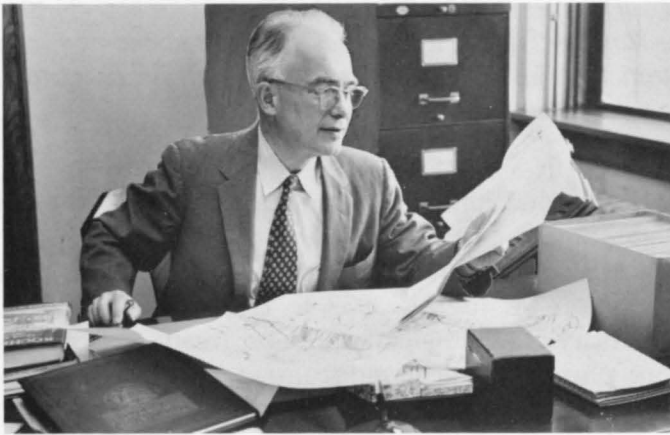
Cover: Buffalo Street in 1844 showing the Erie Canal and the aqueduct in the distance. Executed by G.G. Lange Darmstadt, published by Charles Magnus, N.Y.

Page One: One of nearly 200 issues of **Rochester History** published in the past fifty years, Vol. XLVI, Nos. 1 & 2, January/April 1984, "A Growing Agitation: Rochester Before, During and After the Civil War."

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Rochester History gave the City Historian the opportunity to share new research and interpretations with the public. Careful historical research and monitoring of current events helps all of us to understand ourselves and to make informed judgments. Above Dr. Blake McKelvey is researching a **Rochester History** in May of 1957.

The City Historian's Voice

*It was just fifty years ago, on January 1, 1939, that we launched **Rochester History**, a modest quarterly published by the Rochester Public Library. Professor Dexter Perkins as City Historian and I as Assistant City Historian had assumed our posts some two years before, and we had continued the Historian's service as editor of the Rochester Historical Society's **Publications**, producing two annual volumes and compiling a third. We had extended their distribution on an exchange basis to a score of distant libraries, increasing the circulation, including society members and local repositories, to some 600 copies. Obviously we were reaching only a fraction of the Rochester public, and our hope, backed by John Adams Lowe, Director of the Public Library, was that a 24-page quarterly available free of cost to library visitors and to interested subscribers at a modest charge, would enable the City Historian to reach a wider and more diversified audience.*

Our purpose was to produce a scholarly, not a flashy journal, and by limiting our orders to 1,000 copies we clearly did not aspire for a mass market. But by devoting each issue to a specific local topic we hoped in time to stir the interest of many different community groups in their history. Our aim was to promote the

city's awareness of its heritage, not to nurture a school of historians. One function, which we did not recognize at the time, was the education of the Historian's staff, and in retrospect that function appears to have been most continuant.

Initial Objectives

Certainly our first issue contributed directly to the editor's enlightenment. I had been invited to address a gathering of Seneca and other Indians and friends at the Tonawanda Reservation on July 8, 1938 to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Phelps & Gorham Treaty, and my 20-page paper, plus some relevant documents, provided the text for the first issue of *Rochester History*. But my experience in researching and delivering that paper was an important by-product, for the treaty, which provided a firm basis for all land titles in the Genesee country, had some ambiguous aspects; in reviewing them candidly in the midst of two or three hundred Indians, I learned that historical events can not only have lasting practical effects, but can also stir emotions a century and a half later.

Even after I published my first book, *Rochester: The Water Power City: 1812-1854*, and was pressing my researches into the city's mid-years, request continued to arrive by letter and telephone for information on the Indians. Accordingly, in July 1951, I devoted another issue of *Rochester History* to the "Seneca Time of Troubles" in which I depicted their history, borrowing a Toynbee phrase, as a contest between two ill-matched civilizations. Incidentally, these two articles brought numerous invitations to address groups in Rochester and the surrounding area on our Indian antecedents, thus extending the Historian's service.

One of the major objectives in launching *Rochester History* was to provide historical materials that would awaken school children and other youths to their local heritage. We were, in that first year, compiling a volume for the Historical Society surveying the history of education in the Rochester area, and I asked my able research secretary, Dorothy S. Truesdale [Humes] to assemble some of the materials we were uncovering in an article on "The Younger Generation: Their Opinions, Pastimes and Enterprises: 1830-1850," which

provided the text for the second number of *Rochester History*. That was only the first of several issues designed to appeal to young people. Thus "Touring Backwards: A visit to Rochester in 1818, and again in 1838" outlined two possible downtown tours for school groups in our second year, and six years later our third number in 1946, "Rochester Learns to Play: 1850-1900," attracted the attention of young adults as well as sportsmen to their historical antecedents. I had, on request, written *A Story of Rochester*, published by the Board of Education for use as an historical reader in the fourth grade, and three decades later, when a state change in school curriculum shifted the study of local history to the fifth and seventh grades, I devoted the April 1968 number of *Rochester History* to "Traces of the Age of Homespun in Early Rochester" and was gratified to learn that the schools ordered a special edition for their use. Requests for talks on local history to school classes and assemblies and scout groups have been too numerous to record.

Summary Accounts

Of course a major function of *Rochester History* has been to provide convenient summary reviews of the city's history, and we have produced a succession of such articles over the years. The first and easiest for a beginning scholar to compile was "Economic Stages in the Growth of Rochester," which appeared in October 1941. I had by that date achieved a fair grasp of the "stages" experienced during the city's first half century but only a hazy conception of those that followed. Eight years later I was able to do a better job in "a Panoramic Review of Rochester's History," which appeared in April 1949. And as the supply of these issues was soon exhausted, I produced two additional summary accounts: "Rochester in Retrospect," in July 1961, and "A Sesquicentennial Review of Rochester's History" the next July to commemorate the arrival of the first permanent settlers in 1812. The last of these was designed as an episodic review, divided into 66 segments, each of which was tape-recorded for presentation in an extended series of 3-minute talks on WBBF that summer, thus reaching a wide audience.

Municipal Functions

Summary accounts have their appeal, particularly to the general reader, but the historian of a city has to probe more deeply into its various aspects. As a municipal historian he has a special responsibility for an objective recording of its civic development. I accordingly devoted the April number in *Rochester History's* fifth year (1943) to a detailed review of "Civic Developments of Rochester's First Half Century." I carried that account forward, two years later, with an issue on "Turbulent but Constructive Decades in Civic Affairs: 1867-1900."

As I followed Rochester's development into the 20th century I discovered that its civic life and activity had aspects that required separate treatment. For my October 1944 issue I compiled a "History of City Planning in Rochester," which brought some fruitful relationships with that department. My January 1949 issue, "An Historical View of Rochester's Parks and Playgrounds," was similarly rewarding and eventually brought a request to update that account for the Parks Centennial in 1988. My July 1958 issue, "The History of Public Health in Rochester," and my October 1968 number, "A History of The Police in Rochester, N.Y." likewise brought later appeals for updated articles. Finally, with "A History of Penal and Correctional Institutions in the Rochester Area" and "Water for Rochester," in January and July, 1972, I reviewed the history of two additional civic functions.

Dr. Joseph Barnes, my successor as Historian and editor, has reviewed municipal developments in two additional fields; "Arson Years: Fire Protection, Insurance and Politics: 1908-1917," in April 1976, and two years later "Rochester's City Halls." He has also put Rochester's water works in a comparative inter-city perspective in July 1977.

Perhaps a historical editor should never hesitate to tackle controversial subjects, but the maintenance of objectivity in the treatment of political rivalries becomes both difficult and hazardous as one approaches the present. Yet Rochester's civic developments in the 20th century can scarcely be separated from its political contests, and in carrying my account of the city's civic affairs toward the present I coupled



On the First Armistice Day, November 11, 1918, people crowded the streets of Rochester for a parade and celebration. The First World War took a heavy toll on Rochester's citizens, many of whom had left friends and relatives in the war-torn country they left behind.

them with its political trends in a series of articles on the mayors of Rochester. By starting with "Rochester Mayors Before the Civil War" (January 1964), "The Mayors of Rochester's Mid-Years: 1860-1900" (January 1966), and "His Honor, the Mayor of Rochester: 1900-1928" (January 1969), I promoted, I hoped, an atmosphere of objectivity that permitted an approach to the present, in April 1970, with an issue on "The Last Eleven Mayors, The First Eleven Managers and Twenty County Chairmen." The "present" has, of course, moved ahead at a brisk pace since 1970, but scarcely far enough to provide the historical perspective for an updated article.



Though the Vietnam War was distant and involved few of Rochester's citizens in active service, it became a divisive issue in the city as protesters escalated their demands to end the war.

War Service Records

Another responsibility of the City Historian, imbedded in the office by the state education law of 1921, which authorized its establishment, is the preservation of local war service records and traditions. While our modest journal is scarcely a fit repository for such records, it can recognize and help to preserve wartime traditions. I accordingly published in our October 1942 issue an article on "War on Lake Ontario: 1812-1815" by two of my research secretaries, Ruth Marsh and Dorothy S. Truesdale, and I hastened to review "Rochester's first Year in the War for Survival" in the succeeding January issue. Rochester's continued involvement in that struggle prompted a fresh look by our staff at the *World War Service Records of Rochester and Monroe County*, a three-volume compilation by Edward R. Forman, City Historian from 1922 to 1935, on which we based a summary review of "Rochester in World War One," written by two of my newly appointed research secretaries, Sylvia R. Black and Harriet J. Naylor and published in October 1943. For our January 1946 issue we edited a series of letters by Rochester GI's, "Life in the Armed Services." As the centennial of the Civil War approached, I prepared a summary account of "Rochester's Part in the Civil War" for the January 1961 issue. Our present editor, Ruth Rosenberg- Naparsteck, has carried on in this function by producing an article in the July 1985 issue on "A City in Conflict: Rochester During the Vietnam War."

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UNCLE TOM'S CABIN
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THE LARGEST AND BEST IN THE WORLD.

Uncle Tom's Cabin was performed in Rochester and across the country in the 1850 s. Author Harriet Beecher Stowe's portrayal of slave life helped to form the anti-slavery opinion of northerners. Rochester was a center of abolitionist thought, the home of Susan B. Anthony and Frederick Douglass and the site of William H. Seward's noted speech, "The Irrepressible Conflict."

These issues of *Rochester History*, designed to provide veterans and their friends with a sense of their heritage, have brought numerous requests for historical addresses at successive ceremonies. By far the most flattering request I personally received over the years came from Mayor Samuel B. Dicker, asking me to compose a fitting inscription for the Veterans' Memorial Chamber of the War Memorial. As may be imagined, the chance to write in marble for such a solemn purpose was inspiring, and I spent several days honing the inscription, which I hope I may be pardoned for including here as a byproduct of serving as editor of *Rochester History*:

Dedicated to the men and women of Greater Rochester
 Who died for their country on land or sea or in the air
 Americans by birth or adoption, most of all by devotion
 Rich in the joys and hopes and talents they sacrificed
 Richer still with honor and freedom so nobly maintained
 Whose courage and faith laid deep the foundations for peace



*Many immigrant women learned a craft in Rochester night schools or at settlement houses. These women learned millinery in a city night school in the early 1900s. How Rochester absorbed and benefitted by immigrants is a story that continues to be recorded with each new immigrant group. Photograph from the **Common Good**.*

The People of Rochester

One of my first discoveries, in plotting the stages of Rochester's growth, was that the milltown at the falls had suddenly mushroomed in the 1820s into a boomtown — the first in America to grow from 1,000 to 8,000 within ten years. Another startling discovery resulted from a query by a resident of Kansas, asking for information on a grandfather who had once lived in Rochester. On checking, I found his name in our first *Directory* (1827) but not in the second (1834). The fact that he had moved on during a period when Rochester was booming prompted a check on the number of other names that had disappeared in that period. Intrigued on finding that only 30 percent of those listed in 1827 reappeared in 1834, I pressed ahead, checking the top of the page listings every five years, and finally determined that Rochester's astonishing 70 percent mobility in the twenties had dropped into the 50s a decade later, and dipped into the 40s at times as the years passed, but continued to maintain a high level throughout the century, suggesting that Rochester was a way station on the great westward migration of Americans in that period.

To bring these discoveries into focus, I compiled an article on "The Population of Rochester," delaying publication until October 1950, when the 1950 census statistics became available. I endeavored, of course, to relate the city's surges of growth, as newcomers massively replaced the departees, to the major economic shifts, but the most significant conclusion that emerged from a careful study of the successive census reports was that Rochester was being transformed from a Yankee town into a cosmopolitan city. Newcomers from abroad were flooding in, bringing new skills, new customs, and playing increasing roles in the city's development.

Obviously, a probing study of the principal immigrant groups was called for. Several years passed before I was able to collect sufficient records of these groups to write "The Irish in Rochester, An Historical Retrospect" and "The Germans in Rochester, Their Traditions and Contributions," which appeared in October 1957 and January 1958. I followed in the next two years with articles on "Lights and Shadows in Local Negro History" and "The Italians of Rochester in Historical Perspective." And in July 1963 I summarized the contributions of these and other newcomers in an issue on "Rochester's Ethnic Transformations."

The preparation and publication of these articles brought frequent opportunities to address ethnic groups, and one such occasion enabled me, already serving as secretary of the Rochester-Rennes Committee, to collaborate with Mayor Frank Lamb in initiating the formation of a similar Sister-City relationship with Wurtzburg in Germany. Writing the history of a city in which one is an active participant may have hazards and erode one's objectivity, as a critic of my first book on Rochester pointed out, but it also has its rewards and nurtures fresh insights. Thus these studies of ethnic contributions helped to reveal a basic shift in Rochester's development from a city powered by its waterfalls, into one chiefly dependent on the resources of its people, a theme that gave fresh vitality to my second volume, *Rochester the Flower City*.



*Henry O'Reilly became the editor of the **Rochester Daily Advertiser** in 1826 when it was established as the first daily newspaper west of Albany. He wrote the 500 page **Sketches of Rochester and Western New York** in 1838. It was the first comprehensive history published in the interior of America and is still a valuable source of pioneer history.*

Celebrities

Rochester, like most cities, has produced a goodly number of noteworthy personalities, and we have devoted numerous issues of *Rochester History* to them. I saluted Ebenezer (Indian) Allen, our colorful but faltering pioneer, in our fourth issue in 1939, "Indian Allen's Mills," and Professor Glyndon G. Van Deusen contributed an account of "Thurlow Weed in Rochester," based on his able biography of that distinguished statesman, for the April issue in 1940. Dexter Perkins summarized the significant activities of Rochester's first daily editor and innovative civic leader, "Henry O'Reilly," for the January 1945 issue, and I followed in April with one on "Susan B. Anthony," our most historic resident. I also joined Dr. Ralph Bates in writing an article on "Lewis Swift: The Rochester Astronomer," for the January 1947 number, and

produced another on "Walter Rauschenbusch's Rochester" for the October 1942 issue. W. Stephen Thomas, Director of the Rochester Museum of Arts and Sciences (now Rochester Museum and Science Center), contributed an article on his predecessor, "Arthur Caswell Parker: 1881-1955," for the July 1955 issue; Dr. William H. Pease supplied another, "The Gannetts of Rochester: Highlights of a Liberal Career," on the distinguished Unitarian minister and his equally distinguished wife, for the October 1955 issue; and Professor Robert F. McNamara submitted still another on "Archbishop Hanna, Rochesterian," which appeared in April 1963.

It has, of course, been impossible, even in fifty years, to give full attention to all the distinguished persons who have shared in Rochester's history, but in partial response to the situation I supplied summary details on "Some Former Rochesterians of National Distinction," in July 1959, and the next April published a similar review of the contributions of another 41 whose merits entitled them to one of my "Civic Medals Awarded Posthumously." Finally, responding to numerous requests, I presented a summary sketch of "Colonel Nathaniel Rochester" in January 1962. History has diverse actors, and Dr. Joseph Barnes, sensing a need to recognize the varied roles of women and minorities, devoted the January 1981 issue to "Katherine B. Davis and the Workingman's Model Home of 1893" and reproduced portions of the "Autobiography of Rev. Thomas James," Rochester's first black minister, as his October 1975 issue. Dr. Barnes also devoted two issues in 1979 to "Rochester's Congressmen" and published solicited articles in 1980 on "Dr. Algernon S. Crapsey: Religious Reformer," by Carolyn Swanton, "Herman Dossenbach and the Rochester Orchestra," by Vincent Lenti, and "Charles Carroll of Belle Vue, Co-Founder of Rochester," by Professor McNamara. Ruth Rosenberg-Naparsteck, the current City Historian and editor, agreeing that it is people who make history but that only a few achieve distinction; has determined to seek out and report the experiences of some of the less fortunate of Rochester's inhabitants, as she did in the January 1983 issue: "Life and Death in Nineteenth Century Rochester."



Through newspapers, directories, poor house annual reports, letters, diaries, hospital records, census manuscripts and oral histories, the city historian can trace our city's response to poverty, its causes and its cures. Above is the Monroe-County Almshouse in the 1880s.

Societies and Institutions

That people make history and that they will act more effectively with sound knowledge of the relevant past has been a motivating principle of the editors of *Rochester History* from the beginning. We have recognized, however, that people generally achieve influence and goals in participation with others in societies and institutions. A major objective of our journal has been to uncover and reveal details and experiences of some of the productive groups that have organized for varied purposes in the course of the city's development.

Since Rochester has acquired a reputation for excellence in the welfare field, my first venture in this area was a paper exploring "The Historic Origins of Rochester's Social Welfare Agencies," which appeared in the April 1947 issue. I carried the story forward a decade later with a broader coverage in "A History of Social Welfare in Rochester" (October 1958) and then, by request wrote "A Semi-Centennial Review of Family Service in Rochester." Again by request, Dr. Barnes compiled "A Centennial History of the Humane Society of Rochester and Monroe County" in October 1973. The publication of these articles drew me into active participation in the

programs of the Council of Social Agencies and increased my understanding of the community problems it faced, thus contributing greatly to my analysis in *Rochester: The Quest for Quality*, the third volume in my series.

Numerous other societies and institutions merited historical study. One of the most noteworthy was the Rochester City Club, which maintained a weekly forum that served for decades as focus for community-wide consideration of current problems. I was highly gratified when its board ordered an extra supply of my October 1947 issue, "A History of the Rochester City Club," for distribution as an incentive to new members. The YMCA was similarly appreciative of my January 1954 issue, "The YMCA's First Century in Rochester." The interests and activities I shared with the Museum staff prompted me to write "The Historic Origins of Rochester's Museums" in October 1956, and of course we hastened in October 1961 to assist our host in commemorating "The Semi-Centennial of the Rochester Public Library."

We made similar efforts to examine the origins and development of a number of Rochester's cultural institutions. Two of my research secretaries, Alice T. Sutton and Jean M. Dinse, co-wrote a paper on "Evidences of Culture in Early Rochester" for our July 1945 issue, and another, Natalie F. Hawley, produced a superb account of "Literature in Rochester: 1865-1905" for the January 1948 number. Still another, Hilda A. Coates, (I was especially fortunate in securing the assistance of a succession of talented young women but, because of a limited budget, could not hold them long) wrote a delightful paper for the January 1951 issue on "Some Aspects of Rochester Journalism in the 1890s" when several able writers were contributing with zest to one or another of Rochester's six dailies. I surveyed "The History of Theater in Rochester during its First Nine Decades" for our the July 1955 issue, and "The First Century of Art in Rochester" the following April. In January 1967 we published a paper on "Music in Rochester: A Century of Progress: 1825-1925," by Ernestine M. Klinzing of the Eastman School of Music. Again, the preparation of these articles developed contacts that broadened our perspective on Rochester and

in some cases spurred efforts to bring their stories up to date, as I did with an article on "The Visual Arts in Metropolitan Rochester" in January 1970.

Although the religious history of Rochester had been fairly adequately recorded in several articles in the Rochester Historical Society *Publications* before the establishment of *Rochester History*, we ventured to explore several borderline situations involving church leaders in controversy with lay members of the community. Two of my articles, "When Science Was On Trial in Rochester: 1850-1900" (October 1946) and "Walter Rauschenbusch's Rochester" (October 1952), probed the impact of religion on secular developments, while Aubrey Parkman's "President Hill and the Sectarian Challenge" (at the University of Rochester) and Carolyn Swantons "Dr. Algernon S. Crapsey" saw the impact operating in the other direction. These and other issues of *Rochester History* have brought numerous invitations for historical lectures to church groups, greatly extending the range of the Historian's voice.

Historical Colleagues

While we planned to probe all aspects of the history of Rochester and its environment, we strove to avoid a duplication of studies adequately presented elsewhere. Rich materials gathered by the Public Library and the Historical Society filled the shelves of the Local History Division adjacent to my office, and to make a preliminary appraisal of them I wrote "A History of Historical Writing in the Rochester Area." Its publication in our April 1944 issue brought the Genesee County Historical Federation into view and prompted a revival of its annual pilgrimages to scattered villages.

Several issues of *Rochester History* had a regional content, notably "Williamsburg: Lost Village on the Genesee," by Helen I. Cowan (July 1942) and my recent article on "The Genesee Country Villages" of which the Genesee County

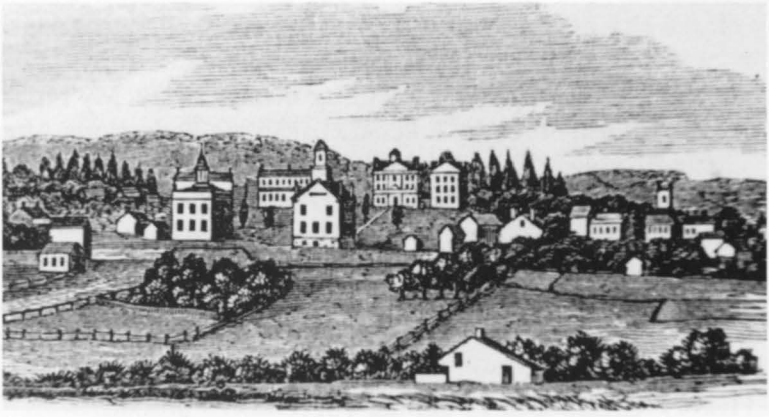
Museum ordered a special edition for sale in its gift shop. To identify and make more readily available the increasing supply of historical literature, I prepared a fairly complete listing of local history writings in "A Rochester Bookshelf" for our October 1948 number. An updated issue would now be useful.

But a city historian cannot limit his circle of colleagues to a local region. To see his city in perspective he must know its relation to other nearby and far distant cities. My report of my first trip abroad, "A Local Historian's Reflections After Visiting Foreign Cities" (January 1952) and , five years later, my comments on a dozen western cities visited during "A City Historian's Holiday," were compiled to help the historian as well as his readers see Rochester as part of a dynamic urban society. My January 1959 issue , "The Rochester Area in American History," had a similar objective and helped to promote my involvement in a newly formed American Urban History Group and in similar conferences abroad.

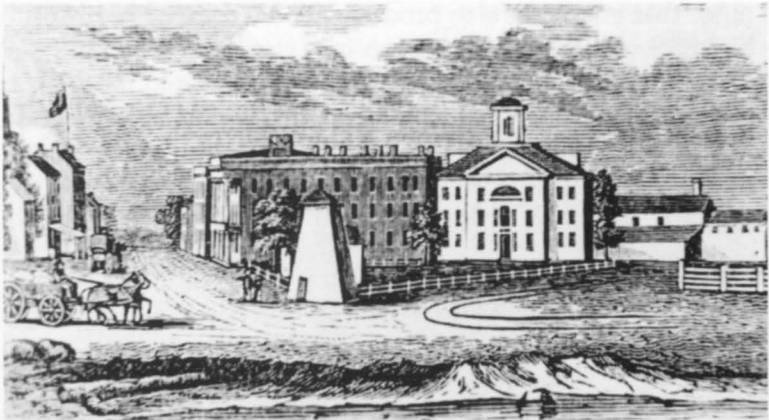
If, as the years, indeed decades, have slipped by, I have acquired identification as a member of the "Old School" of urban historians, I could, on my retirement in July 1973, thank Rochester, in "A City Historian's Report," for maintaining an office that enabled me to produce the only complete historical biography of a city yet written in America or abroad. I also cited *Rochester History* as the ideal practical field for such an effort, as an earlier issue, "Errata and Addenda, Plus Some Thoughts on Nature of History and the Rochester Story," which had followed the publication in 1962 of my Fourth Volume *Rochester: An Emerging Metropolis 1925 - 1961*, demonstrated.

Economic Aspects

The crucial test of an historian measures his or her ability to undertake an objective study of significant developments. In my case this occurred in the economic field. Plotting the city's major economic stages had proved easy, as noted above, but in digging deeper to determine the forces initiating and controlling the shifts from one stage to another, problems



Canandaigua (above) and Batavia (below) in 1841 served as county seats of Ontario and Genesee counties respectively. Until the formation of Monroe County in 1821, Rochesterians traveled to their county seat a distance away.



arose. A detailed review of the city's originally dominant flour milling industry had been included in the Rochester Historical Society's *Publication Fund Series* (X:141-234) and I had already supplied a full account of its nurseries and farm papers in Vol. XVIII: 121-200. My article on "Rochester and the Erie Canal" reviewed the major points of those stages in our July 1949 issue. But when a friend in the Chamber of Commerce recommended an article on its history, I hesitated. The years of its organization and early development had been tumultuous and full of controversy, and a bland account would be pointless, a critical one dangerous. Indeed, in an interview with one of its most influential early presidents, my chance question as to whether Frank Gannett had ever been president had produced an astonishing shout: "Not in a thousand years!" On checking, I discovered that, shortly after Gannett's arrival in Rochester to merge the old *Times* and *Union and Advertiser* into the *Times-Union*, he had printed a full account of a building trades strike on his front page, whereas the other four dailies had noted it briefly on page seven!

Clearly I needed a fuller understanding of the major industries before attempting to assess the control groups. I accordingly wrote "A History of the Rochester Shoe Industry," for the April 1953 issue, and followed in July 1960 with "The Men's Clothing Industry in Rochester's History." The shoe industry, after succumbing in a bitter strike to the strong national shoe workers union, had failed to get needed banking support to modernize its plants and soon declined, whereas the rich Jewish clothing manufacturers had settled equally bitter contests with their Jewish clothing workers and, with the backing of Jewish financiers, had instituted an arbitration agreement that assured their survival. Two additional articles, "The Port of Rochester: A History of Its Lake Trade" (October 1954) and "Railroads in Rochester's History" filled neglected gaps in the economic picture and helped to provide me with a sufficient grasp on the city's economic development to undertake a balanced account of "The First Four Decades of the Chamber of Commerce," which we issued in October 1962. I promptly followed, the



The Keller-Heiman-Thompson Clothing strike in August of 1933 was one of the bitterest strikes in the clothing industry. The Great Depression, the demand for veterans' benefits, the communist movement and the organization of unions were all aspects of Rochester's history that were recorded through research on the clothing industry.

next January, with a review of "Organized Labor in Rochester" and managed to maintain a sufficiently creditable objectivity to prompt invitations for future articles from both sides of the hotly contested issue.

Physical Growth and Expansion

The physical city likewise has its history, and I devoted the October 1957 issue to a review of "The Physical Growth of Rochester." While that article dealt chiefly with the city's territorial expansion, two later numbers, "Rebuilding Rochester and Remembering Its Past" (January 1956) and "The Changing Face of Rochester" (April 1964), took note of the successive structural occupants of key sites and areas. In 1957, as I was launching work on my fourth volume, I dashed off an article on "Rochester's Metropolitan Prospects in Historical Perspective" and eventually incorporated the concept in my book: *Rochester: An Emerging Metropolis*.



*Emma Goldman (1869-1940) lived in Rochester as a teenager. She wrote in her autobiography, **Living My Life**, that her harsh experiences in Rochester's clothing industry motivated her to become an anarchist. She was later deported to the Soviet Union.*

The expansion and rebuilding of Rochester also engendered heated controversies, pitting those who urged public action to clear the slums against those committed to private enterprise. Any mention of slums was long tabu in Rochester, as I discovered when applying for appointment as City Historian in 1948. In a crucial interview with Thomas E. Broderick, the Republican County Chairman, his first remark was, "I don't think much of public housing!" He had clearly checked on my activities during the 12 years I had served as Assistant City Historian and had discovered that I had been an active member of the Better Housing Association and had written some of its resolutions favoring public housing.

As I smiled sheepishly at his comment, he added, "When I came to Rochester from Brooklyn some 20 years ago I built my own house." The best I could do was remind him that he had built it "in suburban Irondequoit, not in the 7th or 8th wards," which launched us on an extended argument that he (thankfully) was less inclined to terminate than I was. We finally agreed to disagree, and since he had read some of my articles and could see that I understood the difference between history and advocacy, I got the job. It was not my arguments however, but the unexpected election of Truman who, to everybody's surprise, carried Republican Rochester, that turned the tide and launched the city on a hesitant program of slum clearance. That program was considerably advanced before I could legitimately review it historically in our October 1965 issue, "Housing and Urban Renewal: The Rochester Experience."

Similar controversies, not only between public and private enterprise, but also between rival investment groups, occurred in the transit and other utility fields, and I reviewed some of them in "Rochester's Turbulent Transit History" in our July 1968 issue. Transit and other utility services played a role in repeated territorial annexations as Dr. Barnes recorded in two articles, "The Annexation of Brighton Village" (January 1973) and "The Annexation of Charlotte" (January 1975). Suburban resistance to annexation was, however, mounting, which spurred renewed vitality in the county government and

prompted me to write "Rochester and Monroe County: An Historic Partnership" for our April 1971 issue.

Some less controversial aspects of Rochester's physical development likewise merited attention. "Reminiscences of the Third Ward," by Virginia Jeffrey Smith in April 1946, celebrated the charms of Rochester's choice neighborhood during the Flour City era. My account, two years later, of "East Avenue's Turbulent History" reviewed the changing character of the Third Ward's prestigious successor. And, as Rochester pushed ahead with urban renewal in some less salubrious areas, I summarized the "Historic Antecedents of the Crossroads Project" (October 1964) and "Rochester's Near Northeast" (April 1967). Suburban commercial migration prompted an issue in April 1972 on "The Historic Predecessors of the Central Business District."

Many facets of Rochester's economic history invited special study. I finally tackled an early one that had been overlooked, "Lumber and Wood Processing in Rochester's History" in January 1978, and both of my successors as editor have continued to explore gaps in our economic history — "Rochester and the Automobile Industry" by Dr. Barnes in April 1981, and "A Short History of Banking" by Gerald Muhl, published in April 1987 by Ruth Rosenberg-Naparsteck, to mention only two.



Snow was a serious problem to early settlers. It slowed travel, communications and trade and at times was life-threatening. In an agricultural area just developing its transportation and communication network, the weather predictions were valuable. In this photograph, men shovel snow from the streets in the 1930s.

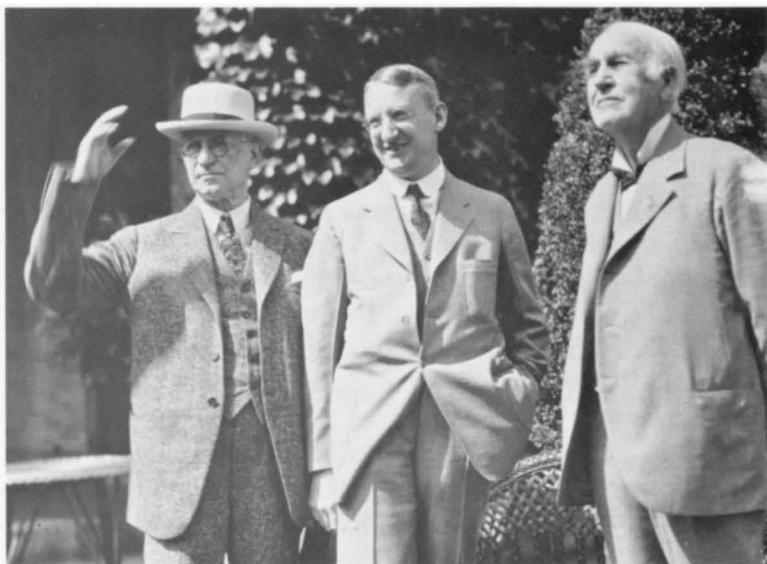
Lighter Subjects

Yet if the Historian's Voice, as *Rochester History* might well be characterized, while cherishing a scholarly objectivity, has been fairly outspoken on many if not all facets of the city's history, as this review implies, it is not always necessary to be painfully sober or to deal only with crucially important topics. Rochester has had a lighter side, as I recognized in an article on "The Early Almanacs of Rochester" in January 1941. Some of the villagers may have taken the weather predictions of the almanac editors seriously, but many must have just chuckled, as we can today, over the homespun aphorisms they pandered. A somewhat similar article in October 1970, "Rochester and the Water Cure," by Dr. Edward C. Atwater and Dr. Lawrence A. Kohn, scarcely served as a sober introduction to Rochester's medical history but provided suggestive details on domestic life in the pre-Civil War era. Our October 1953 issue produced an even more revealing article on the domestic scene after the turn of the century: "Making a Living in Rochester: The Diary of Henry D. Silver," edited by his youngest son, Professor James W. Silver. Mr. Silver, Sr. may not have seen the humor of his struggles with his first automobile, in his frustrated hopes

to make a fortune in the stock market, or his retreat to the attic to escape "the brawling brats and their mother" on the lower floors, but his diary entries are often as graphic as those found in the successive volumes of Dickens he borrowed from the Reynolds Library.

The use of photographs and other pictorial aids, in our pre-photo-offset years, was limited by a tight budget to cuts we could borrow from the Historical Society or elsewhere. Fortunately, Norman Kent, who had made a series of drawings of early Rochester for the *Book of the Rochester Centennial*, supplied a selection of cuts for our issue in July 1943, "Early Rochester Illustrated." Times have changed, and the Historian of the Photographic Capital is now able to speak with a Kodak as well as with a pen (oops; a word-processor), as Ruth Rosenberg-Naparsteck has repeatedly demonstrated, notably with "A Portrait of Rochester Through the Lens of Charles Zoller" timed in January 1988 to collaborate with an exhibit of his photography at the International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House, also her July issue that followed, "A History of the Circus in Rochester," which was not only rich in pictorial detail and comment but also explored the public attitudes of successive generations.

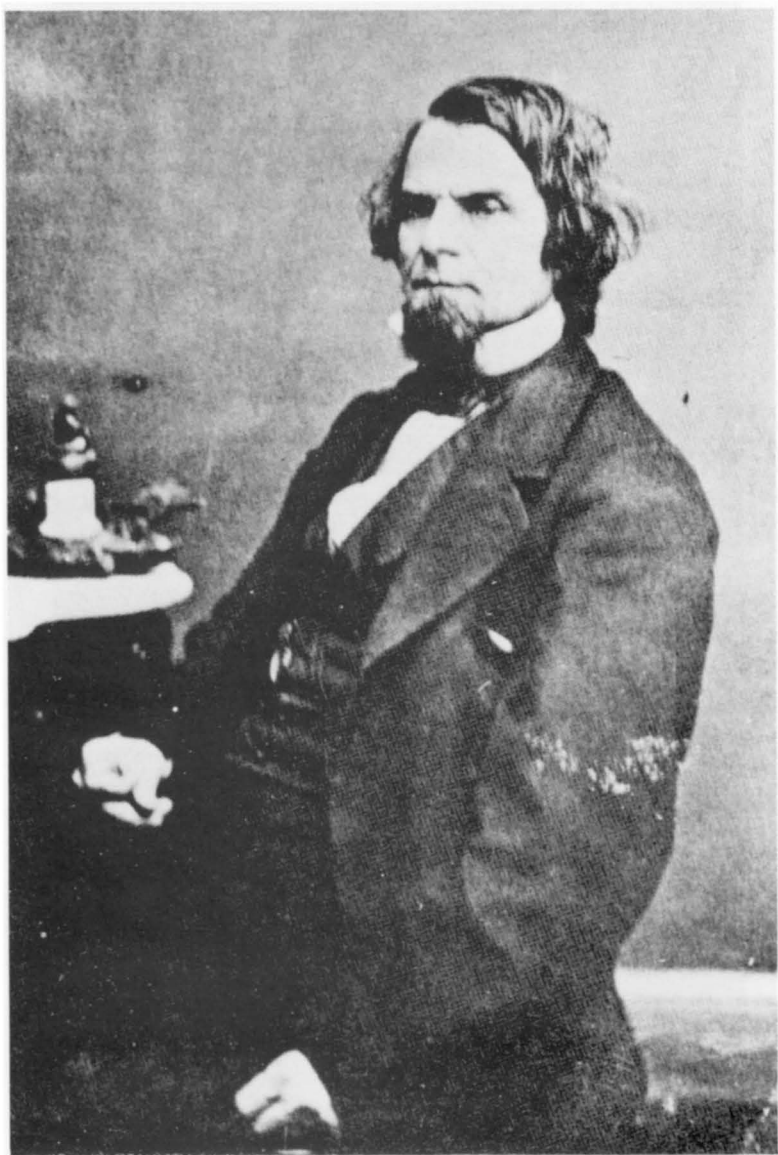
The passing years have brought other changes and new challenges to speak out. Creative individuals have arisen and passed on — Joseph C. Wilson and Mrs. Harper Sibley to mention only two who merit biographical attention. Recent ethnic newcomers — the Spanish-Americans, the Asians and the long neglected Poles, as well as the burgeoning cohorts of our black fellow citizens — are playing roles worthy of historical recognition. Several segments of the Rochester community have changed so dramatically that updated assessments are called for — the museums, the neighborhoods, the facilities for higher education, the status of organized labor, the place of women in the community, for example. And several regrettable gaps — the legal, medical and retail fields, the vogue of popular music, Rochester's international outreach, and strange to admit, the city's two major industries, Kodak and Xerox — remain to be filled. Moreover, the ever mobile and now aging population, central



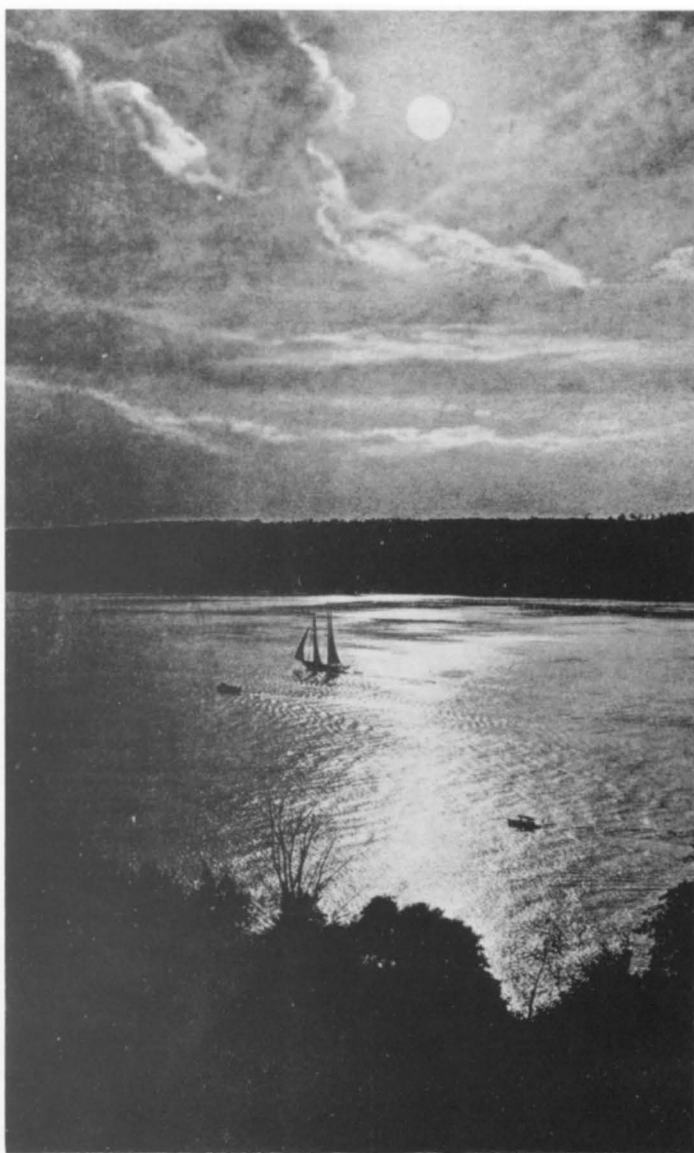
George Eastman, Kenneth Mees and Thomas Edison met in 1915. Eastman and Edison worked together on motion pictures. Kodak, one of Rochester's major industries, grew out of Eastman's experiments with film and the camera. This remains one of the unpublished areas of Rochester's history.

city and suburban, invites reexamination, perhaps with the sophisticated techniques (quantitative analysis), aided by computers, that have supplanted the top-of-the-page method I introduced some decades ago.

Fortunately Rochester's appreciation of its history has been renewed and strengthened by a recent succession of anniversaries: a parks centennial, a Chamber of Commerce centennial, a labor union centennial, Mt. Hope Cemetery's sesquicentennial, all in 1988, and of course the sesquicentennial of the city in 1984. There is ample reason to hope that the City Historian's Voice will continue to be heard.



Dan Rice, the celebrated clown of the 19th century, was more of a comedian than a clown. He performed frequently in Rochester and once, when jailed, he wrote the "Blue Eagle Jail" named for the Eagle Hotel where he usually stayed.



*On a quiet moonlit night Irondequoit Bay appears much as it did nearly two centuries ago when Indians and early traders traveled to Indian Landing and the trading post at Fort Schuyler. Tryon, a trading settlement near the Bay, faded away about 1810 after shifting sands prevented heavily loaded schooners from reaching the landing. Early trade and the development of the Port of Rochester were recorded in **Rochester History**. From a post card at St. John Fisher College, Lavery Library.*