

# ROCHESTER HISTORY

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## Historic Origins of Rochester's Social Welfare Agencies

by BLAKE McKELVEY

Charitable sentiments and deeds, long characteristic of Rochester, have grown into a splendid tradition, and the community has learned to honor those who manifest a spirit of good will in this field. Yet the high standard of the city's present philanthropy was not an easy accomplishment. The great diversity among the 46 welfare agencies represented today on the Community Chest is but one result of a long succession of practical experiences which were oftentimes harsh and disagreeable. New and complex problems have confronted each generation, while old difficulties persisted; new institutions and techniques have developed in response to the changing circumstances of the emerging city.

All of these problems—the product either of urban concentration, of rapid population shifts, or of maladjustments in the economic system—were common to cities throughout the country. In most instances, older or larger communities began to develop institutions to meet these difficulties before Rochester became aware of similar needs. In a few cases, forthright individuals in the Flower City displayed pioneer enterprise and originality in this field, but generally such early efforts were permitted to subside, with the result that most of Rochester's institutions, when permanently established, followed accepted patterns evolved elsewhere. Nevertheless, both the premature and the final efforts came from conscientious men and women earnestly striving, frequently amidst

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obloquy, to make the city a more wholesome place in which to live. We can learn much concerning the spirit of our forebears as well as about the problems which still perplex us through a study of the origin and development of Rochester's social agencies.

## **Yankeeville Charity**

The simple problems of village days were of course not so easy as they appear at first sight. Lacking any of the facilities for social welfare, the villagers had nevertheless brought with them many Yankee and Yorker traditions. Among these were certain educational standards, attitudes towards debtors, the poor, the sick and the infirm. Some of the old familiar customs did not fit perfectly into the frontier settlement and had to be changed; several of the institutions supported by town authorities back East had to be established and maintained as private charities until the civic officials were ready to take them over.

As education was a prime requisite, it is not surprising to see the first manifestation of organized charity appear in that field. A Sabbath school was organized in the summer of 1818 to provide a knowledge of the three R's to poor children forced to labor during the week. Some thirty youngsters were taught the educational rudiments on Sunday afternoons throughout the warm months that year. Similar schools were opened in successive summers until, in 1821, four such schools enrolled over 300 pupils. With the firm establishment by this date of denominational societies, the continuation of these schools was assured, but their emphasis was diverted from the field of secular education.

Thus by the fall of 1821 a week-day school was needed for poor children unable to pay the fees required at the three district schools. In a community where the police and fire fighting services were performed by volunteer companies of young men, it seemed appropriate for a number of young matrons to band together to conduct a charity school. Their achievements that winter led to the formation of a more inclusive organization. The Female Charitable Society, founded at the home of Mrs. Everard Peck in 1822, was one of the first women's organizations in the country, but most noteworthy is the fact that it continued to function in a vital fashion for many decades and even today administers its accumulated legacies, making allocations to institutions caring for the indigent sick.

The village numbered approximately 2,500 residents that February when 60 earnest ladies joined as charter members of the Female Charitable Society. Mrs. Levi Ward was chosen president, and committees were formed to collect provisions, clothing and bedding, to be *loaned* to needy families stricken by sickness or the death of a breadwinner. Fifteen ladies were designated as visitors and assigned to specific districts in which they were to call on all the sick poor at least once every month. Dues of 25 cents a year and annual charity sermons, held successively in the different churches, provided the funds needed for this work and for the charity school which now engaged a regular teacher. The school was maintained until 1841 when the city abolished the fees collected at the district schools. The charitable visitors continued their neighborly calls on the sick year after year for many decades. The city was frequently redistricted, new visitors were appointed, and of course the services varied with the individuals, no doubt decreasing in later years, but reports were tabulated until 1922, the Society's centennial year, when the Public Health Nursing Association, which it had helped to establish a few years before, took over this work.

The Female Charitable Society accepted special donations from time to time, passing them on in goods and services to needy sick folk. It would receive \$800 from Jenny Lind in 1851, and \$256 from the proceeds of a "Moral Lecture" by P. T. Barnum a few years later, but in 1828 it declined to lend its name as sponsor of a charity benefit proposed by the manager of the local theater. The good ladies had strict scruples as well as charitable hearts. When they undertook a project, such as the establishment of a hospital, neither difficulties nor repeated rebuffs could dissuade them, though it sometimes required years to win their goal.

The community's early poor relief was a function of the county, and during the first years few in Rochester had acquired "settlement." The total outlay in the county's first year was \$669.42, mounting to \$1,950 in 1825-6. That year, however, saw the start of a new institution, the county Almshouse, provided for under a state law of the previous year. A brick house was soon erected at a cost of \$2,250 on the East Henrietta road, some three miles south of the village of Rochester. A 46-acre farm was acquired to enable the inmates, who began to arrive in 1826, to contribute to their support. Within a year the family had grown to 35, of whom only 20 were able to perform

daily tasks. Among the dependents were several orphan children whose numbers increased rapidly during the cholera epidemic of 1832. Mental defectives and the harmless insane likewise gravitated to the poor farm, unless, perchance, some infringement of the laws directed their steps to the county jail, opened in 1821, or to the State Prison already established at Auburn. The State Lunatic Asylum was not opened at Utica until 1845.

It was in 1828-9 that Rochester experienced its first and briefest depression. The boom occasioned by the opening of the canal had ended, leaving many debtors unable to make payments. With the desire to escape one's creditors spurring migration westward, local justices found themselves over-burdened with suits for the collection of small debts or the detention of defaulters. Over 800 debtors were "confined to the jail limits" at the close of 1828. Nevertheless, when a group of creditors organized to compile and publish a weekly list of all small debtors, a Committee of Equal Rights arose to combat the Shylock Association, as they dubbed their opponents. The Shylocks quickly disbanded, and the three local papers joined the state-wide campaign for the abolition of imprisonment for debt, accomplished in large part in 1831.

Meanwhile, the plight of the poor was not wholly forgotten. The Female Charitable Society, its resources depleted by the number of needy sick folk in the winter of 1829-30, gave its first benefit concert the next spring and in April announced the opening of a depot at which articles for the poor would be received. In 1832, when cholera was ravaging the community, the Society's collections from three charity sermons and other sources totaled \$270, well above the receipts of previous years. Although financial assistance was the least important of the benefits rendered by these earnest ladies, their service was primarily to the sick, and many whose hardships were exclusively economic saw no alternative but to pack their few belongings and rejoin the numerous caravans of westward migrants.

### **Sectarian Charity: 1834-1860**

Newcomers from Ireland and Germany as well as a continued procession of Yankees and Yorkers were eagerly taking the places of the discouraged pioneers, and in such numbers that, by 1834, Rochester could delay no longer the adoption of a city charter. Its 12,000

residents of that year were to increase threefold in the next quarter century, producing new and more complex social problems. More significant than the ratio of numerical growth was the new diversity of cultures and creeds which would sharply distinguish the Flour City of the mid-century from the simple Yankee pattern of village days.

If, as is often remarked, the chief hardships of pioneer days were borne by womenfolk compelled to follow their husbands to successive new frontiers, the chief victims of the next period were the children. Rochester had become a thriving commercial and industrial center on the main route of east-west migration and trade. Hundreds of neglected, abandoned, or orphaned children, the jetsam of a turbulent stream of westward migrants, now appeared on the streets of the Flour City, and their proper care and discipline became a major concern of its charitable citizens.

It was on February 28, 1837, in a spontaneous gathering at the home of Mrs. William Atkinson, that a group of Protestant women, disturbed over the plight of orphan children in Rochester (who had no refuge except the Almshouse, where their association with miscellaneous derelicts was hardly propitious), determined to establish an orphan asylum. A move the year before by a few individuals in St. Patrick's Church to found a Catholic asylum was still in the discussion stage when the Female Association for the Relief of Orphan and Destitute Children rented a two-story building on South Sophia (Plymouth) Street and opened it on April 1 with nine children transferred from the Almshouse. A total of 58 children were admitted during the first year, most of them before the institution was incorporated as the Rochester Orphan Asylum. Larger quarters were soon needed, and the asylum moved in January, 1840, to a building on Cornhill which at one time housed 50 children. Suitable homes were readily found for many of these youngsters, but the steady arrival of orphans and other destitute children in these depression years compelled the distraught managers to undertake a new expansion. The timely gift by John Greig of a more spacious site facing Hubbell Park, on the southern outskirts of the city, spurred the donation of funds for a new building designed ultimately to accommodate 100 children. The city's first charity fair, lasting six days, netted about \$1,500, and helped to stimulate the campaign for subscriptions. Eventually a fund of over \$5,000 was raised, chiefly by the lady managers, to erect and

equip the new and model asylum which was proudly dedicated in April, 1844.

A Roman Catholic Asylum for Girls had meanwhile been erected on the lot back of St. Patrick's Church. Opened in 1842, it soon sheltered 16 girls, and in 1845 the Sisters of Charity came from Emmetsburg, Maryland, to assume control—the first of several Catholic sisterhoods to take up charitable work in Rochester.

With the community's need for their service mounting rapidly, rivalry between the two asylums was avoided. The county paid 53 cents a week, the per-capita cost at the Almshouse, for each child transferred from that institution, but as the years passed many could not be accommodated. An investigation of the Almshouse in 1853 revealed a population of 90 children, a third of them babies, among a total of over 400 inmates. One teacher was endeavoring at this time to instruct a class of 62 boys and girls between the ages of five and twelve. St. Patrick's Asylum for Girls, having been slightly expanded, now accommodated 50-odd girls, while numerous Catholic boys were sent annually to the St. Joseph Asylum for Boys at Buffalo. The Rochester Orphan Asylum, housing an average family of 90 children at this period, employed a staff of five: matron, teacher, cook, part-time gardener, and a woman who served both as nurse and seamstress.

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The uncertain boundary between charitable and correctional institutions first began to trouble Rochester in these years. Numerous cases of homeless or neglected lads and teen-age girls were appearing in the police records, and in 1844 the Female Charitable Society petitioned the state for a refuge similar to the Juvenile House of Refuge in New York. An act of 1846 created the Western House of Refuge, to be located at Rochester and to admit delinquent boys under 18 and girls under 17 years of age. An addition to the first building, opened in 1849, was required the very next year when the accommodations, increased to 100, were limited to boys under the age of sixteen. Court commitments from the western half of the state soon exceeded these facilities, and a new wing erected in 1855 was likewise filled within three years when the population exceeded 360.

The popular faith in institutional treatment was perhaps excessive, yet a major task confronting this generation was to provide some sort of housing or other shelter for destitute and abandoned youths. Many,

beyond the age that sought admission to orphan asylums, roamed the streets as beggars, sleeping in some unguarded loft or stable at night. An investigation in 1853 of some 500 boys and 200 girls found running the streets during school hours revealed 33 boys and 18 girls to be virtually homeless, destitute of clothing and dependent upon handouts for food. The parents of many of the truants were persuaded to send them to school or place them at some trade, but the homeless could not thus be disposed of. A Home for Idle and Truant Children was accordingly opened that year, providing shelter and supervision to a score of these waifs.

The establishment of a workhouse for adult misdemeanants was likewise inspired by a desire to rehabilitate rather than punish minor offenders. It was proposed, at the same time, that they should be required to contribute by their daily labor to the cost of their confinement. The first superintendent of the County Workhouse and Penitentiary, opened near the Almshouse south of the city in 1854, was Zebulon Brockway, a man destined to gain world-wide fame for his contributions to reformatory penology. His great achievements were still ahead of him when he left Rochester six years later, but meanwhile his work program had met all expenses at the Workhouse in the late fifties, contributing so much to good discipline and rehabilitation that it was soon copied at the House of Refuge and in a measure at the Home for Truants as well.

Although these three institutions were outside the field of charitable effort, as strictly defined, their development was frequently related to the work of local benevolent institutions. Thus the Home for the Friendless, established in 1849 to care for destitute mothers and their babies, was not designed for those with questionable reputations. It was hard, nevertheless, to turn away such unfortunates, especially since the county was frugally cautious about admitting any to the Almshouse who could not claim "settlement." The exclusion of girls from the House of Refuge at the last moment aggravated the problem, with the result that a new wing had to be added to the Truant Home for girls of this character. Within a decade the Home for the Friendless, finding it desirable to make a choice between destitute young mothers, whose marital status could not always be clearly established, and older widows, chose the latter, thus becoming the first charitable institution for the aged in Rochester.

The county, meanwhile, recognized another distinct group of dependents when, in 1857, it opened an asylum for the insane. A building was erected on the poor farm but somewhat distant from the Almshouse, from which its first 48 inmates were transferred that fall.

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It was in this period that Rochester first experienced another troublesome problem—widespread unemployment. The depression which started in 1837 did not immediately cripple the Flour City, for its principal export was in great demand until the summer of 1839. That fall, however, saw flour prices drop to such a point that many local millers went bankrupt and local trade became stagnant. A soup kitchen, opened briefly two years earlier for destitute migrants, was now reopened for impoverished residents. The city's outdoor relief that winter trebled the modest sums previously dispensed. Yet the outlays of the next few years, ranging between \$5,000 and \$8,000 annually, would have proved sadly inadequate were it not for the expenditure of much larger sums by the state for a new canal aqueduct. That \$445,347 project, together with construction work on the Rochester and Auburn Railroad, supplied jobs which helped to tide the community over the lean years. Furthermore, these commercial improvements, pressed to completion during the dark years, provided a sound basis for the new era of prosperity enjoyed throughout the late forties.

When hard times returned in the mid-fifties, Rochester was again confronted with serious unemployment. The poor fund had mounted slowly, even during the good years, reaching \$17,113 in 1854. Part of this advance was caused by the increased cost for the care of youthful dependents placed in the various institutions already described, but excessive charges for relief supplies were held partly to blame, and a drive for efficiency and economy prompted the establishment of a city poor store in 1857. A city wood yard was opened that winter and equipped with a rotary saw, thus giving employment to destitute men at splitting and delivering wood to relief families. Fortunately, the city was ready to press forward with a street-paving and bridge-construction program, at a cost of \$500,000—more than the city's total outlays on improvements up to that date—which provided many useful jobs.

Private charity was poorly organized for such emergencies. The Female Charitable Society continued its efforts in behalf of the sick



and afflicted, but its limited resources were unequal to the great needs of the unemployed. The recently established Y.M.C.A. opened a depot in a central store loft in 1855, inviting citizens to contribute their old clothes for distribution to the poor. A Relief Society was soon organized by several of these men to supervise the work. One wealthy bachelor contributed \$500 to swell the total cash donations to \$1,500. Assistance was given, chiefly in clothing and food, to 385 families that winter. For some reason both the Y.M.C.A. and the Relief Society disappeared from view the next year, despite the continued need for relief. Indeed, a reporter who visited the police station at the old central market in November found it serving as an emergency lodging house for destitute wayfarers, including several families stranded at Rochester in the course of their migration to the West.

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A number of benevolent Protestant ladies, among them Mrs. Samuel L. Selden, who felt that something more should be done for the older children, opened an Industrial School on Exchange Street in 1856. As many as eighty youngsters were gathered off the streets daily that winter into warm rooms where they received a rudimentary job-training and wholesome midday meals. After a preliminary investigation, the Rochester Sabbath School Union endorsed the program and cooperated in a drive which collected \$949 for operating expenses during the first year. The Home for the Friendless, expanding its program under the leadership of Mrs. Selah Mathews, offered evening classes in sewing, care of the home, and other domestic activities to older girls and young mothers. Both of these programs were designed to help the immigrants, many from peasant backgrounds, make an easier adjustment to the strange urban ways of their new home.

A new type of welfare agency, not strictly charitable in character—the mutual benefit societies—likewise reflected new immigrant influences. It was frequently charged, especially in the mid-fifties when the Know-Nothing Party was on the march, that shiftless immigrants were chiefly responsible for the mounting burden of poor relief. Leading representatives of these groups vigorously denied the charge and pointed to the initiative shown by their fellow countrymen in the formation of self-help organizations. Indeed, before the end of the period, five Irish benevolent societies, five similar societies of Germans, one English, one Canadian, and two tradesmen's benefit associations

gave considerable evidence of cooperative effort on the part of Rochester's newer citizens.

Perhaps the institution most earnestly needed in Rochester during these years was a hospital. The Female Charitable Society recognized this lack as early as 1845. After numerous pleas, the Common Council designated the site of the old cemetery on Buffalo (West Main) Street for a City Hospital, but the task of removing the graves to Mount Hope was a slow one, and 1859 rolled around before the ground was cleared for action. New delays ensued and the first building was not ready for use until 1864. Meanwhile, the Sisters of Charity launched an independent movement for St. Mary's Hospital. Under the leadership of the indomitable Sister Hieronymo, temporary quarters were opened in the fall of 1857, thus giving assurance that the proceeds of strawberry festivals and other donations pledged to the hospital would serve the sick. Within a year the first portion of a three-story stone building was completed at Bull's Head corners, and 51 patients were cared for that July, 39 of them charity cases.

With the budgets of half a dozen charitable institutions fluctuating around a thousand dollars each during the late fifties, the earlier reliance on annual charity sermons no longer sufficed. Each society now scheduled yearly donations to which their friends came with gifts of clothing, food or other articles, the more ephemeral of which were then sold to the highest bidder. Occasional "thank you" notices in the daily papers listed cash gifts and the names of all benefactors. Public funds helped to support the work at three of these institutions.

The expenditure of public funds through sectarian channels occasioned some debate, but both the city and county saw the merit of housing sick poor in the hospital and orphans in the Protestant and Catholic asylums, at a total cost of around \$1,500 a year in the late fifties, instead of lodging them at the already overcrowded poor farm. A sharper religious controversy developed in the mid-fifties when the triumphant Know-Nothing faction denied Catholic priests the privilege of administering to Catholic inmates at the Western House of Refuge, the Almshouse, and the Home for the Friendless. The situation at the Almshouse was quickly rectified, and it was at least clarified at the Home for the Friendless which was now definitely identified as a Protestant charity; but the issue dragged on at the House

of Refuge until, in 1875, two chaplains, one Protestant and one Catholic, were appointed.

## Civil War Charities

The Civil War brought additional calls for philanthropic effort, aggravated some of the problems faced by earlier institutions, and introduced new techniques for benevolent activity. During the early burst of war-time enthusiasm, a number of charitable programs were launched which had later to be turned over to the public authorities; moreover, the city was persuaded, in view of the emergency, to make the first heavy drafts on its municipal credit.

Within the first week after the attack on Fort Sumter, a Volunteer Relief Committee was established and a fund of \$36,000 subscribed to aid the dependents of volunteers. Weekly benefits, ranging up to four dollars per family, were distributed in the early months from the first payments on these pledges. However, as the call for new regiments arrived and the long-range character of the war became evident, the Relief Committee was forced to recognize its inadequacy for the big task of supplementing the eleven dollar monthly wages of privates. The task was accordingly turned over to the city which continued throughout the war to pay special benefits, not exceeding two dollars a week, to the needy families of volunteers. The high point in these payments was reached in November, 1864, when 900 such families registered for assistance.

The community's determination to rely on volunteers introduced a new type of subsidy in the form of bounties. Private bounties appeared in the first months, and before the close of the first year the city likewise assumed this function. Starting with \$100 for each enlistee in the fall of 1861, Rochester was paying \$300 for each man a year later. The county took over the bounty payments for a time in 1863, but when a draft was threatened the next year, the city re-entered the field; \$600 bounties were paid that fall, as well as a few private bounties ranging as high as \$1,500. Although these payments were in no sense charity payments, the expenditure of an estimated \$700,000, widely distributed among the 5,000 recruits raised in Rochester, considerably affected the relief problem. As most of the bounties were paid in lump sums, the recipients tended to spend them on equipment or other immediate uses, thus contributing to price inflation and reducing the

real value of the weekly benefits that were to follow. An increased demand for public relief resulted, and the outlays for poor relief reached \$65,000 by 1865.

Charitable folk were confronted at one and the same time by the increased needs of all existing charitable agencies, and by new emergency appeals. One tragic result of the frightful battles along the Potomac and elsewhere during the war was the multiplication of widows and orphans—a long-term problem of sober significance. Moreover, the hardships of famine sufferers in Kansas and especially those in Ireland, and the victims of a fire in Troy, stirred a response in Rochester which resulted in contributions totaling \$7,000 during war years.

But of course the most generous response was to the call of the Soldier's Aid Society for hospital supplies to alleviate the suffering of sick and wounded soldiers. The city's first great bazaar was held during Christmas week in 1863 for the benefit of the wounded. More than \$10,000 was collected in its numerous booths, and this sum, together with the shipments of clothing, bandages and medical supplies sent off at various periods throughout the war, was placed at the disposal of the United States Sanitary Commission for use in battle areas.

It was during the war that the utility of local hospitals finally became apparent in Rochester. When the Federal Government began in 1862 to send small detachments of wounded to St. Mary's Hospital, those who had opposed the City Hospital as a useless extravagance were silenced, and its friends, led by the Female Charitable Society, were able to rush its completion at a cost of \$14,000, raised largely from charitable sources. The ladies of various Protestant churches undertook to furnish the several wards with a total of 200 beds, and the hospital was finally ready for use in January, 1864. St. Mary's had meanwhile received community-wide support in its drive for funds to erect a new wing, increasing its bed capacity to 400. By May, that year, 400 wounded were receiving care in the two Rochester hospitals, and 2,000 sick and wounded soldiers were thus accommodated before the close of the Civil War.

### **Post War and Cosmopolitan Charities**

The close of the war did not bring an end to the suffering it had caused. Hundreds of widows and orphans or half-orphans, not for-

getting the maimed or shattered volunteers, were left as tragic reminders of its devastation. New institutions for juvenile dependents were needed, as well as continued aid for the widows and new methods for handling the problems of the increased number of young women compelled to face life without the aid or protection of a father or husband. The measure of care extended by the Federal Government to the physically disabled, chiefly in the form of artificial limbs (supplied throughout the country, incidentally, by Dr. Douglass Bly of Rochester), did not reach many whose spirits or social patterns had been broken. Accordingly, as the years passed, a new group of shiftless men, unable to find a secure footing in the rapidly changing industrial system, plagued cities such as Rochester each winter.

These problems were by no means a product of the war exclusively. The surging flood of migrants continued, casting up an increased number of lost or abandoned children, deserted wives, and impoverished and defeated individuals of all sorts. The Flower City received its share of such unfortunates, and added in its turn to their number as the ebb and flow of its changing commercial and industrial life distributed rewards and penalties with little apparent rhyme or reason. Charitable citizens endeavored to meet these growing social problems with increased generosity, but the ever-expanding needs repeatedly forced them to turn to the civic authorities for additional support. The mounting cost for relief gave rise in turn to a series of investigations, each of which discovered a large number of foreign-born among those needing public aid, from which varied conclusions were drawn.

Few contemporaries realized that a significant population movement, evident in many Northern cities, was transforming Rochester in the three decades after 1850, particularly in the 15 years following the war, into a cosmopolitan city. Foreign-born residents rose to a peak of 44 per cent of the city's population in 1855. If their 6,000 American-born children are added, the total was 57 per cent. Indeed the declining proportion of the foreign-born in succeeding years was occasioned only by the rapid increase in the number of their American-born children. Added together, the immigrants and their children made up 70 per cent of the residents of Rochester by 1890. It was little wonder that these newer citizens, less firmly established than the earlier arrivals, should resort, even in disproportionate numbers, to the poor store in times of need. More significant—though seldom noted—was the

speed with which the new ethnic groups established institutions to care for their own dependents. In fact, much of the expansion in charitable activity witnessed in Rochester during post-war years sprang from these groups.

German and Irish Catholics, German Protestants and German Jews showed the most rapid increment. Each of these groups hastened to establish independent welfare institutions— orphan asylums, mutual benefit associations, and, following the example of the early Yankees, schools to perpetuate their cultural traditions. Thus, St. Mary's Orphan Asylum for Irish lads, first organized in 1864 but not lodged in permanent quarters at Bull's Head until 1867, St. Joseph's Orphan Asylum, opened for German boys in 1866, and the Jewish Orphan Asylum, established in 1877, increased to five the number of such institutions in Rochester. A Home of Industry was located on a farm site in 1873 to provide quarters for the older boys graduated from St. Mary's. Additional buildings enlarged the accommodations at St. Patrick's Asylum for Girls in 1865, St. Mary's in 1869, and St. Joseph's in 1875. Meanwhile, four German Protestant parochial schools served 732 pupils in 1872, when five German Catholic schools enrolled 2,230, and seven Irish or Canadian schools gave instruction to another 1,990 scholars. A Hebrew, German and English Institute, temporarily closed that year, and a Holland and English school likewise belonged to this group of primary cultural institutions maintained by sectarian charity.

The twelve ethnic benevolent societies founded before the war had increased to twenty by 1870 and doubled again within a decade. A few of these organizations, notably the Hebrew Benevolent Society, extended assistance to newly-arrived fellow countrymen, but most of them were strictly mutual-aid in character. Nevertheless, like the schools, these societies were of considerable social importance, especially in these years when Rochester was most busily engaged in the task of absorbing new peoples and reshaping its cultural patterns.

The division between Protestant and Catholic charities was extended as new welfare problems emerged. The Sisters of Mercy opened a separate Industrial School in 1871 for the training of young girls in tailoring and dressmaking—a program which compared with the evening classes offered to young Protestant women at the Home for the Friendless. Another Catholic institution, the Home of Industry, was opened in 1873 to supply shelter and job training to young women.

Its founder was Mother Hieronymo, whose energetic leadership at St. Mary's Hospital, terminated in 1869, was now directed, in her new affiliation with the Sisters of St. Joseph, to the service of young women in straitened circumstances. A sewing room, a laundry, and other work projects were organized to enable residents without jobs to contribute to the support of the Home until they could find a more permanent place in the urban economy.

One aspect of the problem, created in part by the increased number of single and widowed women\* in the city, was first openly discussed in this period. News of the establishment of Magdalen asylums in other cities prompted a group of conscientious church women to form a Benevolent Union in 1869. The response to their appeal for funds was, however, discouraging. After an investigation convinced these good ladies that the wayward girls they hoped to redeem were accustomed to more sumptuous standards than they could supply, the small sum collected was turned over to the Truant Home where a number of delinquent girls were lodged. When several unsavory incidents finally caused the city to close the Truant Home in 1877, its more serious delinquents were committed to the Western House of Refuge, at which a dormitory for girls had been constructed the year before.

Indeed, as the community's needs increased, all of the other institutions were forced to enlarge their facilities, while several added new functions. The Western House of Refuge provided accommodations for 150 girls and increased the number of cells for boys to 500. The Almshouse, rebuilt after a fire in 1872 at a cost of \$80,000, provided for the care of 400. The Rochester Industrial School, under the devoted leadership of Mrs. George F. Danforth, had previously converted some of its rooms into dormitories for homeless waifs and now erected a new wing to house a day nursery opened in 1872. The Rochester Orphan Asylum's nursery, started five years before, permitted it to admit foundling babies—another product of urban and post-war turmoil. Fortunately the Children's Committee, on which Mrs. William Sage was for many years an untiring worker, was able to arrange so

\*The ratio of young women to men in the 15 to 44 age bracket rose from 1.05 in 1855 to 1.20 in 1865, fell to 1.17 in 1875 and continued down to 1.10 by 1890. In like fashion the ratio of widows to widowers jumped from 3.1 in 1855 to 3.71 in 1865, falling to 3.6 in 1875, but rising by 1890 to 3.8. In 1900 these ratios were 1.12 and 3.5 respectively.

many suitable adoptions that the period of institutional care was greatly reduced. Yet a new wing was required at this time and, together with the remodeling of the old wing to provide a play room and improved bathing facilities, cost over \$30,000.

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New institutional needs were appearing on all sides. The increased number of aged dependents, overtaxing the facilities of the Home for the Friendless, prompted several charitable members of Episcopal churches to erect a Church Home. Opened in 1869 to aged women, the Home was equipped to take young orphans as well—a plan designed to assure a home atmosphere for both groups. When a survey of community needs in 1876 revealed the presence of 60 deaf mutes, a society was quickly formed and a school was opened on St. Paul Street that fall. While the needs of these and many other unfortunates were generously provided, when recognized, a stigma of moral turpitude was attached to alcoholics, and most of this increasingly numerous class were packed off to the county workhouse, now frankly designated as the penitentiary, for a thirty-day sobering-up period. Yet it did not seem inappropriate for F. X. Beckwith, who was gaining a reputation for the cure of alcoholic tremors, to accept as paying boarders at the county jail prominent citizens or their sons who came voluntarily for treatment.

The facilities provided in the hospital field during the war proved fairly adequate for the early reconstruction years. This was most fortunate, since both hospitals faced serious budgetary problems when first the federal payments for the care of wounded soldiers and in 1872 state payments for the indigent sick were cut off. Only the persistent efforts of the Sisters of Charity at St. Mary's, and those of Mrs. William H. Perkins and other ladies of the Female Charitable Society at the City Hospital, carried these two institutions through the seventies. The city provided a long-needed shelter for contagious diseases in 1869 when the so-called Hope Hospital was located on the river bank back of the cemetery. Still another aid for the sick poor was provided by a number of doctors who banded together to open a Free Dispensary in 1872. The leaders of this group were apparently practitioners of the allopathic school, for three years later a Homeopathic Free Dispensary was opened by their rivals. This split in the medical profession threatened a rift among the leaders of the City Hospital



until, in 1885, one wing was designated for those patients who preferred the services of homeopathic doctors.

Perhaps the most helpless of all the victims of the expanding city were the dumb animals. Many families had their private stables, while more than a score of livery and boarding stables helped to house a population of several thousand driving horses, not to mention other domestic animals. The horses in particular were forced to haul heavier burdens and to serve longer hours as the city expanded, the horse car lines were extended, and their passenger loads increased. A move to alleviate this situation and to provide penalties for brutal treatment at the hands of ignorant or vicious drivers led to the formation of a Bergh Association in 1873, patterned after the association founded in New York City by Henry Bergh seven years before.

Several out-of-town calls for relief brought a ready response from Rochester. The great Chicago fire prompted the formation of a relief committee which directed the collection and dispatch of funds and supplies that totaled \$35,000 in value. Lesser shipments were sent to Boston and Troy in their hours of need, and although the plight of the Irish was but lightly stressed for several years, a renewed appeal in 1880 raised over \$5,000 in Rochester for that distraught land.

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Rochester had problems of its own that were sufficiently absorbing throughout the mid-seventies. The onset of the depression in the fall of 1873 closed so many shoe and furniture factories and other establishments that thousands were thrown out of work. Some found unskilled jobs in the construction crews engaged to build the city's water system, but that and other projects failed to provide as much work relief, in proportion to the number of unemployed, as the city had enjoyed in earlier depressions. Desperate times were in store.

As chance would have it, a move had already been launched to study the city's charitable arrangements—with the object of discovering possible economies. The outlays on poor relief had not declined as expected after the Civil War, partly because of the large number of soldiers' widows who comprised from one-third to one-half of the registered applicants. The authorities were naturally reluctant to refuse such requests, but, as the relief expenditures continued to hover around \$50,000 annually during the late sixties, many citizens became concerned lest a misplaced generosity should pauperize the poor. The

recently established State Board of Charities was promoting local action in this field, and a Rochester Benevolent Association was accordingly formed in the summer of 1873 to study the causes of pauperism and to seek a remedy.

Unfortunately, the outbreak of the depression a few weeks after its organization presented the leaders of the Benevolent Association with a hard dilemma—should they transform themselves into a relief society, or should they close their ears to the cries of the unemployed and stick to an academic study of the causes of pauperism? A compromise was reached. The Association, under the leadership of Dr. Henry W. Dean, appointed a visiting committee to inspect all local charitable institutions and enlisted ward visitors to check the circumstances of each applicant for relief and to issue vouchers which the needy could then present at the poor office. Ward relief societies were organized to assist in this task and to rally neighborhood support. Most of the active workers were ladies who had received their training as visitors for the Female Charitable Society. They were immediately appalled by the widespread suffering, but many were likewise shocked to see some men whose families were destitute spend the small sums given them on liquor. To correct this situation, tickets redeemable at a soup kitchen were printed and sold to charitable folk who might wish to hand them to street beggars with the assurance that food rather than beer would be consumed. Numerous ward relief parties and church festivals provided additional funds, but the charitable gifts did not compare with the outlays of the poor office, which approached \$100,000 that winter.

When the demand for assistance slackened in the spring, giving the officials an opportunity to tally up the results, many citizens, surprised by the huge outlays, became convinced that the volunteer investigators, inexperienced and sentimental by nature, had actually increased the burden on the poor fund and thus aggravated the danger of pauperization. Several of the ward committees became alarmed, and their spring reports indicated a growing conviction that the only solution lay in a diversion of their support to the temperance campaign that had meanwhile gripped Rochester. Indeed, all ward committees suspended activity during the summer and remained quiescent throughout the bitter winter of 1874-5. The city at the same time administered its relief with such frugality that the outlays were cut a third below the

previous year's record. Hard times continued, nevertheless, and the appeals of destitute families, in need of both food and clothing, prompted Dr. Dean and those of his former associates who were not completely absorbed in the temperance movement to revive the benevolent association in 1875 under the name of the Monroe County Visiting Association.

Both public and private assistance was more generously extended to the needy throughout the remaining years of the depression. The city poor office, encouraged by the renewed activity of the volunteer visitors, dispensed \$96,800 in 1876 and almost as much annually for several years. Although a soup kitchen opened by charitable folk in January, 1876, was closed a few months later, and the frequent appeals for a public lodging house were disregarded, the Visiting Association took a forward step the next January when it established a Central Aid Bureau. The needs of the unemployed were its chief concern; during the five months of its operation, the Bureau investigated the family circumstances of 344 unemployed breadwinners and distributed the job opportunities and charitable donations placed at its disposal. The untimely death of Dr. Dean in January, 1877, deprived the city of its most capable leader, and the Visiting Association soon dropped from view. A number of charitable ladies organized a Flower Mission to which flowers could be sent for distribution to the sick poor. The poor office continued its efforts, and destitute wayfarers found shelter at the jail during the winter months. Fortunately, industrial recovery in the late seventies took up the slack in employment, thus removing the most serious aspect of the problem.

### Increased Urban Complexity

The three decades following 1880 saw Rochester's population mount from 89,366 to 218,149—a more rapid growth than that of the previous thirty years—with the result that many complex social problems previously encountered in larger centers began to trouble the Flower City. Again, several existing institutions assumed new functions, and new institutions appeared, so many in fact that their fundraising activities reshaped the social scene. The most rapid advance occurred in the hospital field where the institutional needs were clearly apparent, but the social problems confronting young adults urgently demanded attention and led to the establishment of a new group of

character-building agencies. Public assistance to charitable institutions mounted, and with it came a demand for more adequate supervision. The drive for reform and for city-wide organization enrolled both those who desired more adequate services and those who sought economy.

Although in some instances Rochester had stood with the pioneers in charitable work, the urgency of its problems did not become as acute during the nineteenth century as in many larger communities, with the result that some of its more promising efforts were not maintained, thus surrendering the lead to other cities. For perseverance, the Female Charitable Society was unrivalled, yet it had lost its original position in the vanguard of local philanthropy, and a comparable leader did not emerge until the organization of the Woman's Educational and Industrial Union in 1893. The efforts of Dr. Dean and the Benevolent Association had been full of promise, antedating similar developments in most other cities, but while Boston, Buffalo and a half dozen other urban centers—all larger than Rochester to be sure—pressed forward in the late seventies with the perfection of centralized charity, Rochester permitted its venture in this field to lapse.

In like fashion, the Flower City hastened in 1881 to establish the second Red Cross chapter in America and then watched its activities slowly decline. The collection of funds to aid the victims of disasters had long been a practice in Rochester as elsewhere, but the organization of an institution ready to give emergency aid at any time or place was a step forward. The Red Cross was already well established in Europe when Clara Barton organized the first chapter at Dansville in August, 1881, and the second at Rochester two months later. Over \$4000 was raised the first year in Rochester to aid the victims of a great forest fire in Michigan. Floods in the Mississippi and Ohio Valleys in 1882 and 1883, and the great Johnstown flood of 1889, each brought prompt action from the Rochester chapter, but little was heard of it throughout the nineties or until 1901 when it was temporarily revived.

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The most rapid expansion of welfare services occurred in the hospital field, and before the close of the century Rochester was fairly well equipped according to health standards of the day.

The City Hospital (with the Board of Lady Managers, originally appointed by the Female Charitable Society, alert for its improvement) maintained perhaps the best service. The first trained nurse was brought

to Rochester in 1880 to head a nurse training department, from which the first class was graduated three years later. A Children's Pavilion was erected in 1885; the Magne-Jewell Memorial building was given for an out-patient department in 1889; and two years later, the Whitbeck Memorial Pavilion was added for surgery. Each of these improvements increased the maintenance costs, but the annual hospital "Donation" had now become an elaborate and profitable affair. Generous givers were likewise gratified to see their names and gifts listed in the monthly *Hospital Review* as well as in the daily papers. Still another social interest was enlisted in 1887 when the first of a series of sewing clubs, known as "Twigs," was organized to contribute to the hospital's maintenance. The Parent Stem soon sprouted numerous off-shoots, and by the turn of the century nearly a score of these societies, numbering perhaps twenty ladies each and meeting every second Friday from mid-morning until late afternoon, had made Twig day a significant feature of the Rochester social scene.

Despite the strong loyalties which thus surrounded the City Hospital, the deepening rift between the allopathic and homeopathic physicians finally divided its friends. The experiment of designating one ward for the latter group of practitioners did not prove satisfactory, and an independent Rochester Homeopathic Hospital was incorporated in 1887. The first patients were admitted to the new hospital, located on Monroe Street, in September, 1889; five years later the Freeman Clarke mansion on Alexander Street was occupied. It was at this institution that the first trained nurse to be assigned to home visiting was engaged in 1891—a feature made possible by a gift from Mrs. Hiram W. Sibley whose East Avenue mansion was just down the street. Indeed, many of this hospital's friends were East Siders, as contrasted with the West Side, particularly the Third Ward, friends of the older institution.

Disagreement within the medical profession was so strong that even before the Homeopathic Hospital was opened a small group of staunch followers of Dr. Hahnemann had split off to form a separate society. Under the leadership of Dr. Joseph A. Biegler, the Hahnemann Hospital was opened in 1891 in the former home of Judge Henry R. Selden near the Pinnacle highlands. Its first 13 beds were increased to 40 by the end of the decade—the same number available at a private hospital opened by Dr. John Whitbeck on Park Avenue in 1894.

Still another hospital, but of a totally different character, was established at Charlotte. The congested quarters of many residents in the tenements and store lofts that surrounded the central district contributed to a high death rate among children during the hot summer months. Drs. Edward Mott Moore, father and son, leaders in the movement of wealthy families to summer cottages along the lake, launched a campaign in 1887 for a Summer Hospital for Infants on the lake shore. A number of tents were set up that July and more permanent quarters were erected the next year for 16 infants and their mothers. The hospital was formally incorporated in 1890, and three years later a second building was provided as the demand for this care during the mid-summer increased.

By the turn of the century, Rochester boasted seven hospitals, if the Hope Hospital is included. St. Mary's Hospital, with accommodations for more than 300, was still the largest. Its reconstruction, after the fire of 1891, had greatly improved its arrangements. A nurses' class, begun in 1894, an operating pavilion, opened in 1898, and the provision for contagious diseases the next year, marked the stages of its progress. Together, these several hospitals could care for seven or eight hundred patients at one time. Three of them had out-patient departments and conducted nursing schools. A Provident Dispensary, established by a group of women doctors in 1886, gave free examinations and advice to an average of forty women and children daily throughout the nineties. The budgets of these several institutions in 1895 totaled more than \$150,000, of which the city and county contributed slightly more than a tenth, the patients approximately a third, while charitable donations and endowments made up the balance.

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Fortunately the needs of orphans did not increase in proportion. The Henry S. Potter Memorial Building erected at Hubbell Park in 1881 answered new demands at the Rochester Orphan Asylum until the disastrous fire two decades later (in which 31 out of 160 children lost their lives) prompted the managers to move to a new site. The accommodations for Protestant children at this asylum, at the Industrial School and the Church Home, proved adequate in these years, partly because numerous opportunities for adoption kept their populations within bounds. The Catholic asylums likewise proved adequate, especially after the erection of a new wing at St. Joseph's in 1882. The

opportunity to send older boys to the Excelsior Farm, and older girls to the Home and Industrial School maintained by the Sisters of Mercy provided an element of flexibility. Slowly increasing costs occurred. By 1890 the outlays of the five regular orphan asylums, as reported to the state, were \$53,713, of which more than a fifth came from the city. The city had increased its weekly allowances so that its total payments that year for dependent children in these asylums and in four other institutions was \$21,560. Ten years later it would be \$34,700.

The protection of children was making a more rapid advance in other fields. The Humane Society, formed in 1880 by a merger of the Bergh Society (1873) and the S.P.C.C. (1876), opened a shelter for abandoned children in 1884. A typical report was that made by Miss Elizabeth P. Hall, the untiring secretary, for 1889, when 598 cases of mistreatment to children and 412 of brutality to animals were investigated. An evening school for newsboys, maintained for several winters in the early eighties, was later abandoned; but a Children's Aid Society, organized in 1895 to supervise the placement of poor children in private homes, provided an excellent service for many years until professional case workers appeared and took over the supervision of foster homes. Only the construction of Hillside Home, opened in 1904 as a modern successor of the old Rochester Orphan Asylum and introducing the new small cottage or family system, could compare with this service in merit.

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Perhaps the most significant development in the social-welfare field during the last quarter of the century was the slow emergence of character-building agencies. In one respect, it was a result of the city's increased age and the simultaneous aging of some of the youthful wards of an earlier period. The problem was no longer exclusively one of providing suitable shelter. Nor was financial assistance so important as training in social and industrial activities.

All of the industrial schools were growing up with their clients, or so it must have appeared at the time. The Rochester Industrial School on Exchange Street, previously concerned primarily with the day-care of street waifs, some of whom it housed until other homes could be found, now began to train them for useful positions. A "Kitchen Garden"—described as a practical application of kindergarten techniques to classes in domestic arts—was opened for older girls in 1880. The new Sibley-

Watson Memorial building was soon provided to facilitate this program and five years later a normal class was organized to train teachers for instruction in other Kitchen Gardens. Both of the Catholic industrial homes for older girls had already introduced shop work as well as domestic training. While the institution maintained by the Sisters of Mercy gave increased emphasis to its industrial training program, Mother Hieronymo's Home of Industry was slowly converted to the care of aged women, especially after its headquarters were moved to a new building on East Main Street. The new function prompted another removal in 1904, this time into more spacious quarters on Lake Avenue where it changed its name to the St. Ann's Home for the Aged.

Several other significant efforts to provide character-building agencies for young adults need only be described briefly. The Y.M.C.A., after two premature starts, was reestablished permanently in 1875. For some time its activities, under the leadership of George C. Buell, centered around a second-story room on Main Street bridge, where a small library, a boarding house agency, and frequent gospel services provided the chief attractions. A railroad branch was opened in 1880, and the next year brought the first secular activity in the form of a Rambling Club which scheduled a hike each Thursday at lunch time. A weight-lifting device for gymnastic exercise was soon acquired. Professor George M. Forbes became president in 1884, and a year later a series of study classes was organized. The first games appeared the next January when Crokinola, parlor croquet, bean bags, and target shooting, as well as club swinging, were introduced. A long-drawn-out campaign for a building fund finally achieved success, and a new seven-story Y was erected overlooking the canal and river at the corner of South Avenue and Court Street in 1890. A gymnasium, a swimming pool, an auditorium, and numerous other rooms accommodated a full program of cultural and recreational activities, attracting a membership of 1300 in 1892-3 when a total of 182,500 attended its various programs.

The Young Men's Catholic Association, established by Bishop McQuaid in 1872, had opened a building of its own but succumbed during the depression. The active programs of the Irish and German benevolent societies, many of them affiliated with Catholic churches, answered various needs of their young men. The German-American



Society of Rochester, founded in 1883, not only employed an agent to meet and assist all newly arrived countrymen, but conducted programs designed to speed their adjustment to the new home in America. A Judean Club, formed by a number of Jewish young men in 1895, was destined to become the J. Y. M. & W. A. in 1915. [A Columbus Club, organized in 1927, became a few years later the C. Y. A., which developed an active program in the Columbus Civic Center.]

The inquiry of a young woman from London for direction to the Y.W.C.A. in September, 1883, spurred the organization that fall of a Woman's Christian Association similar to those in many other cities. A boarding house for women transients was needed, and a suitable house under private management was so designated, but when the Association considered the establishment of an employment agency and a program of classes and social evenings, the need for a separate home became apparent. A house was accordingly leased on South St. Paul Street the next December. The Workingwoman's Home, as it was called, quickly proved inadequate for both transients and those who desired to remain as regular boarders. Some of the latter, together with their new friends in the community, organized a Y.W.C.A. for social and religious fellowship, but the leadership continued to come from Mrs. Louis Chapin and Mrs. Kenneth P. Shedd of the W.C.A. A second building was rented on Sophia Street in 1885, and a drive the next year raised \$5000 to purchase still another house on Franklin Street. Soon a gymnastic room was equipped, a series of classes for young mothers was organized, and lodgings for transients were provided, as well as an employment agency. Any girl who applied for a night's lodging was admitted, whether she could pay or not, provided she would agree to take a bath. Most of the girls paid, however, and slightly more than half of the W.C.A.'s \$4000 annual budget came from this source. Finally, in 1894, a desire to enlist the more active participation of younger women in the community and to bring the organization into line with the strong Y.W. movement throughout the country prompted the W.C.A. to merge with the Y.W.C.A., which promptly undertook a new program of expansion.

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While the lodging house quickly became a secondary function in these associations, the problem remained of providing suitable lodgings

for the increased flood of homeless men who drifted into the city each winter. The old practice of sheltering them overnight in the jail did not seem consistent with Christian charity, and in 1885 a Temperance Reform Society, led by Colonel N. P. Pond, former captain of the ball team, determined to find a better solution. After a trip to New York, where he visited several shelters for homeless men, Colonel Pond returned to Rochester that fall to open a coffee bar and lodging room for men on Front Street. A fee of five cents was accepted when the lodger could pay, and a cheap but warm meal was served. The first year's report showed a total of 2,153 lodgers, 661 of them free, and 31,054 meals, one tenth given without charge; moreover the Reform Society had conducted seventeen gospel services among these men. A second coffee house was soon opened on Exchange Street, and larger quarters were provided for over-night transients on Front Street. A more permanent arrangement was made in 1889 when the People's Rescue Mission was formally organized. Volunteer managers carried on the work until 1892 when Albert E. Hines came to Rochester to begin his long career of service to homeless men. A statistical summary twelve years later revealed that 267,688 lodgings and 327,775 meals had been provided at the mission in sixteen years of operation.

The somewhat analogous effort of the Salvation Army met for a time a less favorable reception. Indeed, the Army's first efforts, beginning in 1884, to establish barracks and to hold street services and parades in Rochester encountered such opposition that after two hectic years the attempt was abandoned. Rochesterians became more accustomed to the practices of the Salvation Army in the early nineties when annual encampments were staged on Cobbs Hill. The visit of state and national commanders and the lively spectacle of the Army's lassies and laddies, who camped for several days in numerous tents on the hilltop during these occasions, prepared the city for the reestablishment of permanent barracks, first on Spring Street, and then around the corner on Exchange Street in 1897. A lodging house and meals for destitute men, charity work in the slums, and the preparation of Christmas baskets for the poor helped to win toleration for the religious meetings. By 1905, Rochester was ready to respond to the Army's drive for a \$16,000 building fund with which a new three-story building was erected on North Street.

The early resistance to the establishment of the Salvation Army in Rochester may very possibly have come in part from the feeling, shared by many philanthropic citizens during the late eighties, that the city was wasting its charitable resources through duplication of services. There seemed to be no end to the number of fashionable musicals and donations. The activities of the "Twigs" provided a broad base of support for the City Hospital, renamed the General Hospital in 1910. Its *Review*, published monthly, 1865-1918, the *Journal of the Home for the Friendless*, 1857-1875, the *Industrial School Advocate*, 1865-1895, and the Homeopathic Hospital *Leaflet*, 1889-1914, each helped to swell the ranks of its friends. Increasingly elaborate programs were arranged by the managers of the various institutions until, in the late eighties, a costume dance staged at the Kirmess held jointly by the Woman's Christian Association and the Orphan Asylum, brought an outburst of criticism from several Methodist pastors and others who did not approve of dancing, even for charity. Yet with seven hospitals, an independent health dispensary, five orphan asylums, three industrial schools, four character-saving institutions, two homes for the aged and the humane society, each requiring from two to ten thousand dollars a year, much ingenuity was required to provide the annual maintenance. Some effort to integrate and simplify the work of these agencies was needed, and it was with this object in view that the Society for the Organization of Charity was founded in 1890.

Oscar Craig, resident member of the State Board of Charities, launched the program, stressing the object of insuring a more efficient community response to avoid human suffering. Dr. E. V. Stoddard, who was chosen president, declared that while poverty might be necessary in society, pauperism was not. The city was divided into four districts to facilitate the investigation of relief applicants from any part of town; tickets were printed and sold to charitable folk who might wish to give them to panhandlers with instructions to report to the Society's headquarters where their needs would be appraised and relieved. An employment agency was established, and a close working arrangement was effected with the Rescue Mission, to which all needy transients were sent for a session in the wood yard, followed by a meal and lodging. Apparently the plan to make periodic investi-

gations of the other charitable institutions was not adopted, however, for little was achieved in the direction of integration.

As the years passed, the chief function performed by the Society for Organized Charity was to provide a central agency to which street beggars or needy families could be referred. The numbers of such cases rose alarmingly during the depression of the mid-nineties. The Society accepted the task of distributing an emergency fund of \$12,000 raised by the Chamber of Commerce in 1893, and conducted an independent drive in each succeeding year, though its collections never exceeded a thousand dollars. At one time, in an effort to stimulate more generous and intelligent giving, the wants of specific families were listed in weekly releases to the press. Job needs were included, and through this and other efforts the Society rendered real assistance. Yet little more than a beginning was made, even in this field. The seventh annual report, November, 1897, listed but 32 placed in permanent jobs, 190 in temporary positions, and 149 directed to private sources for assistance. From an emergency fund of \$952, aid was extended to 541 families that year. Investigations had been made of 380 families not previously registered, and 237 of these had been referred to the public poor office. So the work continued for a number of years, until a new effort to achieve greater integration produced the United Charities in 1910.

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An increased reliance on public poor relief was evident throughout these decades, especially during depression years. Payments by the city and county for the care of public charges in nine local charitable institutions exceeded \$30,000 in 1889, representing a fourth of their expenditures that year. No other drain on the poor fund had advanced so steadily since the appointment of a full time overseer in 1871. Indeed, the total outlays fluctuated with the times. In the seventies, the annual expenditures in this field averaged \$84,835, dropping to \$67,490 in the more prosperous eighties, and climbing again to \$82,686 in the nineties. These figures did not include the county's outlays, part of them collected from the city, chiefly for its share of the expenses of the Almshouse. That institution, rebuilt in 1872, sheltered more than a thousand in the course of a year, most of them for brief periods until they could be shipped to their "settlement" homes. In 1895, when the daily population averaged 445, the operating

expenses for the year totaled \$29,591, or \$1.28 a week for each inmate.

The practice, followed by most poor committees, of dividing the contracts for supplies among their political friends, provoked frequent demands for reform. An investigation in 1892 prompted several changes, notably the appointment of inspectors to visit and investigate the circumstances of each relief applicant. When, a year later, the depression doubled the number of applicants, two additional inspectors were employed. A stone yard was established that year to provide a work test, although stone broken in this fashion proved more costly than that crushed by machine.

The work test may have helped to weed out unworthy transients, but unemployed residents demanded real jobs. In January, 1894, a petition from 27 trade unions, with a total membership of 3267, called attention to the fact that two thirds of the city's 2400 carpenters and masons had been unemployed for several months and sorely needed jobs. It appeared to be an opportune time to build a new police station, and soon a \$76,291 building was under way. Several other work projects were launched by the city, notably two bridges, which required an expenditure of nearly half a million dollars on public works. The county likewise seized the opportunity to build a new court house at a cost of \$295,000. Yet, considering the city's growth, these work projects did not compare with those undertaken during previous depressions, with the result that a heavier share of the burden of unemployment fell on the unfortunate individuals themselves.

The rigors of the depression were far-reaching. Among its numerous victims were a number of the mutual aid societies on which many individuals had relied for succor in times of need. So many needs were pressed just when other members found themselves unable to make payments that a majority of the several score of mutual benefit societies were forced into bankruptcy. Like many other normally sound institutions, they could not survive the economic collapse of most of their members.

Although neither the state or federal governments recognized any responsibility for emergency relief, the state was assuming new institutional functions. The State Board of Charities, which first undertook to make annual investigations in 1867, gained constitutional status and enlarged powers in 1895, extending its authority, particularly over institutions receiving state aid. The state assumed a major part of the cost at the Western New York Institution for Deaf Mutes,

established at Rochester in 1876. Annual allowances of \$300 for each pupil provided a steady income, and in 1888 the state provided funds for the erection of new buildings. The state likewise took over full responsibility in 1891 for the Insane Asylum, maintained by the county since 1857. Vigorous expansion under the state's supervision increased the Asylum's bed capacity from 200 to 1400 by the turn of the century.

The Western New York House of Refuge was renamed the State Industrial School when in the mid-eighties state laws curbing the use of prison labor compelled the management to shift from contract industries to a program of industrial and military training. The erection of new buildings to accommodate the increased number of commitments provided an opportunity to separate the boys according to age and other principles of classification. But the full advantage of these new techniques was not derived until the long campaign for the institution's removal to a farm site won success in 1906. At its new location, known as Industry, ten miles south of the city, the State Industrial School developed a work and training program in 30 farm cottages, each housing 25 boys, while the girls were now sent to Albion.

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The failure of the Society of Organized Charity to provide broad leadership in the welfare field left that task to a new agency—the Woman's Educational and Industrial Union. When originally established in 1893, this organization was patterned after woman's unions already active in Boston, Buffalo and several other cities. Their principal function was to safeguard the welfare of women in cities. Under the vigorous leadership of Mrs. Helen B. Montgomery, Mrs. Mary T. Gannett, and Mrs. Henry G. Danforth, the Rochester Union quickly established a legal protection service, an employment register, a diet kitchen, a series of training classes and a noon rest where young women could gather to eat their lunch, relax, and, if they chose, tidy up, before returning to work. The Union started the first kindergarten play groups in school yards, launched the first vacation classes for public school youngsters, sponsored school gardens, established a milk depot and led a movement to supply lunches to children for a penny. Before the end of the decade these ladies had persuaded the Board of Education to introduce manual and domestic science

classes in a few schools and to permit them to hang pictures in the school buildings.

Several of these functions closely resembled aspects of the programs previously undertaken by the Industrial Schools or the Y.W.C.A. The significant aspect of the Union's program, however, was its effort to extend these services to all, particularly to all women and children. Privileges that had formerly been accorded only to the destitute were now to be made available through the schools to all who desired them. The Union's long campaign for a small and non-partisan school board was designed to facilitate the adoption of these measures.

Furthermore, the Union took the lead in advocating a number of new reforms in the welfare field. It sponsored the organization in 1909 of a Rochester branch of the Consumer's League, the passage of a state child labor law, and recommended improvements in the health and housing ordinances. The Union was able to rejoice in 1914 when its legal protection committee grew into the Legal Aid Society; it watched with more than passive interest as the public playground movement developed out of its original play groups.

The Woman's Union was by no means alone in its advocacy of reform in the city's welfare arrangements. The Rochester Public Health Association, of which Captain Henry Lomb and Dr. Edward Mott Moore were the driving spirits, began in 1895 the long campaign against tuberculosis and other health hazards. A visiting nurse was employed; a dental clinic was started, later a nose and throat clinic; the campaign for a country hospital and for a tuberculosis sanitarium continued until the establishment of Iola in 1910. The Association joined with the Woman's Union in 1897 to open the first milk station and, a decade later, to maintain the first trained nurse assigned to the public schools.

Another active agent of reform was the Social Settlement, established on Baden Street by a group of philanthropic Jewish ladies in 1901. Patterned after the Henry Street Settlement (founded by Rochester-born Lilian D. Wald in New York City) its objective was to serve the needs of the Polish-Jewish families resident in that thickly settled neighborhood. Recreational and cultural activities and training classes were quickly provided, and after a few years a free clinic was opened. When in 1910 the first house at 152 Baden Street became overcrowded, the building next door was acquired for the clinic. Long before this

date the Settlement's influence was reaching out into wider fields. The monthly *Bulletin*, started by the Settlement in 1906, grew into the *Common Good* of 1909-1914, a publication which dealt imaginatively with all aspects of the welfare problem in Rochester.

At least two other groups were earnestly promoting improved welfare measures during these years. Professor Rauschenbusch, chairman of a special committee of the Y.M.C.A., created in 1904 to study the community's social needs, discovered a shortage of playgrounds and other suitable recreational facilities for both juveniles and adults. From the census reports he learned that the city had 7,355 single men and 8,109 single women between the ages of 25 and 44.\* Better wages in industry would, in the opinion of the committee, provide the best means of encouraging these folk to marry and thus help to check the growth of semi-professional prostitution in Rochester, but meanwhile, until higher wage standards were widely enjoyed, additional social facilities would be needed. It was to provide one such institutional feature that Professor Rauschenbusch cooperated with the Reverend Drs. Paul Moore Strayer and Henry H. Stebbins in 1908 in the establishment of the People's Sunday Evening. Meeting in the Lyceum Theater and extending an invitation to all non-church-going citizens of any or no faith, the program soon attracted an enthusiastic response, helping to bridge the chasm that separated many Protestant churches from the mass of industrial workers.

Meanwhile, the success of the Children's Playground League (an outgrowth in 1903 of the early play groups organized by the Woman's Union) was so marked by 1907 that a campaign was launched to persuade the city to assume full support of the program. The Woman's Union, the Board of Education, and seven other agencies endorsed the proposal, thus persuading the city to undertake a program of neighborhood activities in the school buildings. Edward J. Ward was brought to Rochester to direct the program's development in a half-dozen schools. The Social Centers, as they were called, soon enrolled several thousand participants in varied clubs and forums. It was a character-building program, unique in many respects, that attracted nation-wide interest. Unfortunately, Rochester was not ready for the democratic

\*There were 18,445 married men and 21,190 married women under 44 years of age, and 449 divorced men to 1,573 divorced women of these ages. See the ratios of young men and women in the note on p. 15.



self-criticism which burst forth in several of the adult forums. A convenient excuse for terminating the program was found by the authorities when a Sunday afternoon dance staged by a Jewish girls' group in one of the school centers aroused a storm of protests. The appropriation was cut and then eliminated, Ward accepted another job, and except for the continued maintenance of playgrounds for children, the widely praised social center movement was brought to an end in 1911.

The city authorities were in an intransigent mood that year. Neither outside praise for the social centers, nor outside criticism of other local conditions was heeded. When, at the invitation of the Woman's Educational and Industrial Union, the Reverend Caroline B. Crane came to Rochester to make a survey of sanitary and institutional facilities, it mattered little that she was fêted by some of the most prominent citizens, or that she had recently uncovered still more deplorable conditions in other cities. The favorable portions of the Crane survey, presented at a large mass meeting in Convention Hall on May 13, 1911, were forgotten as officials and citizens alike became indignant over Mrs. Crane's indictment of the arrangements for milk and meat inspection, school ventilation and lighting, and the emerging slums. The *Common Good* and one or two other spokesmen for local reform endeavored to press some of these criticisms home, but nothing was accomplished.

It was in this atmosphere that the campaign for a unification of the city's charitable organizations came to a head. A Labor Bureau—an outgrowth of several discussions of the unemployment problem at the People's Sunday Evening—had been established in 1908 by Dr. Stebbins. The size and urgency of that problem soon prompted the Chamber of Commerce to name a Committee of Seven to study the welfare programs of other cities. Its findings encouraged the Chamber, under the progressive leadership of Edward G. Miner in 1909, to throw its support behind the move for a federation of charities. All of the private charities were finally persuaded to join the United Charities, officially organized the next year. The primary object was to prepare a central file of all relief clients, but by the time Dr. William Kirk was brought from Brown University to assume charge in July, 1911, the hostility of the public officials toward the reformers had reached such a point that only the private agencies would cooperate.

Nor were the private charities ready for extensive cooperation, either in the collection of funds or in the orderly distribution of functions. It would take a war and the example of a War Chest to prepare Rochester for the establishment of a Community Chest in 1918. Six more years would slip by before the Council of Social Agencies was formed and dedicated to the task of welding the existing charitable agencies into a systematic welfare program. Even these accomplishments would prove inadequate when the severe and protracted depression of the thirties brought mass unemployment, finally awaking state and national leaders to the necessity for widely applicable measures of social security. And a Second World War would in its turn disclose the possibility for full employment and suggest goals for national economic planning.

Social welfare would thus become not only increasingly complex in its local institutional application but also increasingly involved in the primary national trends. The spontaneous citizen efforts which had accomplished so much in the early days would no longer suffice, but fortunately the tradition of friendly generosity, which had characterized Rochester during its first century, found continued expression both among the volunteer directors and among the professional staff that shouldered the work during the new era of community welfare which followed 1910.

## Bibliographical Note

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(New York, 1936), each treats an aspect of welfare trends in America against which the local developments must be seen.

The forthcoming volume by Miss Virginia Jeffrey Smith, *A Century of Service: Rochester General Hospital: 1847-1947* (Rochester, 1947), will be of great interest to students of the history of charity and medicine and to friends of Rochester generally.

Of course, many of the statistical records and most of the specific details of welfare work in Rochester have been preserved only in the periodic reports and the daily press. Many official records have been found in the *Proceedings of the Common Council*, in the *Annual Reports* of the State Board of Charities, and in the annual reports printed by several of the private institutions themselves. The *Hospital Review* issued monthly by the General Hospital, 1865-1906, *The Journal of the Home for the Friendless*, 1857-1875, *The Soldiers' Aid*, June, 1863—May, 1865, *The Industrial School Advocate and Soldiers' Aid*, 1865-1870, *The Industrial School Advocate*, 1870-1895, and the *Hospital Leaflet* of the Homeopathic Hospital, 1889-1914, contain much of interest, as does *The Bulletin* of Baden Street Settlement, 1907-1909, and *The Common Good*, which succeeded it, 1910-1914. Finally the index of the *Union & Advertiser*, prepared by the National Youth Administration and available at the Rochester Public Library, has been of great assistance in checking the changing circumstances surrounding the welfare institutions of Rochester down to 1897.